

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Benzodiazepine Action Work Group Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2024 via Zoom

Present:

D.E. Foster, Co-chair

Barbara Connolly, John Staight, Teresa Cobleigh, Madison Zang, Bernie Silvernail, Brian Watkins, NP, Valsava Madhave, MD, Teresa Cobleigh, April Wise, Donald Thigpen, Pam Rodriguez, J.C. Curle, Evelyn Hawkins, Lisa Leibe, Jake Ressler, Jess Angleson, Nicole Lamberson, Michael Bohan, MD, Terri Schreiber

Consortium: Gina Olberding, Shayna Micucci, Jessica Eaddy, Michael Davidson, Jennifer Mackender, Teresa Cantwell, Rosemarie MacDowell

Absent: See attached roster.

Co-Chair D.E. Foster called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the December 2023 meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Co-chair Transition Plan:

Both Alexis Ritvo and D.E. Foster will be stepping down as work group co-chairs. Gail Dawson and Madison Zang will assume the co-chair positions. Shayna Micucci provided work group members with information regarding Gail Dawson's background as a nurse practitioner managing patients undergoing tapering and withdrawal from benzodiazepines. Madison Zang was present and spoke about her background and work with Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners as a substance use response coordinator. Dr. Ritvo and D.E. Foster will remain members of the work group. Gina Olberding thanked D and Alexis for their leadership.

Peer Support Training Updates:

D will continue collaborating with the Peer Support Training Program as an advisor and instructor. Terri Schreiber, one of the peer support trainers, summarized some of the recent training revisions and said training participants attended from various locations around the state. Jessica Angleson (pharmacist) participated and found the training especially useful. D mentioned other positive responses received from training participants. Training links:

<https://corxconsortium.org/projects/benzo-peer-support/>

New Hampshire class registration link to share with partners in NH:

<https://www.nhadaca.org/event-5562425?CalendarViewType=0&SelectedDate=2/5/2024>

National class in March to share with partners anywhere:

<https://choicesrecoverytrainings.com/product/recovering-from-benzodiazepine-use-for-peer-specialists/>

Research Update:

Bernie Silvernail updated meeting participants on current research projects, including a prescriber survey about knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to benzodiazepines. The survey will be distributed shortly. Another research project concerns a literature review of BIND (benzodiazepine-induced neurological dysfunction). The term BIND was introduced into scientific literature via a paper submitted in 2023. The paper has received excellent reviews. Alexis Ritvo was the primary author. A third research project involves a collaboration with Kaiser Permanente on a safe use initiative. Kaiser is attempting to reduce the number of benzodiazepine prescriptions issued by their providers.

Organization/Member Updates:

Nicole Lamberson spoke about a project organized by Dr. Ed Silberman that is looking into reasons why individuals start using benzodiazepines. Bernie said he has been working on a one-page proposal to send to Dr. Silberman and recommended the work group not be involved in the project unless certain protocols are established. Work group members discussed Dr. Silberman's promotion of benzodiazepine use and potential bias.

J.C. Curle blog: <https://www.benzoinfo.com/2021/06/14/benzo-blunders-braincast-with-pospo-and-professor-edward-k-silberman/>

D Foster asked work group members if they would like to participate in a discussion regarding Dr. Silverman's project. The following work group members would like to participate (see attached roster for email addresses):

- Jake Ressler
- Terri Schreiber
- April Wise
- Barbara Connolly
- Lisa Leibe Gemmill:
- J.C. Curle
- Madison Zang
- Nicole Lamberson
- Bernie Silvernail
- Sonja Styblo

John Staight said the Maudsley publication on deprescribing guidelines will be released on February 21, 2024. Both Christy Huff and Nicole Lamberson contributed to the guidelines. <https://www.amazon.com/Maudsley-Guidelines-prescribing-Prescribing/dp/111982298X>

Jake Ressler, Indiana University, spoke about a project he is working on related to benzodiazepine use and pre-existing trauma that may resurface during withdrawal. Work group members can contact Jake directly if they are interested in obtaining more information regarding his research. resslerj@iu.edu

J.C. Curle updated meeting participants on ongoing Benzodiazepine Information Coalition (BIC) projects and other surveys in progress.

Evelyn Hawkins spoke about her Life Center project, which will be launched soon. The website will include information about support groups. They are also working on a film that will feature personal experiences with benzodiazepine use.

D suggested that Evelyn reach out to BIC and Easing Anxiety if additional stories are needed.

Teresa Cobleigh has discussed a “call to action for research gaps” with work group member Dr. Christine Neeb. Teresa’s primary interest is dual diagnoses and polysubstance use.

The Benzo Warrior Community sponsors a Zoom support meeting specifically for caregivers of benzodiazepine-injured individuals. Caregivers are provided with their own reserved space in order to communicate with each other and obtain support. This particular meeting is reserved for caregivers only and is co-facilitated by Wendy Jo Cole, Sam Goldberg, and Dom DaFonte. Meetings are held biweekly on Mondays from 7-8:30 p.m. EDT. Upcoming meetings are scheduled for February 19, March 4, and March 18. BWC also has a moderated chat for caregivers to keep in touch with each other between meetings. Individuals who are experiencing withdrawal/BIND are welcome to attend BWC's regular support meetings. To join BWC and participate in meetings: benzowarrior.com.

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 from Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Attachments: Work group roster