

**Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention**  
Heroin Response Work Group Meeting Minutes  
July 17, 2020

Participants:

Lindsey Myers, CDPHE, Heroin Response Work Group Co-chair  
Chelsea Clark, Rocky Mountain HIDTA  
Chief Rick Brandt  
Ezra Lockhart, Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners  
Cynthia Anaya, Jefferson Mile High Center  
Valerie Resendez, OBH Diversion Program Manager  
Andres Guerrero, CDPHE  
Melissa Gallardo, Division of Adult Parole  
Maggie Seldeen, Mind Springs Health  
Chris Benjamin, Boulder County Public Health  
Mary Brewer, New Beginnings Recovery Center  
Denise Vincioni, Denver Recovery Group  
Marc Condojani, OBH  
Patsy Ramirez, CDPHE  
Jessie Spiers, AspenPointe  
Terri Hurst, Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition  
Miranda Thompson, Jefferson County Public Health  
Jean Finn, Denver Department of Public Health & Environment  
Qing Li, Epidemiologist  
Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Jessica Eaddy, Jen Place, Jamie Feld,  
Lindsey Simbeye, Rosemarie MacDowell  
AmeriCorps: Veronika Hanna, Taylor Vaughn, Grace Garcia, Sarah Green, Holly Sharps, Zac  
Hyde, Matthew Martinez

**Call to Order, Introduction, & Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:**

Co-chair Lindsey Myers called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Prior meeting minutes were approved.

**Member Updates and Discussion:**

Legislation:

Jose Esquibel and Jamie Feld provided legislative updates. The Criminal Justice Bill HB 1017. had a number of revisions. Funding was eliminated. Terri Hurst commented that she is happy with the continuity of care that remained in the bill, particularly Medicare enrollment. Jose suggested work group members review the past three years' policies related to criminal justice policies in order to determine how effective these policies have been and if other recommendations should be made.

HB 1065 allows MAT within jail facilities and extends immunity for use of expired naloxone. It also prohibits service access denial for individuals on medication assisted treatment.

More detailed information regarding legislation can be found here:

<https://www.corxconsortium.org/legislature/>

CCJJ Opioid Investigation Committee:

The Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice established an Opioid Investigations Subcommittee to make strategy recommendations relative to dangerous drugs such as black market heroin. Several members of the Heroin Response Work Group participated in the subcommittee along with the attorney general's office, the US attorney's district office, public health and safety departments, and law enforcement officials.

Three recommendations included funding of a task force; however, this funding was not approved. A narcotics enforcement entity was recommended and approved and will coordinate information statewide. A summary of the committee recommendations is attached to the minutes.

Jose suggested obtaining support for the recommendations from public health and law enforcement and an eventual endorsement by the Substance Abuse Task Force. If there is legislator interest, it would then be possible to present the recommendations to the Interim Study Committee when it reconvenes in the summer of 2021. Either another work group meeting can be scheduled to discuss the recommendations or work group members can provide feedback by email.

OBH (Marc Condojani):

Marc updated participants on recent budget cuts. OBH has tried to prioritize remaining funds in order to minimize the impact on programs and assure that all core services continue.

They are completing year two of SOR projects. There are now six mobile units administering MAT in rural areas of the state, including to the uninsured. The SOR extension allows a focus on stimulants, which are on the rise. Funding has also been earmarked for residential treatment, and Oxford House services have been expanded. As of next month, there will be four locations in Grand Junction, one in Montrose in August, and five in Pueblo by the month of September. The first month's rent for Oxford House or any other CARR certified residence will be paid for 400 individuals experiencing financial challenges. There are 97 CARR certified residences in Colorado (totaling 1,600 beds). Additional funding will be allocated to peer services through recovery community organizations such as The Phoenix. The MSOs will be handling the referral process once the contracts are in place.

CDPHE:

Over 10,000 doses of naloxone were distributed between January and June 30, 2020. Ninety-three agencies statewide have received naloxone to date. Most of the agencies are either harm reduction agencies or law enforcement. Nasal spray is the most requested form of naloxone. Single dose and prefilled syringes are less expensive. Wholesale pharmacies will only deliver to organizations that have a standing order with the State of Colorado. Ordering and shipping information is available online: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/naloxone-bulk-purchase-fund-opportunity>

### Harm Reduction Grant Funding:

There are now five grantees across the state. Boulder County Public Health plans to centralize their harm reduction activities and will focus on community syringe access programs, MAT treatment within the jail, and support of community-based recovery.

The Harm Reduction Action Center will operate two mobile syringe access programs. Funding will also support a harm reduction case manager to work with individuals in the Denver police district six. Funding will support education and training for Denver police officers in order to reduce officer needle injuries. This program may expand to other Denver police districts.

The Larimer Police Department project plans to reduce the number of individuals entering or returning to the criminal justice system by providing case management and harm reduction services to program participants. They also plan to start a LEAD program.

Pitkin County is planning to reduce the negative effects of drug use by improving communications between stakeholders and developing alternatives to the criminal justice system referral for people suffering from substance use disorders. They are planning a co-responder program that will pair law enforcement with a behavioral health specialist when responding to calls. The intent is to refer individuals with SUD to treatment rather than jail.

The Southern Colorado Harm Reduction Coalition will utilize their funding for workforce development training, development of community resources, case management, and acupuncture detox.

### STAR-Denver Presentation (Chris Richardson):

Chris is Associate Director of Criminal Justice Services with the Mental Health Center of Denver.

The STAR program was established to respond to low-level 911 calls that do not require law enforcement assistance, but do require either a social worker or other health response. A paramedic and social worker from the Denver Mental Health Center utilize a van to respond to calls pertaining to substance use, mental health crises, or individuals requiring referral to services. Services are available from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Responders carry naloxone and safe needles. Case managers follow up with individuals after the initial call. A grant from The Caring 4 Denver fund is supporting the pilot program. The program is similar to one that began in Eugene, Oregon 30 years ago. A delegation from Denver visited Eugene to explore the idea for Denver.

Work group meeting participants discussed the differences between this program and the LEAD program as well as the method for evaluating the STAR program's services, which will be done by survey. Meeting participants also shared ideas to help STAR program participants who have needs for daily living such as clothing, etc.

### Other Updates:

Denise Vincioni's organization is partnering with HRAC and Denver Health to organize an Overdose Awareness Day event. The event will include speakers and presentations.

Jean Finn with Denver Public Health and Environment spoke about a rapid assessment and response program funded by CDPHE that includes a fentanyl early warning dashboard. Fatal and non-fatal overdose data will be collected from six different public and private sources. She indicated that they have seen a gradual increase in fatal overdoses over time. The assessment program is modeled after one established by the New York City Department of Public Health.

Qing Li shared information about a seminar conducted in June by Glen Mays, Chair of the Department of Health Systems, Management and Policy, in the Colorado School of Public Health. The seminar (Law Enforcement and Public Health: Patterns of Interaction and Inaction Across the US) addressed unequal treatment, racism, and violence in the criminal justice sector in communities with relatively strong health and social service sectors and suggested that strong connections between law enforcement and local health and social service organizations might help to build cultures and practices that promote health, safety and social justice.

Qing also mentioned the 2017 publication “Forging a Partnership – Law Enforcement and Treatment” published by the Consortium’s Heroin Response Work Group and the “Heroin in Colorado” report published in 2018 as well as a “Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods” that was published in Science in August of 1997. For more information: [qing.li@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:qing.li@mail.sdsu.edu)

Jose announced that the Consortium annual meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **COVID-19 Impact:**

Mary Brewer said her organization has seen a large influx of mental health issues since COVID-19 began. Individuals with SUD are worried about the lack of available resources. Zoom meetings are not an adequate replacement for in-person support meetings.

Maggie Seldeen said she has also seen individuals struggling with Zoom as a replacement for their customary in-person support group.

Jessica Eaddy reported an increase in suicides in rural areas. Montrose law enforcement is reporting an increase in assaults and domestic violence.

Chief Brandt mentioned some of the issues encountered by law enforcement due to COVID-19 restrictions and indicated there has been an uptick in cocaine use. Chelsea said she would look further into the available data. She reported that the restricted movement imposed by COVID-19 also impacted the availability of methamphetamine, i.e. issues with shipments from China to drug cartels as well as border closures.

Denise said there were more treatment take outs for patients than normally would be allowed, which has resulted in long outdoor queues difficult to manage. Deliveries to homeless shelters have also presented a challenge. Telehealth is working very well.

Lindsey briefly spoke about ongoing discussions regarding a crisis standard of care in the event the COVID-19 situation worsens. The standard would include a backup if the behavioral health system becomes overloaded. Recommendations will be forthcoming.

The meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m. The next work group meeting will be held on Friday, January 15, 2021 from 1 – 3 p.m.

Attachment: CCJJ Recommendations