

## Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

### Benzodiazepine Work Group Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2021 via Zoom

#### **Present:**

Steve Wright, MD, Co-chair

Alexis Ritvo, MD, Co-chair

William Swann, CU Anschutz

Christopher Schultz, CU Anschutz

Christy Huff, MD, BIC

Melanie Wuzzardo, Swedish Medical Center

J.C. Curle, Benzodiazepine Information Coalition

Terri Schreiber, Schreiber Research Group

Tracey Ritter, Tri County Health Department, Work Studies

William Elsass, Mindspring Health

William Swann, UC Anschutz

Trina Faatz, Boulder County

Nicole Lamberson, John Staight, Christina Dalpiaz

Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Susanna Cooper, Lindsey Simbeye, Michael

Davidson, Rosemarie MacDowell

**Absent:** See attached list.

Co-Chair Alexis Ritvo called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made to approve the February 2021 meeting minutes. Motion approved.

#### **Discussion – “Medicating Normal”**

Work group members discussed the logistics of showing the film “Medicating Normal,” including the cost of tickets and organizing a panel discussion following the film. The film features five individuals, four of whom were detrimentally affected by prescription benzodiazepines. The fifth individual featured in the film was prescribed a stimulant for ADHD. The film is approximately 90 minutes long. It was suggested that the panel include six members.

#### **Comments regarding the film:**

- The tone of the film could be construed as being “anti-psychiatry;” however the filmmaker does not have that attitude.
- The title could imply that normal people are being medicated.
- The film is very well done and provides a lot of material for discussion.
- The film captures the level of anger experienced by individuals harmed by benzodiazepines.
- A panel discussion addressing the issues mentioned in the film is recommended; discussion is an important part of the messaging.

- There are some conditions, such as schizophrenia, where long-term use of medications is appropriate.
- A panel member with youth psychiatric experience is recommended.

Work group members discussed how the film should be promoted and whether or not promotion should encompass a variety of psychiatric medications or just benzodiazepines. It was agreed the promotion would focus on benzodiazepines, but would also cover informed consent and risks and benefits related other medications.

The importance of building bridges with doctors was mentioned, as was the possibility that some doctors might be offended by the anger demonstrated by patients. Any deprescribing clinic will have to deal with patient anger.

The work group approved of the film project. There were no objections.

Work group members discussed registration, tickets, cost, and free tickets for those unable to afford payment. A donation of \$1 or more could be suggested or there could be tiers, i.e., general admission, extra donation ticket, etc. Proceeds will be shared with the non-profit producers of the film. Gina Olberding said the Consortium has a fee-for-service account where funding can be held.

The audience will likely be Colorado residents. Possible days for showing the film were discussed such as weekends or Sunday afternoon or evening. Details will be discussed at the next work group meeting in April. Steve, Alexis, and Nicole will meet before the next work group meeting to discuss plans. The Consortium external relations staff is available to assist with logistical arrangements.

#### Other comments:

The panel should be comprised of individuals with varied backgrounds, i.e., psychiatrist, general practitioner, survivor, affected family member. The Consortium can serve as the host. Christina Dalpiaz said she would be willing to discuss her story. Trina Faatz said she would be willing to assist.

#### **March 31<sup>st</sup> Lunch & Learn – Safe Prescribing Protocols of Benzodiazepines: Lessons Learned from the Opioid Crisis:**

Susanna Cooper provided an update of this upcoming educational seminar and asked the work group for support. The seminar flyer is attached to the minutes. Information is also posted on the Consortium website, including registration and information regarding CMEs. Session recordings are also posted. Link: <https://corxconsortium.org/2021-lunch-and-learn-series/>

#### **Co-chair Transitions:**

Steve Wright is now living in Oregon and considering retirement. He suggested the co-chair position should be shared by a benzodiazepine survivor with lived experience. The individual should reside in Colorado and possess organizational skills and the ability to conduct meetings. Interested persons should contact Susanna Copper: [susanna.cooper@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:susanna.cooper@cuanschutz.edu), Steve: [sleighwright@gmail.com](mailto:sleighwright@gmail.com) or Alexis: [alexis.ritvo@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:alexis.ritvo@cuanschutz.edu)

### **Subcommittee Updates:**

The Peer Support Committee is still refining their document. Committee members would appreciate comments. Work group members are welcome to join meetings.

Other comments regarding the guidance documents being prepared by subcommittees:

- Deadline for final draft
- How to reach physicians that disagree
- Pregnant women and methadone issues
- 90% of benzodiazepine prescriptions are written by general practitioners

Steve suggested developing the best guidance possible before determining how best to deliver the information. He has compiled literature related to strategies and improving prescribing practices. Academic detailing is useful. Pharmaceutical companies conducted successful marketing programs to encourage usage. Similar programs might work for deprescribing. Once the guidance material is completed, the work group should consider the outreach approach.

### **Caring for Denver Grant:**

The deadline for this grant is March 18<sup>th</sup>. Considerations for writing the grant include: cost to set up a deprescribing clinic, peer support training, a support line, certification process for peer support, and protocol development.

### **Adjournment/Next Meeting:**

The meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 6, 2021 from noon to 1 p.m.

Attachments: List of absent work group members and March 31<sup>st</sup> Lunch & Learn Flyer

Useful Links:

<https://medicatingnormal.com/>

Peer Support Committee document:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YF79Jev84jblW5SX754lQaXcd3HIW1Zj/view?usp=sharing>

Prescribing Committee document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V3njOsMpKiJ8TR9el43uH5OAiocnVQ3Nb6UJNr9lLo/edit?usp=sharing>

Deprescribing Committee document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q9RhilRtWnpbVZht8TlnJtg-64k6FbuyX9wqgCWkls0/edit>

Link to all Google Doc folders:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UnCntmyBu-uANbcOLq\\_79Orl069Q9xGO?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UnCntmyBu-uANbcOLq_79Orl069Q9xGO?usp=sharing)