

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Recovery Work Group Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2022 via Zoom

Present:

Rica Rodriguez, and Jenny Loth Hill, Co-chairs
Racquel Garcia, Hard Beauty Foundation
Rebecca Berg, Springs Recovery Connection
Heather Dolan, Signal Behavioral Health
Michael Sanchez, P2P Recovery Resources
Racquel Garcia, Hard Beauty
Rachel Fowler, Recover Simply
Joan Holtz, Illuminate Colorado
Darin Valdez, Colorado Artists in Recovery
Bruce Edmonstone
Ernest Bilinski, CDPHE
Michelle Ryan, Community Medical Services
Meghan Razimoff, Boulder County Health
Wendy Sachs, Denver County Court
Stephanie Salkin, CDHS
Erin Boyle, CHOW
John Narine
Shayna Kittell, River Valley Family Health Center
Advocates for Recovery: Tonya Wheeler, James Gannon
Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Jen Place, Jessica Eaddy

Absent: See attached roster

Program Manager Jen Place called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m. Co-chair Rica Rodriguez reviewed the work group norms and focus areas. She announced that Jenny Loth Hill was named work group co-chair to replace Carly Larsen.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the April 2022 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

ED-RSS Evaluation Update:

The Swedish Hospital pilot program ended in March. The Evaluation Center will be providing a project report for both the Swedish and the Memorial Hospital pilot program that ended last year. Both pilots were two-year programs. It is expected that data from the Swedish pilot will be published in a scientific peer review journal.

Legislative Updates

Jose Esquibel gave an update on legislative activities, including SB22-181:

Health-care Workforce <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb22-181BehavioralJ>

He explained that the bill makes it a felony to knowingly possess any drug containing fentanyl, which gives law enforcement a lot of influence. Jose spoke about the importance of increasing access to recovery support services and the role of the work group in this effort. This effort

could include working directly with county sheriff associations to educate their staff about the role of peer support specialists and influencing policy by educating county commissioners. He also outlined the ARPA funding that is still available, which includes funding for treatment.

Comments:

Legislation can provide an opportunity to expand recovery support services. Telehealth could be employed to provide recovery services to incarcerated individuals in order to help with the re-entry process.

Wendy Sachs described her work with Denver County Courts and their plans to continue to engage individuals when they are in the process of being arraigned.

Some qualified peers are unable to access jail programs because of past felony convictions; however, they might be able to utilize telehealth. The work group could potentially address this issue by recommending policy changes.

Rebecca Berg said that the Springs Recovery Connection has a justice program primarily funded by a SAMHSA grant. The program includes a justice program manager, data analysis and two coaches. They are affiliated with the Fourth Judicial Court. They are currently training 50 inmates. She would like to discuss further development of justice system programs.

Michael Sanchez spoke about Embark, a CDC cognitive behavioral health program in the Denver County jail. Zoom meetings are scheduled with inmates several weeks before they are transferred to a halfway house or community corrections facility. Phone consultations have worked very well. He also mentioned other jail escort programs.

Recovery Advocacy Project:

Jen provided details regarding the Recovery Advocacy Project, which is a national recovery advocacy organization. She attended one meeting and asked other meeting participants about possible overlap with the work of the Recovery Work Group.

Michelle Ryan said RAP is a grass roots organization with regional advocates in every US state. Their main focus is state and federal legislation related to recovery issues. They track recovery-related legislation and provide advocacy training. The Colorado chapter is working on a referral resource list for those requiring recovery support.

Recovery-Ready Workplace Toolkit Update:

John Narine is currently reviewing toolkit edits received from Jose Esquibel. Jose suggested changing Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention to the Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention. The toolkit will be distributed throughout the state within the next two to four months. The work group discussed ways in which employers could be incentivized to become recovery-friendly workplaces, which would include assisting individuals exiting the criminal justice system. Other states are offering tax incentives.

Meghan Razimoff mentioned a Boulder County employer program for individuals with a criminal record and/or in recovery and how the toolkit might be of use.

According to Jenny Hill, the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment Public Health Investigations Division is including recovery in their work with other diversity programs. The equity initiative includes those who have mental health issues, disabilities, and other forms of systemic oppression, such as racism.

Michelle Ryan said that BHG has grant-funded employment specialists who might be able to provide useful information regarding barriers they have encountered while trying to assist individuals with employment.

John Narine mentioned the recently published White House National Drug Control Strategy to advance recovery-ready workplaces. Link: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/National-Drug-Control-2022Strategy.pdf>

John is starting a new nonprofit organization that will include training to become a certified recovery-friendly leader. He is in the process of forming a board of directors and asked for volunteers, particularly those with nonprofit and program management experience. Contact: john.narine88@gmail.com

Jenny Hill mentioned that the Wildflower Alliance (formally known as the Massachusetts Recovery Learning Center) has a guide for employers.

Breakout Groups:

Jen reviewed plans to set up breakout rooms for the following categories: public relations, employer guide to the peer professional, regional conferences. Funding is available from OBH to sponsor three regional conferences. The first conference will be held in Glenwood Springs in August. El Paso County has also been mentioned as a possible venue. Virtual conferences would also be helpful since people would not have to travel to attend. Tonya Wheeler suggested including eastern Colorado since there are many issues in that area.

Announcements:

Jen Place: A grantee in northeast Colorado is having difficulty filling peer support specialist positions.

Michelle Ryan: Community Medical Services is planning to open opioid treatment programs in the four corners of the state as well as in the Denver metro area (Aurora).

Melinda Dorn: CHOW is focusing on peer support for non-clinical areas. They have received guidance from the SAMHSA Peer Center of Excellence. She asked for work group suggestions. They may consider starting with a pilot program that could eventually be used in other non-clinical environments.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1fmY6Nhnc82rnuD7o8VYyuIV1Qv1nQp7U>

Stephanie Salkin: Fentanyl test strips are now available for peers. Funding is available for peer certification and scholarships (regions 1, 2, and 4). An announcement will be forthcoming.

Heather Dolan: Signal Behavioral Health has received additional funding for workforce support.

Wendy Sachs: Denver County Court is seeking another forensic peer, navigator, and that person would need to have lived experience with mental health or substance use as well as criminal justice involvement.

Jenny Loth Hill: The City of Denver secured a grant from Caring for Denver to conduct interviews and focus groups with individuals working in peer support roles in order to collect workforce and supervisory position data. Early data suggests concerns with career advancement. For additional information: Jennifer.LothHill@denvergov.org

Funding Announcements/Updates:

- The Colorado Health Foundation: Supporting Recovery Through Non-clinical Programs: Deadline is June 15. https://coloradohealth.org/funding-opportunities/funding-opportunity-supporting-coloradans-recovery-through-non-clinical?utm_campaign=fyi_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery
- SAMHSA Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics – \$1M grants to improve access to community-based mental health and substance use disorder treatment **and support**. Due May 17th. <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-22-012>
- Centura Health Equity and Access Fund: Info meeting was 4/28, unknown deadline. <https://www.centura.org/community-impact/social-justice/health-equity-advancement-fund>

Consortium Announcements/Updates:

- Grant Writing Assistance: <https://corxconsortium.org/grant-assistance/> through 6/23 or earlier if funds are depleted.
- Open positions – two external relations strategists and one program manager

Other Guest and Member Announcements/Updates:

Send Jen/Rica/Jenny announcements for distribution with the minutes. Events and articles can be posted on Facebook

- CCAR – Multiple Pathways of Recovery Conference, May 11-13, Cheyenne Mountain Resort, Colorado Springs
- Western Slope Regional Peer Professional Conference – August 11 & 12, Hotel Colorado, Glenwood Springs
- Springs Recovery Connection: Chris Herren event, May 19th at 5:00 PM

Jobs:

- Aurora Mental Health Center: <https://www.aumhc.org/careers/>

- City & County of Denver: https://denver.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/CCD-denver-denvergov-CSC_Jobs-Civil_service_jobs-Police_Jobs-Fire_Jobs/job/Downtown-Denver/Forensic-Peer-Navigator---Denver-County-Court_R0044250-2

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m. The next work group meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 14, 2022 from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Attachments: Work group roster