

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Benzodiazepine Action Work Group Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2023 via Zoom

Present:

Alexis Ritvo, MD, D.E. Foster, Co-chairs

John Staight, Michael Bohan, MD, Barbara Connolly, Lisa Gemmill, Bernie Silvernail, Mila Long, Lis Collins, RN, Gail Dawson, NP, Nicole Lamberson, Brooke Thomas, Tanner Valdez, Valsa Madhava, MD

Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Shayna Micucci, Jen Place, Jessica Eaddy, Eric Barker, Rosemarie MacDowell

Absent: See attached roster.

Co-Chair D.E. Foster called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

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

CME Module Update (Alexis Ritvo):

Two of the four-part 2022 lunch and learn sessions are available on the Colorado School of Public Health, Center for Public Health Practice webpages. Other modules are awaiting CME approval and/or the registration link for the website. Links:

<https://registrations.publichealthpractice.org/>

<https://registrations.publichealthpractice.org/Training/Detail/974>

<https://registrations.publichealthpractice.org/Training/Detail/98694>

Peer Support Training Update (D.E. Foster):

D previewed the webpage with the finalized peer support training listing, The training will eventually be listed on the Consortium website. Link to current webpage and registration:

<https://www.easinganxiety.com/benzo-peer-training>

Upcoming training for Colorado residents will be held on June 19th and 26th. Christy Huff and Terri Schreiber will be conducting the training along with two trainers from Embark PCA Recovery Services Colorado. Additional training, and a national launch, are planned for the future. Training is being advertised in the Consortium newsletter and via COPA.

BIND Research Paper Release (Alexis Ritvo):

Alexis Ritvo, Christy Huff, Bernard Silvernail and two colleagues from Vanderbilt (Peter Martin and Reid Finlayson) collaborated on a paper addressing benzodiazepine-induced neurological dysfunction (BIND).

Nicole Lamberson said there is some opposition to BIND. Barbara Connolly suggested involving those opposed to BIND to provide them with additional information.

D mentioned an upcoming roundtable discussion that will explain the research done to produce the paper. Bernie Silvernail said he would be happy to participate in the roundtable discussion and help inform others.

Lisa Gemmill suggested inviting the paper authors to the next hub meeting she facilitates with Barbara Connolly, as many psychotropic group leaders attend.

Benzo Warriors Presentation (Barbara Connolly and Lisa Gemmill):

Benzo Warriors Facebook group started in 2019. The group primarily focuses on peer support and coaching for individuals who are attempting to discontinue the use of benzodiazepines. The group is private. There's a screening process prior to admittance. Work group members were invited to join.

The Facebook page has a wealth of information available for members, including information from the Benzo Information Coalition and from the Alliance for Benzodiazepine Best Practices and others. New members are provided the Ashton Manual as a reference and given guidance on finding physicians and how to communicate with them. They recently created a chat for caregivers only, recognizing that this group is under supported in the community.

In addition to the Facebook page, Benzo Warriors has been holding 90-minute Zoom support meetings for the past three years. The meetings are now being held twice a week. Attendance has grown from 8 to 29 regular participants. Many others view recordings, including recordings by Christy Huff.

Links: <https://www.benzowarrior.com/>

Mark Horowitz (hyperbolic benzodiazepine tapering):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMpNgnBntHA&t=2707s>

Member Updates:

Gail Dawson reported that there is a big push in British Columbia, Canada to deprescribe, but few know how to do so safely. Gail has spoken to hospitals interested in the four-part deprescribing series. They have asked her for a presentation (including SSRIs). She mentioned several other organizations she has spoken to about deprescribing practices and referenced a presentation held recently at the Canada Nurse Practitioner's Annual Conference.

Bernie Silvernail said the Alliance for Benzodiazepine Best Practices educated over 3,000 pharmacists in May with a CME course related to benzodiazepines (including BIND).

D said he recently interviewed a podcaster from The Netherlands who said he found blogs as a great source of information for deprescribing.

Benzodiazepine-Related Presentations:

The co-chairs would like to schedule other presentations at future work meetings similar to the Benzo Warriors presentation. Members were asked to contact Shayna Micucci directly if they are interested in presenting at a future work group meeting. Shayna.micucci@cuanschutz.edu

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 p.m. The work group will not hold a meeting in July. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 1, 2023 from Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Attachments: Work group roster