

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Harm Reduction Work Group Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2021 via Zoom

Attendees:

Mike Nerenberg, MD, Co-chair
Sam Bourdon, Co-chair, CDPHE
Chris Stock, Pharmacist
Cassandra Rocha, Denver County Court Probation
Christine Zeitvogel, Pueblo County LEAD
Ryan Tsipis, Colorado Naloxone Project
Kailey Meardon, Southeast Health Group
Madeleine Evanoff, BCPH Works Program
Steve Koester, Retired Professor of Anthropology
Georgia Babatsikos, Boulder County Public Health
Keaton Sheagley, Southern Colorado Harm Reduction Association
JCPH: Miranda Thompson, Annie Nolan
CDPHE: Megan Canon, Erin Flynn, Jericho Dorsey
SLV AHEC: Charlotte Ledonne, Denise Lobato
AmeriCorps/Vista: Marlee Yost-Wolff, Pat Bebie, Liz Burnham
Consortium Staff: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Jessica Eaddy, Jen Place, Susanna Cooper, Jamie Feld, Lindsey Simbeye, Michael Davidson, Rosemarie MacDowell

Absent: See attached listing.

Co-Chair Sam Bourdon called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the May 2020 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Colorado Naloxone Project Update (Ryan Tsipis):

Ryan Tsipis, Project Manager for the Colorado Naloxone Project, provided a brief update. They are currently creating a toolkit, which will include resources for hospitals enrolled in the program. They have established a leadership committee comprised of a representative from each enrolled hospital. The committee's first meeting was held on July 1st. They currently have 4,000 naloxone kits (injectables) that were donated and will be used for uninsured patients. They are also working with labor and delivery units to begin a pilot program for at-risk pregnant patients. Pilot program advertising will begin in August. For additional information and a map showing enrolled hospitals:

<http://naloxoneproject.com/>

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1pSkz1vai51gs4mS7N7am6vztMF1xfub&usp=sharing>

Questions/Comments:

Sam mentioned the Colorado Perinatal Care Collaborative as a potential pilot program contact for Ryan. Ryan indicated they have already been in touch with them.

Jefferson County Public Health (Miranda Thompson):

Miranda Thompson is the Homeless Outreach Coordinator for Jeffco. She spoke about issues harm reduction patients have been encountering with law enforcement because some law enforcement personnel consider the supplies provided to the patients as items that can be confiscated. They have not as yet addressed this issue with the local district attorney. Chris Stock recommended that Jeffco contact Lisa Raville at the Harm Reduction Action Center in Denver. Lisa is very knowledgeable in the harm reduction area and any exemption laws that exist.

Jose suggested finding out how widespread the issue is before considering any actions related to potential policy changes, such as increasing education and training or clarifying a state policy.

Madeline Evanoff suggested that there is a benefit to working from top down, i.e., enlisting the assistance of the local district attorney. She said the law is vague and can be misinterpreted. She has only heard of one person who was charged. Jose suggested he could contact the district attorney, Alexis King.

Georgia Babatsikos, Boulder County Public Health, said individuals they work with carry a card with them and that educating law enforcement is an important component of the program. Mike Nerenberg also talked about his experiences with Pueblo law enforcement.

Jamie Feld pointed out the importance of statewide education rather than focusing on specific regions.

[CO Rev Stat § 18-18-430.5 \(2016\)](#)

A person shall be exempt from the provisions of sections 18-18-425 to 18-18-430 if he or she is participating as an employee, volunteer, or participant in an approved syringe exchange program created pursuant to section 25-1-520, C.R.S.

<https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/olls/crs2016-title-18.pdf>

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/DrugParaphanailia.pdf>

Work group members discussed the exempted items listed in the legislation, the importance of communicating with local district attorney's offices, and the potential for patients encountering issues in counties of the state that have more conservative law enforcement agencies.

Jose suggested that any new legislative language recommended would have to be drafted by the work group by November. The issue could then be addressed with legislators who might be willing to assist. Jessica indicated that she could look into other states to see how their legislatures have handled the issue. She also provided the following links:

Oregon paraphernalia statute:

https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors_475.525

<https://www.networkforphl.org/news-insights/ensuring-access-to-clean-needles-can-save-lives-but-legal-barriers-persist/>

It was suggested the work group establish subcommittees to focus on drafting language by November. Subcommittees could also identify other priority topics for the Behavioral Health Task Force meeting in the summer. \$500,000 in funding is available for harm reduction purposes and another \$2 million for syringe access programs.

The Behavioral Health Recovery Act provided for the establishment of this Behavioral Health Task Force. After the task force meets this summer, they will write a report for submission to the legislature. The ISC will be meeting next year.

Work group members discussed funding priorities:

- Syringe access programs for rural counties. Chaffee County has approval from their county commissioners to explore a pilot program. Durango has started their own informal program.
- Funding for drug checking equipment and fentanyl strips. The equipment is exempted in the paraphernalia laws.
- HIV and Hep C testing in syringe access programs.
- Naloxone for non-medical organizations. The transit department in Pueblo needs naloxone.
- A SAP in every region of the state or mail order services.

Member Updates:

Steve Koestler is working on a digital story project funded by the State Health Department. The videos will feature individuals who have successfully reversed overdoses and saved lives using naloxone. The videos are intended to reduce stigma and increase awareness and the availability of naloxone. The project is currently recruiting individuals to tell their stories. A \$250 gift card will be provided to participants. <https://clas.ucdenver.edu/anthropology/digital-storytelling-project>

Marlee Yost-Wolff and Liz Burnham are organizing a 5K race to raise overdose awareness. The event will take place on August 22nd and 31st during Overdose Awareness Month. For additional information: ioad5k.colorado@gmail.com

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeZzol_KI_bhrzBQJW-0oc_SdIYMiAd5Khlmh-soO0qn8Q68g/viewform?usp=sf_link

Overdose Awareness Day events statewide:

<https://www.endoverdoseco.com/>

There is still a lot of work to be done regarding the availability of naloxone and syringes. It is now legal for pharmacists or pharmacy technicians to dispense syringes anywhere in the state. Susanna suggested further discussion offline regarding education needs.

The CHAPP board will be meeting regarding funds distribution. Grantees would benefit from attending the meeting. <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/chapp>

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 14, 2021 from 1–2 p.m.

Attachments:

Work group roster

Other chat comments:

- Mike Nerenberg: A number of our participants ask for an injectable, thinking it is more effective than the nasal. Education is needed.
- Gina Olberding: @Access Point Pueblo you can contact the harm reduction facility in Pueblo <https://www.socoharmreduction.org/>
- Quinn: The drug checking FTIR machine is not paraphernalia in Colorado.
- Chris Stock: Just an FYI about the Colorado Pharmacists Association -- they only represent and have attendance by less than 10% if all licensed pharmacists in the state. Getting the Board of Pharmacy to do some outreach and education would be amazing to fill that gap.
- Patrick Bebie: Just a quick update -- should be starting the program to get fentanyl test strips into retail paraphernalia shops in Pueblo within the next two weeks. I would encourage other organizations to speak with retail shop owners to see if they are interested in carrying harm reduction materials.