

## Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

### Criminal Justice Response Work Group Meeting Minutes

July 14, 2021 via Zoom

#### **Present:**

Jenny Wood, Co-chair  
Mike Nerenberg, MD, SCHRA, PDPHE  
Susanna Velie, Christlife Ministries  
Ernest Bilinski, CDPHE  
Doug Hanshaw, State Judicial  
Cassandra Rocha, City & County of Denver  
Edna Hendershot, City of Westminster  
Jack Patterson, Colorado AHEC  
Kyle Gustafson, Colorado Judicial Branch  
OBH: Kelly Russell, Donda Gorton  
AmeriCorps: Ryan Etwiler, Matthew Martinez  
Amanda Myers, Carol Peeples, Janet Robertson  
Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Tyler Payne, Jen Place, Jessica Eaddy, Jamie Feld, Michael Davidson, Rosemarie MacDowell

**Absent:** See attached roster.

Co-chair Jenny Wood called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

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

A motion was made to approve the May 2021 work group meeting minutes. Motion passed.

#### **Remerg Presentation (Carol Peeples)**

Carol Peeples provided information regarding a website launched in 2016 that provides information for individuals involved in the justice system. <https://remerg.com/>  
The website is intended to foster better outcomes for individuals who have been incarcerated. The website serves approximately 2,500 Colorado-based users per month. A call line was recently added, which also serves family members. The site provides information regarding over 1,100 resources related to health and treatment, housing, jobs, and other services. They also plan to include helpful videos, which will be provided for use within the jail system.

#### **Comments/Questions:**

Jose Esquibel suggested other potentially useful contacts for Carol, including JBBS, Allyson Gottsman, and others.

Kelly Russell mentioned that she had tried to include the site within Jeffco jails in the past, but their IT Department indicated there was an issue with preventing use beyond the specific website. Carol indicated that the jail-based videos would provide a solution to this issue.

Work group members discussed other ways to expand the website reach. For additional questions or comments, Carol can be reached via email: [carol@remerg.com](mailto:carol@remerg.com)

### **Support of Veterans:**

Jenny Wood spoke about a friend who had served in the Gulf War. When he returned from active service, he was encouraged to become a first responder. As a result of his employment, he had a mental health crisis and quit his job. She said that this is not an isolated case and questioned how many others may experience the same issues because the trauma they experienced during their military service was not properly addressed.

Jessica Eaddy agreed and pointed out that there is an association between PTSD, substance use disorders, and homelessness. Traumatic brain injuries can contribute to the issue. She would like to see this problem addressed, but said that many of the work group objectives may already be handled within the VA system.

Emily Richardson asked if the VA justice liaison program still exists and, if so, that it might be worth engaging someone from that program.

Amanda Myers mentioned her experience working with veterans in court in the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. She currently serves on the Warrior Now Board of Directors. Eighty-one percent of justice-involved veterans have a substance use disorder, 25% have been identified as having a behavioral health diagnosis, one in five suffer from either a mental health diagnosis or cognitive impairment, one in six Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from substance use disorder, 50 percent suffer from PTSD and do not receive treatment, and 181,000 veterans in the US are currently incarcerated. Kelly indicated that it is difficult to obtain VA services for those veterans who have been dishonorably discharged. There are a number of non-profit organizations in Colorado trying to assist veterans.

Jamie Feld said it was important to consider veterans within the larger segment of individuals suffering from substance use disorder.

Jenny said she and Tyler would discuss the possibility of setting up a smaller subcommittee to address the veteran population.

### **Work Group Goals:**

Tyler Payne reviewed the work group's current strategy map. Updates include information obtained from the recent work group survey.

### **Comments/Question:**

Veteran concerns should be part of an overall target population with issues related to the criminal justice system.

Work in Colorado is continuing at the state level rather than with the congressional delegation. There isn't a work group addressing issues at the federal level. A group could be formed if others would like to establish one. The Consortium could assist.

Goals and objectives can evolve into actionable items such as legislative policy recommendations, promotion of a particular practice, or recommended solutions for targeted issues.

Work group goals from the preceding meeting were discussed:

1. Jail to community peer recovery support prior to leaving Detention.
2. Learning about models that reduce the number of people with mental health and substance use disorders in the criminal justice system (continuation of the SIM presentation).
3. Identifying funding sources for these programs.
4. Encouraging legislators to support these programs.
5. Including peers in the criminal justice system (diversion programs, decriminalizing possession and use of drugs, increasing alternative responses to non-crime law enforcement responses, mental health and similar calls).
6. Support services for prisoners re-entering society
7. Training services for those dealing with justice involved people to ensure that best practices are followed.
8. Adequate funding for services.
9. Re-entry, diversion, SUD.
10. Housing, peer support, and treatment access.
11. Community support for reintegration following incarceration; support, and resources for jails doing MAT and encouragement for others to start.
12. Training and guidance for law enforcement
13. In-house treatment/recovery services for incarcerated individuals.
14. Re-entry navigator focused on treatment/recovery resources.
15. Advocacy, knowledge sharing, and networking to learn about resources to support jails.

The above-mentioned goals will be added to an interactive Google document.

### **Announcements:**

OBH is currently looking into how recent funding will be distributed. Updates will be provided at a future meeting.

Mike Nerenberg said there were over 90,000 overdose deaths recorded last year, a 30% increase over the previous year. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

13,000 fentanyl pills were confiscated in Colorado Springs on Tuesday, July 13<sup>th</sup>.

The work group is still seeking a co-chair. Suggestions can be emailed to Tyler Payne: [tyler.payne@cuanschultz.edu](mailto:tyler.payne@cuanschultz.edu)

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m. The next work group meeting will be held on August 11, 2021 from 11 to noon.

Attachments: Work group roster