

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Benzodiazepine Action Work Group Meeting Minutes

July 2, 2024 via Zoom

Present:

Madison Zang, Co-chair

Amanda McBarron, Barbara Connolly, Brian Watkins, Jake Ressler, J.C. Curle, Jess Angleson, John Staight, Rachel Mascaro, Sneha Varanasi, Terri Schreiber, Terry Lynn, Trina Faatz, Wendy Jo Cole

Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Shayna Micucci, Jennifer Mackender, Jessica Eaddy, Teresa Cantwell

Absent: See attached roster.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the June 2024 meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Work Group Mission and Norms:

Program Manager Shayna Micucci reviewed the work group's mission and norms:

Mission:

Increase benzodiazepine safety through education and informed prescribing and deprescribing practices.

Norms:

- Introductions to include pronouns and other vital details.
- All work group participants remain muted until speaking.
- The Zoom hand feature, or chat, to be used when possible to share information.
- Allow other meeting participants to finish their thoughts before speaking.
- Ensure space for new ideas, comments, and people.
- Focus discussions on actionable efforts.

Sneha Varanasi, School of Pharmacy:

Sneha Varanasi is a School of Pharmacy student working on a graduate project that requires some assistance from the work group. Jose Esquibel asked work group members to respond in the meeting chat if they are interested in assisting.

Project Details: The project aims to assess pharmacist awareness specific to the long-term withdrawal effects of benzodiazepines and knowledge of Benzodiazepine Induced Neurological Dysfunction (BIND) and the updated FDA black box warning. The results will eventually be compared with physician awareness, a project of Dr. Ritvo's. Sneha would like to interview work group members who have previously used benzodiazepines and are now experiencing withdrawal effects. She asked those interested in interviews to post their emails in the meeting chat.

The following members responded to Sneha's request:

- John Staight: john.staight@gmail.com
- Jake Ressler: resslerj@iu.edu
- Madison Zang: madisonzang36@gmail.com
- Barbara Connolly: Barbara.Connolly.31@gmail.com
- Terry Lynn: Terryandlloyd@gmail.com
- Jess Angleson: Jessica.angleson@gmail.com
- Rachel Mascaro: rmascaro37@yahoo.com

Sneha will ask members to review the survey questions and make recommendations for additional questions. sneha.varanasi@cuanschutz.edu

2024/2025 FY Subgroups and Schedule:

Every other month meetings (beginning in September) will include breakout sessions to discuss specific projects such as the resource guide, provider education, and peer training.

Resource Guide (Madison Zang): The resource guide will be posted on the work group's webpage. The guide will include "user friendly" information with links to helpful information. Guide discussions will continue at future meetings.

Provider Education (Shayna Micucci): Future Zoom meetings may include a breakout session for provider education.

Peer Training (Shayna Micucci): This group is currently full.

Work group members were asked to email Madison if they are interested in participating in the resource guide project and Shayna if they are interested in the provider education project.
madisonzang36@gmail.com
shayna.mucucci@cuanschutz.edu

The August work group meeting will include more information about the above projects.

Training Updates (Shayna Micucci):

Year one training has been completed. There will be a break over the summer months. A post-meeting attendee listening session is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, July 10th from 11 to 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. All training attendees will be invited to attend to provide feedback about the training sessions they attended. An evaluation will be conducted after the session to determine the following: inclusion of a wider professional audience, marketing strategies, module content.

Member Updates:

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) has made available for public comment a draft of its *Clinical Practice Guideline on Benzodiazepine Tapering*. The deadline to submit comments is July 19, 2024.

https://www.asam.org/quality-care/clinical-guidelines/benzodiazepine-tapering?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ASAM%20Weekly%2062524&utm_content=ASAM%20Weekly%2062524+CID_1e1902b979e432f2587bd3eb71b25a94&utm_source=Email%20Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=here

Helpful BIC links pertaining to the guidelines:

<https://youtu.be/ByCn4PKUcP4?>

<https://www.benzoinfo.com/2024/07/01/asam-potential-comments/>

<https://www.benzoinfo.com/2024/07/02/cta-asam-comment/>

<https://www.benzoinfo.com/2024/07/02/all-about/>

2024 Colorado Pharmacists Society Annual Meeting BIND Presentation (Terri Schreiber):

The presentation went very well and lasted for about 50 minutes. Terri said the audience was very responsive. Most of the pharmacists in the audience had no prior knowledge of BIND.

Jess Angleson said she had heard very positive feedback, and the presentation was well received.

Barbara Connolly mentioned that the BIND research survey did not distinguish between those who are on benzodiazepines from those who are also on other psychotropics.

The work group discussed the training content for pharmacists. John Staight said he had never had a pharmacist (or doctor) tell him that benzodiazepines are only meant to be taken for two to four weeks in the entire 30 years he was prescribed them.

Informed Consent Document: <https://corxconsortium.org/work-groups/benzodiazepine/>

J.C. Curle: BIC contributed to an article in the UK “Telegraph.” <https://archive.ph/rn9ct>

Barbara Connolly: A pharmacist in Australia is developing an app for tapering called “Tapermate.” The pharmacist will be speaking about the app at an upcoming Benzo Warriors event on July 30th. For information: Barbara.Connolly.31@gmail.com
<https://www.benzowarrior.com/>

D.E. Foster: D spoke about the increased incidence of protracted benzodiazepine recovery related to COVID or other co-morbidities as well as COVID neurological dysfunction. He suggested the work group investigate this further. He asked work group members to contact him if they come across any information related to COVID and neurological issues as he plans to collect data and create a resource list. foster@easinganxiety.com
J.C. said that BIC will be addressing the issue of benzodiazepines and COVID.

John Staight: John mentioned the lack of appropriate treatment venues for people needing to taper benzodiazepines. Jose suggested this topic could be raised with the Colorado Hospital Association and eventually to the legislature. John said he would be willing to assist. D mentioned that a clinic was one of the original work group ideas discussed with Alexis Ritvo.

Gina Olberding said this need has been considered by Alexis Ritvo; however, funding such a clinic remains a challenge. The Consortium's provider education continues to be a short-term way to inform physicians of tapering protocols. <https://corxconsortium.org/resources/cme/> Shayna mentioned that personnel from an ER had also attended a peer course.

The 2025 Rx and Illicit Drug Summit is now accepting proposals. The deadline for submissions is August 5th.

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 6, 2024 from Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Attachments: Work group roster