

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Benzodiazepine Action Work Group Meeting Minutes

August 3, 2021 via Zoom

Present:

Alexis Ritvo, MD, Co-chair

Steve Wright, MD

Christopher Schultz, MD

Christy Huff, MD

J.C. Curle

Patricia Stroud

Denise Vincioni

Becky Barnhart

Trina Faatz

Bernard Silvernail

Terri Schreiber

Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Jen Place, Jessica Eaddy, Jamie Feld, Lindsey Simbeye, Rosemarie MacDowell

Absent: See attached list.

Co-Chair Alexis Ritvo called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the July 2021 meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Subcommittee Updates:

- Peer Support: The document has been finalized and is awaiting approval.
- Deprescribing Committee: The document is still available for comments before being finalized.
- Prescribing Committee: The document is still being edited.

Comments:

Steve Wright suggested reviewing references before the documents are finalized next month. The three documents will then be formatted and include the Consortium and other appropriate logos. Documents will be kept to two pages.

The guidance documents are intended to educate providers as well as patients.

Steve said he used readability software to determine the reading level for the documents (Grade 15), which is consistent with other opioid related material. This level might prove to be a challenge for a number of individuals.

Alexis mentioned that the work group had decided not to participate in World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day, but would organize a media event some time in October. The event will include Rob Valuck and others. The event is intended to bring awareness to the issues related to benzodiazepine use. The guidance documents will be available at the event.

Gina Olberding offered graphic design help from the Consortium. The documents will also be posted on the Consortium website.

Discussion SB 21-1276 Prevention of Substance Use Disorders

Work group participants discussed the bill sections related to benzodiazepines.
https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2021a_1276_signed.pdf

Version shared prior to the rule-making meeting:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zhm22Tak4wGRSQGGpJgg5QuQ8_PnUWdr/view

A summary of all of the benzodiazepine references in the bill will be added to Google Drive.

Jose mentioned how the efforts of the work group were instrumental in much of the policy changes contained within the bill. He also mentioned funding that will be available for provider education. Jose suggested following up with Dmitry Kunin at DORA regarding the rulemaking process and when changes will become effective. Additional input from the work group will be likely, including references to the guidance documents produced by the work group. Education related to exceptions (such as epilepsy) will also be necessary. Work group members could collaborate with the Epilepsy Foundation.

Possible Disorder Name - Benzodiazepine Induced Neurological Disorder (BIND):

Steve mentioned a study that demonstrated naming fibromyalgia as a disorder resulted in the reduction of pain. Bernard Silvernail said the term “benzodiazepine-induced neurological disorder” is a term used in New Zealand for insurance purposes. Steve felt it would be of great value to have a specific name for this benzodiazepine disorder and include basic criteria describing what it is. It could then be introduced into the literature and guidance documents along with the time frame for experiencing such a disorder (three months to six months).

J.C. Curle said that she and others had looked into a possible ICD code, but that it was complicated. She suggested patients might use the term loosely with neurologists and then encounter hostility and dismissal. She also suggested researching neurological databases for other drugs that might have a similar disorder. She provided the following link:
<https://www.benzoinfo.com/2019/09/23/benzo-induced-harm-the-nameless-problem/>

The work group discussed next steps, including the requirements for establishing a disorder name and the criteria for supporting it. It was agreed that a sub-work group would be established to study the matter and return to the work group with a recommendation.

Announcements:

Jen Place, Program Manager for the Consortium Treatment Work Group, announced that the work group would be meeting again on Thursday, September 23rd from 12 to 1 p.m. and would like to include an informal benzodiazepine presentation at the meeting. Either Steve Young or

Angela Bonaguidi, Treatment Work Group Co-chairs, will be reaching out to the work group to arrange for the presentation.

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 from noon to 1 p.m.

Attachments: Work Group Roster

Other Links:

Peer Support Committee document:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YF79Jev84jblW5SX754IQaXcD3HIW1Zj/view?usp=sharing>

Prescribing Committee document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V3njOsMpKiJ8TR9el43uH5OAiocnVQ3Nb6UJNr9IILo/edit?usp=sharing>

Deprescribing Committee: document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q9RhilRtWnpbVZht8TlnJtg-64k6FbuyX9wqgCWkls0/edit>

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Link to all Google Doc folders:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UnCntmyBu-uANbcOLq_79Orl069Q9xGO?usp=sharing