

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Harm Reduction Work Group Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2024 via Zoom

Participants:

Maggie Seldeen and Zack Jenio, Co-Chairs
Abigail Smedly, Chaffee County Public Health
Becky Milanski, Boulder County Public Health
Carrie Paulson, Raleigh's Cause
Coreen Johnson, Young People in Recovery
Elicia Chacon, Arapahoe County Public Health
Erika Greenberg, Centennial Area Health Education Center
Gabriella Turnbull, ke'nekt
Laurie Konsella, Health & Human Services
Lucrecia Medrano, Yarrow Collective
Melissa Chizmar, Southern Colorado Health Network
Nathan Aguilar, La Plata County
Nikki Wagner, CU Anschutz
Rachel Wachowski, Community Member
Shelly Marie, Health District of Northern Larimer County
Sierra Roe, La Plata County Public Health
CDPHE: Cody Brown, Haley Klein, Kaleigh Kessel, Sophie Feffer, Teresa Will
Consortium: Jose Esquibel, Gina Olberding, Jessica Eaddy, Eric Barker, Hilary Bryant, Jen Place, Jennifer Mackender, Michael Davidson, Shayna Micucci, Teresa Cantwell

Absent: See attached work group roster.

Co-chair Maggie Seldeen called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. She introduced new co-chair Zack Jenio. Zack is a program manager at Mile High Behavioral Healthcare working in the field of harm reduction.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the May 2024 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Discussion of Good Samaritan Law and Revisions Required:

Sierra Roe recently met with her local county commissioner to discuss gaps that exist in the Good Samaritan Law. The commissioner asked to meet with her to become more educated about the law and its effects.

Coreen Braden, Eric Barker, and Sierra met several weeks ago and compiled a draft of questions for distribution to people using drugs. Coreen asked meeting participants to review and comment on the questions.

Eric said the intent is to put together information on a temporary basis pending plans for more formal education and training.

Jessica Eaddy and Jose Esquibel have held discussions with Jeffrey Reister, AG's office, about the best way to disseminate information about the Good Samaritan Law to law enforcement.

The Consortium has a good working relationship with the County Sheriffs of Colorado, which could provide another distribution channel.

Coreen reviewed the draft comments. A link to the document is provided below.

Comments/suggestions:

- The main reason for the document is to collect information from the target audience, i.e., people who are using drugs. The language should not be traumatizing.
- The disclaimer should indicate that people are free to respond only to questions they are comfortable answering.
- Respondents should be asked about their familiarity with the Good Samaritan Law and what they think is the primary purpose of the law.
- Maggie Seldeen: Different audiences require different messaging. Use of the word “overdose” is very “trauma informed.” Use of the term “drug poisoning” is more stigmatizing than the word “overdose.”
- Michael Davidson: Law enforcement is a specialized audience; credibility and department and state policies are factors to consider.
- Gina Olberding: Add drop down categories for responses.
- Eric Barker: The document could have different applications, such as in a harm reduction or syringe access venue as a “check in” to be completed.
- Coreen Braden: The document could be sent via automated text message to people who register with YPR.
- Maggie Seldeen: There could be a multiple choice response option.
- Jose Esquibel: Check boxes with questions.
- Michael Davidson: Add a personal experience question (have you ever been in a situation where you or someone else experienced an overdose; did the Good Samaritan Law impact the situation? Did you call the police? If not, why not?)
- Coreen Braden: Have you ever witnessed a substance use related medical emergency or, specifically, an opioid related medical emergency?
- Maggie Seldeen: Ask what do you think is the purpose of the Good Samaritan Law? Have you heard of it? Have you witnessed someone experiencing an overdose? Did you call 911? If not, why not?
- Eric Barker: If they say they are not familiar with the law, a link to the law could be added.
- Nikki Wagner: Open text fields do not provide good data on surveys as they are rarely filled out and, if they are, it's rarely useful. If you have selected all that apply response options, consider yes/no responses for each option. If all that apply is selected, you won't know if it was not selected because it's missed or because they didn't select it.
- Sierra Roe: We want to make it as trauma informed as possible and not ask traumatic questions without having the ability/capacity to dive deeper into the situation with the participant. It makes more sense to keep it simply worded.
- Sophie Feffer: Are you all planning to incentivize this survey? Who will administer it? Would it be an interview or just folks filling out the form?
- Jen Place: We could use Qualtrics through the University. It has "skip logic" which can enable the if yes, then...; if no, then.... I think a lot of these questions, at least how they are currently listed, could be Likert scales as well.

- Maggie Seldeen: I wonder if it could be “Have you ever witnessed a medical emergency?” followed by a multiple choice question on how people responded and/or if they called 911.
- Gabriella Turnbull: I’ve heard people call it “drug poisoning” but that can be kind of a convoluted term.
- Teresa Will: Have you reversed an overdose? Did you call 911? Why or why not? Did the Good Samaritan law impact your decision to call 911 or not?
- Becky Milanski: I have not yet had a participant who was triggered by using the word “overdose.” Has someone heard a drug user say something?
- Coreen Braden: A survey or questionnaire specifically for law enforcement might be appropriate. If use of the word “overdose” is triggering, what is a good alternative?
- Sierra Roe: Keep in mind these surveys are going to be given to a lot of SAPs, which is very “street outreach” centered.
- Jessica Eaddy: Should the document be shorter?
- Eric Barker: I would like to see it a bit shorter; include the option of not responding to some of the questions.
- Coreen Braden: Some self-care ideas could be mentioned if people are feeling triggered by the questionnaire.
- Zac Jenio: There could be multiple versions/lengths, particularly if there is enough time to actually sit down with someone.
- Eric Barker: Add a question that asks if anyone has been present during an event and not called 911 because of a prior experience.
- Jessica Eaddy: Ask about barriers that were encountered, i.e., did they call and then have a friend arrested? This information could then be shared with law enforcement.

Maggie suggested it might be possible to establish a subcommittee rather than hold discussions during a work group meeting. The subcommittee could meet before the end of September or prior to the annual meeting in October. She asked meeting participants to note their emails in the chat if they are interested in being involved in the meetings.

Eric suggested the following timeline for completion of the document:

- Draft for additional comments: AG’s conference September 30th
- Final version in time for the Consortium annual meeting on October 31st.

Link to document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bZ3iRG1vbxXan729thYCTPT7YA29GtqZn8HeRIhq5g/edit?u=serstoinvite=josesquibel@gmail.com&sharingaction=manageaccess&role=writer>.

Pueblo SAP Case Update:

Syringe access programs are still allowed to operate within the Pueblo city limits and services have not been interrupted. There is still some concern that the decision may be appealed. A copy of the District Court Judge’s Order is attached to the minutes.

A representative from the Network for Public Health Law (possibly Amy Lieberman) may be speaking during the Consortium annual meeting harm reduction breakout session. This organization wrote the amicus brief for the Pueblo case. Discussions during the breakout session could potentially inform policy changes in 2025.

Jose explained that the judge's ruling was based on Colorado's Home Rule Statute, not the merits of harm reduction. The state statute takes precedence over local ordinances. Since there isn't a formal definition of syringe service programs in the state statutes, there may be work to be done in the future to address this lack. The City of Pueblo may still attempt to enact some restrictions related to how certain services are provided.

Sophie Feffer mentioned CDPHE funded programs that state organizations receiving direct funding or no cost materials must operate on a needs-based distribution, which is in line with CDC suggestions for syringe access programs.

CDPHE Standards for HIV/STI/VH Prevention and Harm Reduction Services:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qASKKpcrqZ-0-PatSydhWjnYcmAiwJb/view>

Jessica Eaddy said that Arvada might have considered a similar SAP ban. An anti-harm reduction group exists in Denver: Safe & Clean: <https://www.safeandcleanddenver.com/>

ACLU "District Court Judge Rules Against New Ordinance" <https://www.aclu-co.org/en/press-releases/district-court-judge-rules-against-new-ordinance-syringe-exchange-programs-can>

City and County of Denver Rules & Regulations Governing Syringe Access and Treatment Referral Programs dated February 7, 2019: https://denvergov.org/files/assets/public/v/1/public-health-and-environment/documents/bphe/2-7-19_rulesregs_governingsyringe-accessprograms.pdf

Member Updates (OPC, IOAD and Week of Solidarity/Grief):

A syringe access program conference was held recently in Blackhawk

Young People in Recovery is organizing a panel of people who have lived experience with the medical field, i.e., ER visits for substance use disorder. They will address how they were treated. First and second year medical students from Rocky Vista University will be in the audience.

The Yarrow Collective is hosting their first annual MAT 5K run in Fort Collins. Registration: https://docs.google.com/forms/u/1/d/e/1FAIpQLSfiSBbeg_UXrRuDd0rIMSe5IW1IWGQ15VTAkw_o7yaPVp-3olq/viewform?usp=send_form

Access Point organized several events for Overdose Awareness Day, including outreach in Dorchester Park where there are many encampments. Sharps and ID cards were distributed. Narcan training was held at a local yoga studio. Serenity Recovery Connection distributed Narcan and test strips at a memorial event.

Eric Barker attended an event in Montrose that featured chairs to symbolize each overdose in Montrose County last year.

Nikki Wagner is working on a grant to implement Narcan vending machines and kiosks in three communities with 24-hour access in some locations. Denver Health is in support of the program. Vending machines are currently located in Summit County and are planned for Pueblo. Work group participants discussed the importance of not disposing of expired naloxone, which can still be used safely.

The Consortium Annual meeting will be held on Thursday, October 31st in the Health Sciences Building, Anschutz Campus. In-person and virtual attendance options are available.
Registration link: <https://corxconsortium.org/2024-annual-meeting/>

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 12, 2024.

Attachments: Work group roster, District Court Order