

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Treatment Work Group Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2021 via Zoom

PRESENT:

Steve Young, MD, Co-Chair

Angela Bonaguidi, Co-chair,

Tyler Coyle, MD, ARTS Adult Outpatient Program

D.E. Foster, Co-chair, Benzodiazepine Action Work Group

Heather Ihrig, NCHA COSLAW

Ernest Bilinski, CDPHE

Jane McCulloch, Colorado Health Network

Stephanie Salkin, OBH

Sara Gallo, Care on Location

Consortium: Gina Olberding, Jen Place, Susanna Cooper, Jessica Eaddy, Rosemarie MacDowell

ABSENT: See attached roster.

Co-chair Angela Bonaguidi called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

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

Co-chair Updates:

Angela Bonaguidi provided the following updates:

(1) OBH: 2-1-1 Colorado to Make Behavioral Health Referrals:

OBH announced a new partnership with 2-1-1 Colorado that will connect unemployed Coloradans with behavioral health resources across the state. Providers have been asked to take the following actions to ensure that 2-1-1 has accurate and up-to-date information about their organizations.

- Add information to the 2-1-1 Colorado Database through [this form](#) or by contacting the 2-1-1 Colorado Resource Team at 303.561.2112 or 211database@unitedwaydenver.org.
- Be prepared to answer questions if contacted by a 2-1-1 resource specialist assisting clients.

(2) OBH: CDHS Executive Director Michelle Barnes Update on BHA Model

After months of research and discussion, the [Behavioral Health Reform Committee](#) is continuing to identify the elements of the proposed Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) model that will put people first. Michelle Barnes, Executive Director of the CDHS and chair of the Behavioral Health Reform Executive Committee, gave an update on the Committee's work during a Colorado Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF) summit last week. [View the presentation slides.](#)

(3) OBH: DUI Telehealth Services and On-Site Licensing Update

On July 8, Governor Jared Polis ended the Health Emergency Executive Orders for COVID-19 and rescinded all previous Executive Orders issued due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On August 6, the State Board of Human Services adopted a rule change allowing DUI services to be provided using video technology and granting CDHS the discretion to determine if a remote licensing visit is applicable. All adopted changes were effective immediately and will be considered for permanent adoption at the September 3 State Board of Human Services meeting. This emergency rule change reestablishes access to needed behavioral health services for individuals who cannot readily go to a facility for in-person treatment. [View the rule changes here.](#)

(4) OBH: The Office of Behavioral Health is seeking public comment on Colorado's combined mental health and substance use federal block grant application for Federal Fiscal Years 2022-23. Mandated by Congress, the non-competitive block grants provide funding to states for substance use and mental health services. Colorado submits a combined behavioral health assessment and plan every two years to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). States are required to use block grant program funds for prevention, treatment, recovery supports and other services that will supplement services covered by Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance.

SAMHSA requires OBH to provide public notice on the proposed use of block grant funds. OBH has already incorporated research from expert staff and recommendations from the patient- and family-led Colorado Behavioral Health Planning and Advisory Council. Interested stakeholders are invited to comment. The [feedback form](#) for public comment on the application will be open for 30 days, or until October 1. OBH will consider all comments and requests that are allowable uses of the funds within state and federal regulations.

(5) Department of Regulatory Agencies:

On June 30, 2021, Governor Jared Polis signed [HB21-1305 Mental Health Practice Act](#). Effective July 1, 2021, the bill clarifies the title use restrictions for certified addiction specialists, certified addiction technicians, and addiction counselor candidates; clarifies the scope of practice of licensed addiction counselors; clarifies the educational requirements and hours of practice required to be certified or licensed as an addiction counselor; authorizes a duly licensed or certified addiction counselor to provide clinical supervision to individuals working toward certification or licensure, as specified in the bill; expands the scope of practice of a certified addiction technician to include facilitating psycho-education and therapy groups under appropriate supervision; and updates the continuing professional competency program.

Gov. Polis signed [HB21-1085 Secure Transportation Behavioral Health Crisis](#) on June 27, 2021. This bill defines secure transportation services as urgent transportation services provided to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis and provides specific scenarios that are included in, and excluded from, the definition. By January 1, 2023, the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing must create a benefit for secure transportation services. After January 1, 2023, this bill requires secure transportation services to be licensed by a county's board of commissioners in order to provide urgent transportation to an emergency medical services facility, a mental health treatment facility, an approved alcohol and substance abuse treatment center, or a walk-in crisis center for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The minimum requirements for licensing will be set via rules adopted by the State Board of Health in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

[HB21-1123 CAPS Checks For Substantiated Mistreatment of At-Risk Adults](#) takes effect on September 1, 2021 and, most notably, requires information sharing between the Department of Human Services (DHS), county departments of human services, and the Division of Professions and Occupations (DPO) if a regulated professional was found to have a substantiated case of mistreatment of an at-risk adult in the course of their professional duties. Review the bill or [full bill summary](#) for important additional information.

[SB21-077 Remove Lawful Presence Verification Credentialing](#), most notably, specifies that the verification of lawful presence is not required of an applicant for a license, certificate, or registration to practice a regulated profession, and removes such requirements from the Department of Education and the Department of Regulatory Agencies. This law takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the 90-day period after final adjournment. Review the bill or [full bill summary](#) for important additional information.

(6) The State Boards will hold a Permanent Rulemaking Hearing to allow stakeholders a final opportunity to provide feedback before the Board considers adopting revisions to Rule 1.8(B), to implement Colorado Senate Bill 21-077 (Concerning the elimination of verification of an individual's lawful presence in the United States as a requirement for individual credentialing).

- LPC Hearing Information: Friday, September 10, 2021, at 12:00 P.M. (MDT)
- LCSW Hearing Information: Friday, September 17, 2021, at 9:30 A.M. (MDT)
- CAC Hearing Information: Tuesday, October 5, 2021, at 9:30 A.M. (MDT)

(7) DORA: Both federal and Colorado state law provide protections for consumers accessing mental and behavioral health services. The guide, currently available as a downloadable document, [the Mental and Behavioral Health Parity Guide](#), produced by DORA's Division of Insurance, provides an overview for consumers and providers on mental health parity law.

Concomitant Use of Benzodiazepines & Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Presentation (Tyler Coyle, MD):

A copy of Dr. Coyle's presentation is attached to the minutes. Presentation highlights:

- Benzodiazepines are controlled substances for treatment of anxiety, seizure, insomnia, muscle spasticity, and for opioid use disorder maintenance therapy.
- Both opioids and benzodiazepines (to a lesser extent) slow breathing and are central nervous system depressants.
- There is a synergistic effect when benzodiazepines are combined with opioids.
- According to 2019 data, patients are being prescribed both benzodiazepines and opioids at an increased rate.
- Overdose deaths involving benzodiazepines by opioid involvement are increasing.
- Benzodiazepine prescribing has increased over time.

Treating Benzodiazepine Injury Syndrome (D.E. Foster):

A full copy of D.E. Foster's is attached to minutes.

Comments:

- It is difficult to find a medical provider to help patients with tapering, in particular a provider with knowledge of a slow tapering schedule.
- There is a diverse reaction among patients to drugs prescribed for benzodiazepine withdrawal.
- There is a paucity of information available related to efficacy of supplements.
- Benzodiazepine tapering takes up a lot of provider and staff time, especially for primary care providers. Patients need a lot of support, which would require setting up a full implementation protocol for staff.

Consortium Announcements:

- Consortium Annual Meeting - October 28, 2021.
- The Provider Education Symposium – October 29, 2021
- Grant-writing support is available for non-profits/non-governmental entities with priority given to agencies serving rural and/or marginalized communities.

Adjournment and Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m. The next work group meeting will be held on Thursday, December 2, 2021 from 12–1:00 p.m.

Attachments: Work Group Roster, Presentations: Concomitant Use of Benzodiazepines & Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Presentation and Treating Benzodiazepine Injury Syndrome