

**Minutes of the
Winnebago County Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting / Retreat
Wednesday, August 27, 2014 @ 7:30 a.m.
Rosecrance – Griffin Williamson Campus, 1601 University Drive, Rockford, IL**

Present: Richard Kunnert, Dr. Charles Smith, Carol Klint, Matthew Toohey, Angie Goral, Donny Parham, Phil Eaton

Others Present: Sue Fiduccia, Lynnette McRae, Ron Clewer, Penny Billman, Michelle Rock, Gary Halbach, Harlan Johnson, Cheryl Piper, Cheryl Waak, Bob Vertiz, Derek Bergsten, Dominic Iasparro, David Peterson, Rick Pollack, Kara Fiery, Danny Lee, and Mike Bacon

The meeting began at approximately 7:35 a.m.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Bacon welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation for the great attendance. The Mental Health Advisory Committee members were introduced and other present proceeded to introduce themselves, their organization and interest in the topic.

Mr. Bacon also introduced Karen Fiery and Dr. Penny Billman who will be providing extensive information and / or facilitating further discussion after the informational presentations. The purpose of the meeting was to develop recommendations for combating the Opioid epidemic in Winnebago County. The Mental Health Advisory Committee is interested in reducing life threatening poisonings related to opioids whether contributed to by illicit drugs or pharmaceuticals, either alone or in combination with other substances.

Mr. Bacon proceeded to clarify the agenda and the desire to stick to the timelines established for this morning's discussion. The first speakers were then introduced.

PRESENTATIONS OF DATA AND AGENCY / ORGANIZATIONAL CONCERNS:

Those in attendance had the opportunity to hear from Chief Derek Bergsten with the Rockford Fire Department. Chief Bergsten discussed the Department's use of the Narcan in its EMS response capacity and has done so for a number of decades. The Chief also clarified the impact of the growth in recent years on response calls involving opioid overdoses and the increasing prevalence of these drugs in the community and on the streets. These problems extend far beyond the impact on Rockford's EMS system to community wide impact.

The next speaker was Winnebago County Sheriff's Department Deputy Chief Dominic Iasparro. Chief Iasparro mentioned the Regional Center for Excellence between the 17th Judicial Circuit and the University of Illinois College of Medicine. Chief Iasparro went on to define how the majority of drug transactions happen in the community (e.g. frequently changing cell phone numbers, small quantities, prevalence of crimes supporting daily habits, and family / community impact).

Gary Halbach (CEO) and Cheryl Piper (Nurse) from Remedies reviewed the impact of funding limitations on the number of available slots for treatment. They further reviewed the number of admissions, approximately 1,000 per year with almost 80% of those being heroin and cocaine dependent related. The typical client profile was described, with the average age being approximately 28, family impact was highlighted.

Phil Eaton, CEO of Rosecrance, pointed out that there is little room for error with one of the real challenges being the way that the current State licensure system for adolescent drug detox, drugs / alcohol detox services, and mental health are operated under a separate system of licensure. As all present realize many of these problems don't happen separately but concomitantly. He further indicated the typical age range and the amount of time funding is able to support interventions being less than optimum for successful treatment and transition back in to the community. Mr. Eaton further discussed the increased risk of overdose upon release from treatment.

The next speaker was Michelle Rock, Executive Director of the Midwest Center for Excellence (UICOM). Ms. Rock discussed the drug court and the Vivitrol treatment services that have been an integral part of this process and the successes achieved.

Sue Fiduccia, Winnebago County Coroner, provided an overview from the Coroner's perspective on the tragedy the current opioid trend represents to families and other segments of the community and impact on service providers. Ms. Fiduccia briefly reviewed the number of deaths her office has responded to.

The next speaker was Dr. Penny Billman. Dr. Billman provided copies of her PowerPoint presentation entitled "The Opioid Epidemic: Research and Response". Dr. Billman succeeded in providing a clear overview of the many faces of opioid abuse including not only illicit drugs but prescriptive drugs. She further emphasized the research base and trends therein. Dr. Billman further discussed the Winnebago County Response, emphasizing the 17th Judicial Circuit Court and the drug court process and range of interventions provided therein. Dr. Billman concluded by summarizing some of the promising practices that have been identified from both the literature and our own community's success in addressing various aspects of the local concern (see attached slides).

BREAK OUT GROUPS:

Karen Fiery led those in attendance by breaking into workgroups around a) services available on demand, b) assistance available from the Affordable Care Act, c) prescription drug related issues, d) medically assisted treatment opportunities, e) treatment length (need for changes), and f) housing challenges / opportunities.

A broad range of issues were discussed in these workgroups including the understanding of the scope of the local epidemic (with the presenters providing helpful input) the range of availability of the intervention services, the impact of the lack of access to various services and the loss of tolerance and erroneous judgment around dosage post treatment. The workgroup brought back numerous recommendations including:

Prevention – wellness teams needed to educate various segments of the community, and necessity of providing greater sustainability of such educational efforts along with a broader array of intervention services

Law Enforcement – (frontline responder agencies) emphasis was on the utility of expanded access of Narcan and the necessary training for frontline responders and supplies / resources

Treatment – PDMP System should be mandatory and with the emphasis on the importance of expanding availability and access

Housing – provided a series of recommendations including the importance of transitional housing that links to permanent housing and the necessary funding to more effectively promote, package and increase access to effective existing services and lifelong management including the importance of support groups, especially for those in greatest need.

Lifelong Management - emphasis was on everyone having a role either in support or improving the availability of services and minimizing the stigma attached with such community concerns. After all they are no different than any other physical illness like diabetes, heart disease, etc.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS / FUTURE DELIBERATION:

Mr. Bacon wrapped up the morning session by thanking all participants for giving so generously of their time through the entire morning's work. He reminded those in attendance that the current level of drug overdose deaths in the community in recent years are either higher than or rival those of other major diseases including Diabetes, Alzheimer's Disease, Chronic Liver Disease, Parkinson's Disease, Homicides and Suicides each individually. Mr. Bacon emphasized that materials from each of the workgroups along with the minutes of this morning's session will be shared with all in attendance.

NEXT MEETING:

There was a reminder of the next meeting, Wednesday, September 10, 2014, 7:30 a.m., Rosecrance on Mulford Road, Rockford, IL.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no other items of business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Maichle Bacon (Winnebago County Health Department)

Approved by the Mental Health Advisory Committee: _____
DATE