



COLUMBIA COUNTY

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MINUTES OPIOID ABATEMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The first meeting of the Columbia County Opioid Abatement Ad Hoc Committee was called to order at 1:00 p.m., by Chair Doug Richmond. The meeting was publicly noticed.

ROLL

An attendance sheet was distributed by Gretchen Halvorsen.

OPIOID ABATEMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Doug Richmond; Liz Miller; Tom Drury; Jeff Leckwee; Public Health Officer Ellen Ellingsworth; Sheriff Roger Brandner; Cheryl Anderson; Assistant Corporation Counsel Susan Fisher; Jessica Beckett, Transitions Counseling.

BY PHONE: Stephanie Nickel.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICE STAFF PRESENT: Heather Gove, Director; Gretchen Halvorsen.

OTHERS: Jesica Walter, Accounting; County Board Supervisor Brad Cook; County Board Supervisor Darren Schroeder.

AGENDA/ADDITIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

No changes were made to the agenda.

COMMITTEE INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Richmond lead the group in introductions.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

MOTION: TO NOMINATE COUNTY BOARD SUPERVISOR JEFF LECKWEE AS VICE CHAIR OF THE OPIOID ABATEMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE.

Motion by Liz Miller, second by Tom Drury. Motion carried.

GENERAL DISCUSSION ABOUT HANDOUTS SENT WITH AGENDA

Chair Richmond discussed the 3 documents that were sent out with the agenda: Allowable Use of Settlement Payments (1 pg.); Opioid Needs Assessment Overview from the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA), (4 pgs.); and Opioid Related Expenditures (11 pgs.). Chair Richmond

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advised that the next WCA meeting, regarding the opioid settlement, is scheduled for Friday at 2 p.m. The meeting will be held via Zoom. Chair Richmond reported that the State is working to get the settlement money upfront, as opposed to a payout over the course of 16 years. He also shared that a second settlement from pharmacies is still being negotiated so Columbia County could potentially see additional settlement money after receiving the initial \$2+ million settlement distribution from the opioid manufacturers and distributors. Public Health Officer Ellen Ellingsworth distributed three documents for the committee members to review: Columbia County Overdose Fatality Review Report, 2019-2021 (booklet); OFR Recommendation Tracker (2 pgs); Overview of Reviewed Overdose Fatalities (3 pgs). Discussion followed. Attorney Fisher shared that the County has begun receiving partial payments of the settlement, and that Columbia County has received approximately \$500,000 thus far.

THOUGHTS/NEXT STEPS FOR COMMITTEE

Chair Richmond led a roundtable discussion in which each committee member shared their perspective, and identified needs, regarding the opioid crisis in Columbia County:

Public Health: Need more community resources for the volume of consumers with addiction problems and need them to be maintained in community (Satori House already closed, MAT program no longer available); Need to use current data from Columbia County to guide decision making; Overdose Review Panel helpful;

Law Enforcement: LE only works with consumers with addiction problems after they break the law; suggestion for LE investigators and SWs teaming together to address needs of consumers in the community at the time of LE contact to assist with Prevention, Education, Enforcement, Treatment, and Accountability; need same messaging from all agencies out to the public that all drugs are bad and that we don't want any drugs in our community; sees PARCC as a good partner in the community, and wants to see agencies and staff work on addiction issue in the county who have passion for the work; wants committee to get going, move quickly, due to high needs in the community;

Fatality Review Team: Sees multiple members of families overdosing so need to address generational abuse; Columbia County has some good programs like Drug Endangered Children, Handle with Care, PARCC; need to include schools in drug education and help them influence our children about the dangers of drug/alcohol addiction; need to bring back the programs that have worked, like MAT; really sees the need for Peer Counselors, Peer Support from individuals who have personal experience with addiction and can influence in a way that others cannot;

Community: Barriers to treatment – Financial, Transportation, Lack of Employment, Lack of Housing, Lack of resources in the community, one or two agencies cannot effectively handle the whole opioid crisis in Columbia County; need to offer financial assistance for consumers ready to get sober to help pay for treatment, transportation, housing, as these are huge barriers and

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programs need to be nimble, and fast paced, when addicts are ready to commit, not 6 months from now; Harbor Recovery Center is a good resource for families; Peer Support is really needed; Sees need for group homes, halfway houses, access to treatment with follow-up and accountability thru the use of peers, and peer counseling; help people pay for treatment; help people pay for transportation to treatment and follow up appointments;

Mental Health Providers: Short window of opportunity with addicts, need programs to move quickly, need to change and restore MAT and SOAR, provide funding to these programs, Peer support and family support are not coverable services by insurance, including Medical Assistance (MA), so need to fund Peer Supports and Peer Counseling; Satori House now gone; need more providers in community, need more resources in community, need resources to move quickly when addicts are looking for help; currently in Columbia County appointments with a mental health provider are 6-months out; Currently seeing less heroin and fentanyl due to the risk of using them, so seeing more meth users currently, opioid settlement money won't cover meth addiction, and it won't cover alcohol addiction; Need to pay for housing; Columbia County needs affordable housing; Need to address the needs of children whose parents have died due to addiction, need prevention programs; these kids carry a higher risk of becoming addicts; kids are accessible at school so schools need to have curriculum to address this;

Behavioral Health: Barriers to treatment and recovery include just getting a person's basic needs met, housing, primary care doctor, transportation, employment, length of time for criminal cases to close, having a diagnosis, lack of mental health clinic within HHS; programs have to be able to move quickly in order to address these needs so people can get the help they need when they're ready to get it; Need to address staff retention; need staff trainings in natural supports; need recovery coaches; Seeing friends OD is a trigger and can influence consumers in recovery to start using again because there are no supports for them and not enough resources in the community.

The group discussed the possibility of establishing a mental health clinic within HHS. HHS Director Gove shared that the space is already available in the building but it would require completion. Heather is working on organizing a mental health survey to research whether or not a mental health clinic can be financially self-sustaining. Sheriff Brandner shared that he also has to budget for mental health services for his inmate population and that he would be 100% supportive of HHS having a mental health clinic that could also provide services for his inmate population.

The group discussed the mobile MAT van scheduled to begin operations in Portage, 5 days a week, for methadone and suboxone patients.

Agenda items for the next meeting should include: Financial Report from Accounting on settlement money received so far, Creating a 5-year plan for use of the settlement money, Update on likelihood of getting all settlement money upfront so Columbia County has a secured amount, Prioritization of needs (such as Peer Supports, Counselors, Money for Treatment, etc), and Establishing a Budget. Attorney Fisher advised the group that the County Board will ultimately decide on whether to securitize an upfront settlement payment. She encouraged the committee

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members to participate in the WCA meeting this Friday for updates on the settlement payout options.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chair Richmond thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in today's meeting and encouraged participation in the WCA meeting on Friday.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Columbia County Opioid Abatement Ad Hoc Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 1:00 p.m., in Meeting Room 3, at Columbia County Health & Human Services Department, 111 E. Mullett Street, Portage, WI.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 2:06 P.M.

Motion by Tom Drury, second by Sheriff Brandner. Motion carried.

The Columbia County Opioid Abatement Ad Hoc Committee will reconvene for their next meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 1:00 p.m., in Meeting Room 3, at Columbia County Health & Human Services Department, 111 E. Mullett Street, Portage, WI.

Respectfully submitted,



Gretchen Halvorsen, Executive Secretary
Col. Co. Health & Human Services Dept.

cc: County Board Chair Chris Polzer
County Board 1st Vice Chair Denise Brusveen
County Board 2nd Vice Chair Matthew Rohrbeck

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