



SARA INNAMORATO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Drug & Alcohol Planning Council Meeting Minutes
Microsoft Teams
Wednesday, May 8, 2024**

Present: Daniel Garrighan, Josie Morgano, Charles Davis, Val Ketter, Taliera Gibson, Mario Browne, Stuart Fisk, OBH Deputy Director; Maisha Howze, Bureau of D&A Services Assistant Deputy Director; Kathryn Gadd, Bureau of D&A Services Administrator; Carly Ferrone, OBH Quality Oversight, BH Policy & Strategy Senior Manager; Colleen Sokira, OBH Special Projects Manager; Leah Bailey, OBH Special Projects Project Specialist; Michelle Lee, Bureau of D&A Services Clerk Typist 2

I. Introductions and Attendance

Colleen Sokira called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. As of this meeting, one member of the D&A Planning Council was approved, but there were other applicants for the D&A Planning Council present, who were in the process of having their membership reviewed and approved by the county council.

II. Critical Incident Reporting System Changes-Carly Ferrone

Carly Ferrone, DHS/OBH Quality Oversight, BH Policy & Strategy Senior Manager, said that DHS/OBH had undergone a process over the last 1-2 yrs. to improve how they process critical incidents, which are adverse events involving consumers whom DHS/OBH pays for the behavioral health services of by a behavioral health contracted provider. Examples of incidents include instances of death, illness, an injury requiring medical attention, an elopement, which leads to a missing person case, an abuse case, etc. DHS/OBH wants to know how many of these events are occurring so they can ensure the safety of individuals served by contracted BH providers, as well as engaging any quality improvement efforts to ensure that the clinical care is being delivered. The changes in the critical incident reporting system are intended to improve how DHS/OBH is collecting, storing, and processing incident-related information. The goals are to relieve the administrative burden for both providers and internal DHS staff, who process and follow up on incidents, to reduce duplicative data entry and instances, where there is a lot of back and forth between providers, who are reporting, as well as DHS/OBH staff to make sure that all information is clear and correct. DHS/OBH also wants to facilitate seamless and better coordinated investigations between DHS/OBH and Community Care Behavioral Health (CCBH), the behavioral health managed care organization (BHMCO) overseeing the Medicaid program and individuals served by Medicaid. DHS/OBH contracts with a lot of the same BH providers that CCBH contracts with. Carly Ferrone said that DHS/OBH wants to ensure that everybody, who needs to be notified that an incident has occurred, is notified. DHS/OBH wants to improve the investigation process to avoid having multiple visits at different points in time. DHS/OBH wants to internally improve their processes and how incidents are stored so that everything is well-integrated. Carly Ferrone said that DHS/OBH is removing the requirement for providers needing to verbally report the 2 incidents relating to death and an incident involving the fire/fire department or police since the state does not require this. Another change with the critical

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incident reporting is that the fax and emailing a PDF options will be removed to streamline this process of submitting incident reports. The new primary way to report incidents will be via a website, where providers can fill in the information about the incident. The second option for reporting incidents is under consideration but may be a centralized phone line. The aim is to reduce some of the phone calls being submitted by some of the DHS/OBH program specialists and managers so things can be more quickly directed to the right parties through a main line. Carly Ferrone said that DHS/OBH would be holding a training for providers on the new incident reporting system on May 21st. DHS/OBH hopes to schedule another training in June. After both trainings, there will be follow-up meetings scheduled. The follow-up meetings will be scheduled after giving providers time to test out the new critical incident reporting system. There will be a period, where providers can test out the new incident reporting process before the final incident reporting form and process go live on July 1st, 2024.

III. Opioid Settlement Information-Stuart Fisk

Stuart Fisk said that DHS/OBH is preparing a public document regarding the opioid settlement information that will be released soon. This public document will give more information about how the opioid settlement dollars have been used by Allegheny County and DHS. All counties in Pennsylvania will be receiving portions of the settlement dollars through the year 2038. As of this meeting, Allegheny County had received about \$8.42 million from opioid settlement funds, and this amount will be spent out by 2024. There is another planned tranche of money expected to be received to fund additional programs after June 2024. As of this meeting, the opioid settlement funds had been spent to increase access to treatment and recovery. For instance, part of the funds had been used to pay for low-barrier mobile medication for Buprenorphine, as well as supporting medication access by telehealth. The funds have also been used to fund warm hand-offs from emergency departments. The opioid settlement funds have been used to support people in recovery by supporting recovery and low-barrier housing. The opioid settlement funds have also been used to fund harm reduction services, primarily syringe services, syringe safety programs, and other services, such as wound care, that are provided. The opioid settlement funds have also been used to spread messages to educate the public on safe storage practices for controlled substances, whether illicit or not. Stuart Fisk said that these messages were put at bus stops, among other places, and will also be shared on social media. The messages are primarily targeting accidental ingestion of opioids and other controlled substances by children. The opioid settlement funds have also been used to test some innovative approaches around treatment, including contingency management and wastewater monitoring to try to determine the substances in wastewater, so there is an indication of where the drug supply might be going, in terms of other substances.

Josie Morgano asked if there were provider alerts for RFPs (Request for Proposals) or funding opportunities that providers could apply for. Stuart Fisk said that some of the opioid settlement funds had been used to fund RFPs through the standard solicitation process at DHS. DHS/OBH is also looking for ways to solicit input from providers in the community regarding how future tranches of the funding should be spent. He hoped to have more updates on this soon. He also said he would give a full report on the opioid settlement information at the July 10th D&A Planning Council Meeting. Stuart Fisk said that not all of the opioid settlement money has come through OBH/D&A but that some of it had been used by other county agencies for some of the programs he had previously mentioned.

IV. Drug and Alcohol Updates-Maisha Howze

Maisha Howze wanted to make meeting attendees aware of the recent overdoses in Allegheny County over the time period of April 27, 2024-April 28, 2024, and May 2, 2024-May 3, 2024. There were 14 suspected overdoses from April 27th-April 28th. There were 17 suspected

overdoses, in which individuals were seen at 11 local hospitals, from May 2nd-May 3rd. Maisha Howze said that Colleen Sokira would send out the information, which include resources and links, about these overdoses to meeting attendees. She encouraged attendees to share this information with people, who are in active addiction, along with members of the community, who support those in active addiction. As of this meeting, the information from the state regarding these overdoses had not included explanations about what the causes of the overdoses might be.

V. Announcements-*There were no announcements at the time of this meeting.*

VI. Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

VII. Next Public Meeting

The next public D&A Planning Council meeting will be on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, from 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. on Microsoft Teams.

Colleen Sokira said that she will send out the Microsoft Teams invites for this meeting the week before. There is also a link posted on the DHS advisory board [webpage](#).