

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS

December 10th, 2021

9:30am-11:00am

Fox Chapel

Members Present:

Steve Ahnen, *NH Hospital Association*

Mathew Culver *representing the NH Liquor Commission, Division of Enforcement*

Russ Conte, *Suicide Prevention Council*

Jen Doris *representing the Department of Education*

Jess Edwards, *NH House of Representatives*

John Formella, *Attorney General, Department of Justice*

Traci Fowler, *NH Charitable Foundation*

Morissa Henn *representing the Department of Health and Human Services* Keith Howard, *Recovery Representative*

Joseph Johnsick, *Non-Professional Public Representative*

Timothy Lena, *Prevention Task Force*

Chuck Lloyd, *Community College System of NH*

Dave Mara, *Governor's Advisor on Addiction & Behavioral Health*

David Mikolaities, *Major General, NH National Guard*

Jeffrey Nelson, *Non-Professional Public Representative*

Chris Nicolopoulos, *New Hampshire Insurance Department*

Jaime Powers, *Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services*

Robert Quinn, *Department of Safety*

Joseph Ribsam, *NH Department of Health & Human Services*

Kathie Saari, *Faith Community Representative*

Stephanie Savard, *Treatment Professional*

Kate Thomson, *NH Nurses Association*

Patrick Tufts, *Chair, Granite United Way*

David Watters, *NH State Senate*

- 1. Welcome, Opening Remarks** – Patrick Tufts, Governor's Commission on Alcohol & Other Drugs Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the public and the Commission. The Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October meeting of the Governor's Commission. Jen Doris made the motion to approve the minutes without any corrections and Matt McKenney seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by the body of the Commission.
- 2. Public Comment** - The Chair opened the meeting to public comment. Cheryle Pacapelli shared the Annual Report for the PRSS Facilitating Organization and thanked the Commission for funding many of the programs listed. The Chair asked if there were any regions not represented by a Recovery Community Organization (RCO). Ms. Pacapelli shared that the Upper Valley region doesn't have a state funded RCO. The Chair welcomed Susan McKeown to speak. Ms. McKeown reminded attendees of the parent and family support groups that are spread around the state to serve families of people with substance use disorders. With no further comments the Chair welcomed Morissa Henn to speak about the Department of Health and Human Services update.
- 3. DHHS Department Update** – Morissa Henn, Associate Director, Department of Health and Human Services, shared an update on 466 individuals who are hospitalized with COVID. FEMA and the National

Guard have been deployed and are deeply concerned with the rate of infection. The Associate Commissioner shared that 30-40% of people entering the emergency department are leaving because of the wait times of 4-6 hours. Associate Commissioner Henn welcomed Steve Ahnen from the New Hampshire Hospital Association to speak on the impact he's witnessing. Mr. Ahnen shared that the hospital staff are tired and the moment we are in today is like nothing the hospitals have seen before. Mr. Ahnen thanked the National Guard for their support and asked for everyone's support during this time. Associate Commissioner Henn also shared that there is tremendous work happening to address the Ten-Year Mental Health plan. She highlighted the critical need to integrate services like substance use disorder treatment and mental health services while thinking across the age continuum. Henn spoke about the need to integrate public health and clinical services. The Chair then asked for questions. Traci Fowler asked about the crisis standards of care and if there is integration in behavioral health. Katja Fox answered that Ken Norton and herself are working to make it much more robust. With no further questions the Chair moved to address the next agenda item.

3. **The Executive Directors Update** – Jaime Powers, Director, Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services, was welcomed by the Chair to provide the Executive Directors report. Director Powers reviewed the Governor's Commission dashboard on existing and future contracts. Director Powers shared the new Doorways campaign will be launching in the next few weeks. Don Hunter is retiring and there is an opening in the data department. The Chair thanked Mr. Hunter for his many years of service.
4. **Governor's Office Update** – Dave Mara, Governor's Advisor on Addiction & Behavioral Health was introduced by the Chair to speak on urgent issues from the Governor's Office. Dave Mara shared that the Governor's Office facilitated a meeting with NH Coalition of Recovery Residences (NHCORR) and the Fire Marshall to discuss changes to the law to allow for changes in bed space. He shared from that meeting that an amendment has been filed. Mr. Mara shared the Governor also spoke with dozens of women on recovery support services for women in the state. Mr. Mara shared that The Drug Fatality Review Commission has contracted with UNH to do data research for the Commission. Steve Ahnen asked for the bill number for the NHCORR amendment and Mr. Mara confirmed he would share the bill number with the Commission. Representative Edwards asked what was happening to the recovery housing while the amendment is waiting to pass. Mr. Mara shared that organizations aren't being qualified for NHCORR. With no further questions or comments the Chair welcomed Amy Daniels and the JSI staff to speak about the Commission's strategic planning process.
5. **Strategic Planning Process** – Amy Daniels, Senior Consultant with JSI, shared that the action plan is three years, and it ends this month. Ms. Daniels stated this report shows progress overtime at a high-level. She said this information only reflects what reports the JSI team received and doesn't include everything that happens in every state department. The JSI team is reviewing if a slide deck is more effective than printed materials because the feedback was that few people review them. Previously most of this data was not publicly available and this will be an improvement in transparency. Daniels also shared that the Commission has its own dashboard that is publicly available on the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services website in an interactive platform. Daniels shared that tremendous progress has been made in reducing youth alcohol use but shared that there is an increased need in providing resources around cannabis use. Traci Fowler asked about looking at the Youth Risk Behavior Survey moving forward and seeing what relationships between mental health, substance use and social determinants of health exist. Ms. Daniels shared that having an organization funded to do that work could support that comparison. Daniels shared that this is the most comprehensive spending report that has been collected to date. She shared the breakdown of where the funding came from, and a significant portion was Medicaid dollars.

Ms. Daniels also shared updates on all the strategies from this previous strategic plan. She shared that almost all the strategies had significant change. Many of the strategies were thought to be aspirational but many have been proven to be achievable and measurable change has happened. Ms. Daniels shared the next steps for the strategic plan including a proposed meeting schedule. Ms. Daniels asked that the Commissioners send their strategies and plans to be included as soon as possible.

Ms. Daniels introduced Hannah Lessels to present on the commission survey results. Ms. Lessels shared the purpose was to learn about community members experiences with alcohol and other drugs in NH. 61% of respondents said they had a family member impacted by substance use. The survey inquired whether respondents were aware of services, used services or unaware of services. The Chair asked for questions on the presentation. Commissioner Quinn asked for data to reflect polysubstance use. Traci Fowler encouraged that future data collection include the “why” not just the “what”. She shared it’s important to know why someone might be using substances and not just what substances. Ms. Lessels shared that those follow up questions can be asked during the listening sessions. Senator Watters asked to ensure that people who are experiencing homelessness or who may not have access to computers be sought out for representation. Tim Lena asked about the distinctions between THC, CBD and Cannabis needs to be separated. Stephanie Savard shared that there needs to be more unpacking of the demographic data to better understand disparities. Commissioner Hanks shared that it would be helpful to have a question in the future to determine if someone is justice involved and to know if someone self-selected treatment or were encouraged through justice involvement. With no further questions the Chair moved on to the discussion on the stimulant’s workgroup recommendations.

6. **Stimulants Workgroup Recommendations** – Patrick Tufts led a review of the recommendations from the Stimulants Workgroup. He shared that the recommendations were made by a group of multi-disciplinary individuals. The group conducted literature reviews and increased their education around stimulants to create a common language around this issue. Mr. Tufts reported that a significant amount of the discussion was focused on decriminalization, and it was determined that more thoughtful dialogue needs to happen before recommendations can be made. The Chair asked that the Commission be prepared to fund these recommendations before seeking outside sources. The Chair shared that prevention, treatment, recovery, and policing were targeted as recommended areas of focus for investments. The Chair asked for questions on the Stimulant Workgroup recommendations document. Senator Watters asked if there was thought to including an increase in mental health supports in prevention. Tim Lena shared that a comprehensive approach should include mental health supports in universal prevention activities. The Chair asked for a vote to include these recommendations in future funding recommendations. Traci Fowler asked that these strategies not be prohibitive of including other substances when making these recommendations. The Chair agreed that strategies need to be inclusive of all substances. Senator Watters moved to accept the recommendations and Tim Lena seconded the motion. Representative Edwards abstained and the motion passed with majority vote.
7. **February Commission Meeting** – Next the Chair spoke on the funding process for future Commission meetings. The Chair reminded the Commission that there are million of dollars to develop funding recommendations in the new year. To align with the contract’s unit, he recommended bi-annual funding meetings. The Chair also recommendation having minimum funding recommendations of at least 50 thousand dollars. Senator Watters asked what should be in an emergency reserve. The Chair replied he would prefer about 20% in reserve, and everything would need to be approved by the Commission. With no further discussion or questions the Chair moved to adjourn the meeting, The meeting closed at 11:34 am.

Next Meeting
January 28th, 2022
9:30-11:30