

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS

June 26th, 2020

9:30am-11:30 am

Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Governor Chris Sununu, *State of New Hampshire*
Steve Ahnen, *NH Hospital Association*
Mark Armaganian, *NH Liquor Commission, Division of Enforcement*
Alex Casale, *NH Courts*
Russ Conte, *NH Suicide Prevention Council*
Michelle Myler, *NH Department of Education*
Monica Edgar, *Treatment Professional*
Annette Escalante, *Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services*
Katja Fox, *NH Department of Health & Human Services*
Helen Hanks, *NH Department of Corrections*
Keith Howard, *Recovery Representative*
Tim Lena, *Prevention Professional*
Chuck Lloyd, *Community College System of NH*
Gordon MacDonald, *NH Attorney General*
Dave Mara, *Governor's Advisor on Addiction & Behavioral Health*
Matt McKenney, *Business & Industry Association*
David Mikolaities, *NH National Guard*
Tina Nadeau, *NH Courts*
Chris Nicolopoulos, *NH Insurance Department*
Robert Quinn, *NH Department of Safety*
Joseph Ribsam, *NH Department of Health & Human Services*
Tym Rourke, *NH Charitable Foundation*
Kathie Saari, *Faith Community Representative*
Seddon Savage, *NH Medical Society*
Stephanie Savard, *Treatment Professional*
Kate Thomson, *NH Nurses Association*
Patrick Tufts, *Chair, Granite United Way*
David Watters, *NH State Senator*

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks – Patrick Tufts began the meeting and welcomed the members to the first virtual Governor's Commission Meeting. The Chair reviewed housekeeping items on the PowerPoint, including how to unmute as a member and how to rename titles of members. After opening the meeting, the Chair welcomed the Governor to the meeting and opened the floor for his comments.
2. Guest Speaker – Governor Sununu thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak. The Governor noted that with children not in school and an increase in social isolation and mental health issues he is advocating for being proactive with prevention. The Governor shared there are increased federal funds coming to New Hampshire to address the COVID-19 crisis and these funds need to be distributed quickly. He stated that NH is roughly on track for the same SUD overdose numbers as last year and he would like to see that decrease. The Governor noted that the Doorways are a great success and that the new Doorways are up and running in Manchester & Nashua. The Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) initiative continues to do very well, from his perspective, and a lot of new employers are continuing to come on board. The Governor mentioned that they made an announcement on CARES Act funding relative to substance use disorder and COVID-19 this week and the GOFFER committee will

be following up on those recommendations. Through those funds, we are in a place where we can make investments in the infrastructure needed for SUD, like respite care. The Governor's Youth Council members are passionate, and the Governor is impressed with their forward thinking. He wants to make sure we are bridging the gaps that exist because school and community organizations are not open. The Governor would like to see a closed loop referral system in place so that people don't get lost in the system. Tough economic times are coming and we need to ramp up mental health services to offer support during difficult times. He asked that Commission members keep his office updated with what's happening from their perspectives.

Patrick thanked the Governor for being proactive and for using the Commission as a vehicle to provide feedback and recommendations. The Chair opened the floor for questions from Commission Members. Susan McKeon, a member of the public, asked what we are doing to increase the workforce support for substance use treatment. The Governor answered that the state has done a lot to streamline licensure. There could be an opportunity for workforce growth because we are seeing a huge de-urbanization from people moving away from big cities. The Chair thanked the Governor for his time and moved forward on the agenda.

3. Approval of Minutes – The Chair asked for a motion for the approval of the minutes. Steve Ahnen made a motion to approve and Senator Watters seconded. The Chair then asked for questions or comments on the minutes. Joe Ribsam shared that he was at the March meeting, but that wasn't reflected in the minutes. The Chair noted that change for the minutes. Senator Watters asked if we needed to do a roll call vote because of being in a remote meeting. The Attorney General shared that under 91A, when meetings are conducted remotely a roll call vote is needed. The Chair then conducted a roll call vote. In attendance were: Senator Watters alone in his home in Dover; Seddon Savage alone in Concord; Attorney General McDonald alone in the Department of Justice office; General Mikolaities alone at the National Guard office in Concord; Kate Thomson alone in Freedom; Keith Howard in Manchester at the Hope for NH office; Mark Armaganian replied using the chat feature; Matt McKenney was in Lebanon; Michelle Myler alone at home; Monica Edgar alone in Meredith; Russ Conte alone in Concord; Commissioner Quinn alone in Concord; Stephanie Savard was alone; Steve Ahnen was alone at home; Tim Lena in Kittery, ME alone; Tym Rourke alone in Bedford; Joe Ribsam alone in Concord; Katja Fox alone in Concord, and Annette Escalante alone in Bedford. Abstaining from voting were: Commissioner Hanks at the DOC headquarters alone; Chuck Lloyd alone in Bow; Chris Nicolopoulos traveling in a car with his girlfriend and kids; and Judge Nadeau alone at home. Once the roll call vote was completed, minutes were approved with corrections to attendance for Joe Ribsam, Annette Escalante, Katja Fox, and Kate Thomson.

4. DHHS Commissioner's Update – Katja Fox shared a huge "thank you" for the enormous amount of collaboration and partnership happening over the past three months. The work continues and despite being in a pandemic, it does not mean we aren't still in an opioid crisis and a priority of the Department is to provide stability and support to SUD providers. This support includes increased funding opportunities, stipends for front line workers, and expansion of telehealth. The expansion of telehealth quickly became a huge opportunity for maintaining contact with people who otherwise may not have been able to access services. This is a partnership with the Division of Public Health, the Division of Behavioral Health, and the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol services. They have been having weekly phone calls with treatment providers, community mental health providers, and across the board with all sectors to provide information and a forum for individual organizations to ask questions on what is happening on the ground. There were some COVID-19 related funding opportunities from SAMHSA that were above and beyond the \$1.2 billion. In both cases, the SAMHSA grants required a one-week turn around for what would usually be a 6-8-week process. The first grant, for \$2 million, is for NH Rapid Response, which is directly related to COVID-19. Through that the Department was able to contract with 10 community mental health centers to provide rapid response in conjunction with SUD providers. The second grant was

for suicide prevention. Both are 16-month grants and the second grant is for \$800,000. It requires 25 percent of the service dollars go to supporting domestic violence survivors, so the department collaborated with NAMI NH and the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. Katja asked Don Hunter to speak on the recent Doorways report.

The Doorways in Greater Manchester and Greater Nashua have new contractors as of May 11, 2020. Catholic Medical Center (CMC) is operating the Manchester Doorway and Southern New Hampshire Medical Center is operating the Greater Nashua Doorway. Don shared a PowerPoint with tables that showed month to month summaries. All numbers have increased since April, except for the number of Naloxone kits distributed. The second table shows the summary of activity by Doorway. Wentworth-Douglas is the most contacted Doorway. Just in the first three weeks of May, Manchester and Nashua are higher than April, so people are seeking them out in larger numbers now. The next slide showed opioids are still the number one reason people are contacting the Doorways for services. Alcohol use is still the second highest reason and methamphetamines tied for third. People are reaching the Doorways primarily through referrals from 2-1-1 and Dartmouth Hitchcock after hours hotline. The second most frequent way people access the Doorways is through walk-in services. The Doorways are still open to receive people in person, but they can also access a Doorway through telehealth. All monthly Doorway reports are available on the DHHS website. The Chair entertained questions. Senator Watters asked if there is any report on how the cooperation with emergency rooms is going now. Don answered that his understanding is that the communication between the Doorways and the emergency rooms has continued. For example, he shared, a new effort CMC is undertaking is introducing social workers in the emergency rooms directly with the Doorway staff. Tym Rourke asked if someone could speak to the closing of the Nashua Safe Stations. Katja shared that the Nashua Safe Stations is closing on July 1, 2020. The Safe Station in Nashua relied heavily on the Mobile Crisis Unit that was run out of Harbor Homes. Harbor Homes has chosen to discontinue that service and without it the fire department decided it could no longer continue Safe Stations. The Department has convened several meetings with the City and all the community providers. Katja shared they are putting the pieces together and trying to fill that need with Southern NH Medical Services to make sure people are still accessing substance use treatment services. Tym Rourke asked if there will be mobile crisis services in Nashua now. Katja answered yes, it was a key component to the community mental health agreement and there will be an extension with the current Harbor Homes contract while they look for a new provider. Senator Watters commented that an amendment designated \$370,000 to Nashua for SUD services for the following two years and he believes that it will be approved quickly. The Chair shared that two questions were asked about GOFFER funds (via Chat). Dave Mara answered that he does not have any specifics about GOFERR funding, but that the Governor's Office is still collecting recommendations from the community. The Chair then moved on to the next agenda item, an update from the Executive Director.

5. Executive Director's Update – Annette Escalante shared a PowerPoint of the Financial Dashboard. For state fiscal year 2020 there is a balance of \$474,163. For state fiscal year 2021 there is a balance of \$1,253,358. The Department of Health and Human Services is going through hundreds of contracts that expired June 30, 2020, so this is the busiest time of the year for them on top COVID-19 adding additional needs. There are a number of RFPs on the website that currently need to be reviewed. The Department is moving as fast as they possibly can because the Bureau is just one of many in the Department that are working diligently to get things done as soon as possible. The Chair then asked for questions for the Executive Director. Senator Watters asked what the process would be on any contracts offered if the Governor allocates more funding to substance use disorders? Would we (the Commission) have any role in money that is sent to schools? He is hearing from students that there is an increase in youth substance use. Katja said it will depend on how the money is allocated. One thing she noted is that the CARES Act funding discussed earlier by the Governor were focused on the adult population. Youth services would be through a different process. Senator Watters asked for a rundown of what has been allocated so far of

non-commission funds because it's hard to keep track of what funding has come forward. Seeing no other questions, the Chair moved onto the next agenda item.

6. Prevention Cost Effectiveness Survey – Amy Daniels presented on the Prevention Cost Effectiveness Survey. She shared that they are seeking approval to review four prevention programs that are funded in full or in part by the Commission. There is a 12-page report summarizing the rationale of that choice and there is a one-page report as well. It is legislatively required for the Commission to do a cost effectiveness analysis every year. The Commission funds 11 prevention programs but four were the best fit for doing a cost analysis because it requires rigorous standards. The workgroup is seeking permission from the Commission to move forward with creating the cost effectiveness report. The Chair then asked if Ms. Daniels was looking for a vote from the Commission to approve this survey. Ms. Daniels replied that it is required by the statute to be approved by the Commission. The Chair asked for further questions or comments from the Prevention Task Force Chair, Tim Lena. Tim fully supported the evaluation process of the survey. Senator Watters asked if we should change the law to remove the cost effectiveness requirement. Ms. Daniels answered that the results of this survey may help to find what needs to be changed in the legislation and in the way that prevention data is collected for future grants. The Chair called for a vote on the approval of the Prevention Cost Effectiveness Survey. There was unanimous consent to move forward with the survey. The Chair then proceeded to the next agenda item and turned the meeting over to Seddon Savage, Chair of the Healthcare and Opioid Task Forces.

7. COVID-19 Impact on SUD Services – Seddon Savage shared a PowerPoint to make the members aware of a survey that captured data on the way that COVID-19 has impacted treatment for substance use disorders and how that relates to technology in treatment. Seddon shared that a full executive report of this data is available for members to review after the meeting and this data shaped recommendations from the Healthcare Task Force on telehealth. The survey showed that people saw an increase in alcohol use over the course of COVID-19 and a decrease in access to treatment for SUD services. The survey also revealed that many people with substance use disorders could not practice best practices for preventing COVID-19 infection. The Chair asked for a vote to approve the Healthcare Task Force recommendations for the development of telehealth to treat substance use disorders. Senator Watters moved to approve the recommendations and Monica Edgar seconded the motion. The motion was passed with Seddon Savage and Chris Nicolopoulos abstaining and all other votes approving the motion. Next the Chair asked for brief Task Force updates due to limited meeting time remaining.

8. Task Force Updates

- Prevention – Tim Lena deferred his time.
- Treatment – Stephanie Savard shared an update on involuntary commitment research they've been doing. She is waiting to get feedback from the Task Forces to weigh in on three questions about involuntary commitment. They had a listening session from 51 people with lived experiences and received wonderful feedback from a variety of people in recovery, their family members, and providers. They hope to have a model to present to the Commission in the fall.
- Recovery – Kristine Paquette shared an update on behalf of Keith Howard. They are working with the Treatment Task Force on involuntary commitment.
- Joint Military – General Mikolaities deferred his time.
- Healthcare – There was no update from the Healthcare Task Force.
- Perinatal Exposure – Monica Edgar shared they continue to advance the strategic plan.
- Data – Steve Ahnen deferred for this month.
- Opioid – There was no update for the Opioid Task Force.

9. Other Business – Patrick Tufts turned it over to Dave Mara to provide an update from the Governor's Office. Dave wanted to address the Recovery Friendly Workplace, an initiative of the Governor's Office.

\$450,000 was awarded to the program. Currently, some of the staff members of the initiative (Recovery Friendly Advisors) are housed at Southern New Hampshire Services. The Program Director is Shannon Bresaw, an employee at Granite United Way. The Governor has asked Granite United Way to administer the program moving forward so that it continues without interruption and all efforts are streamlined under one organization. The Chair asked Annette Escalante to take questions, so that he could abstain from the discussion to avoid any conflict of interest. Annette asked for comments or questions. There were none, so Annette passed the meeting back to the Chair. The Chair moved to the public comment agenda item.

10. Public Comment – Kate Frey shared a comment about the increased use of alcohol through COVID-19 and with weakening alcohol regulations across the state it's important to take this into account when looking at funding. Policy changes that make alcohol more accessible need to be looked at long-term to see the effects. There were no other questions or comments from the public. The Chair ended the meeting after the end of public comment. Time adjourned?

Next Meeting
August 28, 2020
9:30am - 11:30am