

New Hampshire Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting
Department of Justice, Granite Place South
February 12, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

Attending:

David **Mara** (Governor's Designee)
Attorney James **Boffetti** (Designee for the Attorney General)
Rachel **Miller** (Treasury)
Helen **Hanks** (Commissioner, Department of Corrections)
Jennifer **Sabin** (DHHS Commissioner's Designee)
Representative David **Nagel** (House)
Senator, Cindy **Rosenwald** (Chair)
Patrick **Tufts** (Chair of Governor's Commission on Drug and Alcohol Treatment)
Bobbie **Bagley** (City with 75k+ appointed by Governor)
Elizabeth **Dragon** (City with < 75k appointed by Governor)
Traci **Fowler** (NH Charitable Foundation)
Dr. Seddon **Savage**, MD, (Appointed by Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Prevention, Treatment and Recovery)
Emily **Rice** (Appointed by Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Prevention, Treatment and Recovery)

Attending Virtually:

Patricia **Conway** (County Attorney appointed by Governor)
Ellen **Riiska**: (Appointed by the New Hampshire School Administrators Association)

Absent:

Jason **Henry** (County Corrections Superintendent appointed by Governor)
Kathryn **Kindopp** (Governor's Appointment)
James **Watkins** (Municipal Fire Chief appointed by Governor)
Kevin **Rourke** (Municipal Police Chief appointed by Governor)
Toni **Pappas** (County of +100k appointed by Governor)
Peter **Spanos** (County of <100k appointed by Governor)
Benjamin **Gaetjens-Oleson** (Governor's Appointment)
Bianca **Monroe** (Appointed by the Attorney General)

Welcome and Roll Call - Attendance

- Senator Rosenwald opened the meeting at 1:00 pm with a roll call. A quorum of the Commission members physically present was established¹.

Adoption of Minutes of January 8, 2024

- Commissioner Hanks motioned to approve the minutes; Attorney Boffetti seconded the motion. The Chair opened the floor for discussion on corrections. Commissioner Savage requested that the members virtually present be listed under the title, “Attending Virtually” instead of, “Present via virtual platform”. Members noted that Commissioner Savage was misspelled throughout the minutes as, “Commissioner Seddon”. Chief Mara noted a typo on page 5, the sixth bullet says, “sue”, but needs to say, “do.”
- All members present voted to approve the minutes on a 13-0 roll call vote, with the exception of Commissioner Dragon and Representative Nagel who abstained.

Public Comment

- Courtney Peters from Insubordination Station Harm Reduction, in Dover, NH spoke to the commission members about funding smaller grass roots organizations. Her organization is a registered syringe service program and feels the long-term unhoused residents of NH are deserving of this funding for harm reduction services.
- Christian Bernier introduced himself as someone who has been in recovery for 15 yrs. Worked at southeastern recovery services. SAMHSA B-cor grant to fund recovery in Portsmouth. Formed own Non-Profit 501C3 Photography Comp. Was a film maker in CA. Was a cinematographer. Has idea for story to be told in Portsmouth. A recovery festival the last week in Sept. Recovery month. 24 hr meeting schedule, symposium on what is new in recovery and various events, event will be filled with his company ultimately the goal will end with One World Comedy Spectacular for local comedians to come in and help make this a large event for the area. Since working at safe harbor recovery services, they disperse funds, shelter, phones, and originally the mechanism was to donate to them, but now I have created my own company. Whitney Brown the Director of the program.
- Commissioner Savage thanked Christian and Courtney for presenting their visions and needs to the group and let the public know that the commission is working towards a goal of developing a clear mechanism and clear understanding of how people can apply for funding. Commissioner Savage requested to add this topic to the agenda today or at the next meeting.
- Daniel Amato, the Director of Merrimack Valley Assistance Program the largest HIV and AIDS service organization in NH. NH Harm Reduction Coalition recommended he attend the meeting to learn about funding opportunities.
- Lynn Blankenbeker introduced herself to the Commission as someone who had served in the House with Senator Rosenwald. She introduced her Pastor Peter Chamberlin from

¹ Eleven members constitutes a quorum pursuant to RSA 126-A: 85, IV.

Granite State Baptist Church to learn more about funding opportunities and offer her support to the OAC to develop framework and proposal processes if they are interested.

Proposal from Judicial Branch on the Community Housing Program on funding specifics and outcomes measures

- Alex Casale presented the Commission members with a proposal based on what was approved at the January 8, 2024, meeting:
 - To be accepted into the Community Housing Program, an individual must meet all the following criteria:
 - •is diagnosed with a substance use disorder (SUD)
 - •is engaged in one of the following:
 - NH Adult Drug Court Program;
 - Family Treatment Court; OR
 - Under active parole supervision from incarceration at a state correctional facility.
 - is at risk of homelessness or is actively homeless
- Alex reviewed the rest of the proposal with the commission members and then left time for questions.
 - Commissioner Tufts asked roughly how many additional people would be helped with this additional funding?
 - Alex explained that it could be double or more based on number of individuals currently on parole and probation who meet the criteria. Riverbend tracks their Drug Court participants who within 18-24 months went from homeless to housed completed Drug Court at a success rate from 32% to 63% once provided funding for housing.
 - Commissioner Rice asked how the program would be evaluated.
 - Katie Parent explained to the Commission members that they currently have a data base for participants of the program, and they could expand to capture the participants who are using this funding.
 - Alex Casile discussed that they had added 20K to the budget to pay for evaluations, but they could instead add to the database when OAC funds are used without needing to add more funding to budget.
 - Commissioner Rice wondered if they could provide a yearly budget instead of a combined budget. Commissioner Sabin explained that when the contract goes through DHHS Contracts Unit they budget will reflect the full length of the contract.
 - Commissioner Savage commented that the measurement on the impact of housing and recovery outcomes will be helpful data for the support on housing.
 - The Chair thanked CHP for their proposal and discussed next steps will not need to be a vote because Chris Bond and Robin Guarino from DOJ worked with Katja Fox on how to get proceeding to G&C.
 - Chris Bond then explained to the Commission members that DOJ will be filing an emergency order that includes housing to take immediate affect where the commission can avoid needing to post the grant to the website for 30 days. The emergency rule will be in effect for 180 days.

- Senator Rosenwald thanked DOJ and DHHS for their combined efforts on this rule and explained the next steps now fall on DHHS to start the process.

Presentation from Ronaldo Rosa of Healthcare Resource Center on MOUD/Insurance interruption and access to methadone in the state prisons

- Ronaldo Rosa is the Treatment Center Director for Health Care Resource Centers providing outpatient methadone services. He has been in the MAT services for 20 years, working in Maine, NH, VT, and MA. NH doesn't have a payer of last resort for interruption of service in insurance.
- Mr. Rosa proposed that the OAC provide \$1.9M for all MATs in NH to help cover patients who are not able to pay for cost of medication.
- This would average out to 100K for each MAT
- Currently clients are referred to Marketplace but that also has a fee.
- If clients cannot afford their medication they will be back on the streets, arrested, in the emergency room, or dead.
- There was a brief discussion among the Commission members about the MAT programs being for-profit and AJ Boffetti confirmed that it cannot support for-profit or individual clients at this time.
- Commissioner Sabin discussed coordination with the Doorways for unmet treatment needs. The communication of what to do, what to get, and how much needs to be coordinated for the client with treatment providers and the Doorways.
- Commissioner Bagley shared with the Commission members about a client that she was working with recently that started without housing, wain in MAT out of Manchester, but their insurance lapped, and they tried to pay for as much as they could but soon was not able to pay for anything. Doorway was able to help, it was a process that took about 8-9 months in total and a collaboration in providers.
- Commissioner Savage commented that this sounds like a system's issue not a funding issue. The Commission members asked Katja Fox Dir. Of Div. of Behavioral Health to discuss the funding for gaps.
- Katja explained that the Doorways and the Governor's Commission on Alcohol & Other Drugs has funding for gaps. With Commissioner Bagley's example it is a funding issue and a connection with care issue. Doorways are 100% federal funds. If the Dept needs more money, we can bring it to the G&C.
- Ronaldo commented that this would be a proactive move to help keep clients in the care system. As of February 1, Rosa's treatment center will lose 500 clients because their cost of care is too high for them to pay.
- Commissioner Savage thanked Mr. Rosa for raising the issue of gaps and shared with the Commission that she wants to be sure something active will be done from this discussion. Commissioner Sabin commented that the first line of defense should be to call 211 and

get in contact with a Doorway. If people are struggling to get their medication they need to get in touch with a Doorway. If the message isn't clear, Katja said she would reach out to the engagement providers to see if they reported having trouble gaining access to information.

Discussion of Core Principles

- Commissioner Fowler presented an updated version of the communication tool, "Guiding Strategies for use of Opioid Abatement Funds."
- This is a companion piece to the structure of the OAC, not the entire process.
- Discussion among members about what they feel was missing and still needs to be worked on within the document.
- Commissioner Savage motioned to accept the document, and Commissioner Rice seconded the motion. Discussion to remove, "non-gov entities, and delete bullet #4 and strategy 7. The motion was accepted unanimously 15-0 with a roll call vote.

Update on SOAR funding

- Commissioner Sabin explained that SAMHSA pushed out notice of funding from Feb. 1 to March 15, so she doesn't have an update for this meeting today. Will add to April agenda. Anticipate a reduction because the funding is dictated by overdose fatalities per capita. NH was in the top 15%, we received top funding. Rates in NH are still high, but they have risen in other States, so NH is now down to 24%.
- A bill from Shaheen for states like NH who have not had a drop in OD rates, but moved a cliff should be considered to help support funding. We are currently in SOR 3 year 2. Dept has not made a request for the funding in the budget because we have not received a cut in funding yet. Going through data on everything that has been utilized to date. Anticipate that in the spring they will have a number and write a proposal for summer to spend.
- If we look at right now Strategy 1 is being taken care of by SOR, it is built into their budgets. If funding were reduced, Commissioner Sabin expressed that she would be concerned. OD medication to be broadly available. NH shows as having enough medication, but it is not where and when it is needed. Looking at things carefully for future planning. Will add to April Agenda.

Extension of North Country Health Consortium discussion

- Requesting additional 12 months
- Would need to go back to G&C to extend length.
- Commissioner Hanks motioned to extend 12 more months; Chief Mara seconded the motion with no discussion from the Commission. Roll Call with 14 in favor 0 opposed and Commissioner Riiska abstaining from roll call.

Discussion on prevention needs

- Commissioner Fowler discussed option to push this topic out until the commission has finalized a process for awarding grants. Prevention needs will be added to topics for March meeting.

Discussion on next funding opportunities

- Commissioner Tufts requested that next funding opportunities and the process for awarding them be moved to the beginning of the next meeting to ensure sufficient time to discuss the topic. Discussion on process for awarding grants will be added to the beginning of the March agenda, after public comment.

Update on New Position at DHHS

- No updates at this time.

Update on Settlements and Funds Distribution

- 2 million Publicis settlement will be coming in.
- Walmart, Walgreens, Teva, Allergen no updates on when and how much coming in

Date of Next Meeting and Subjects for Discussion

- March 11, 2024, at 1pm at Dept. of Justice, 1 Granite Place South
- Discussion on process for awarding grants
- Discussion on prevention
- Presentation on youth group prevention program
- Traci would like to bring kinship to the meeting.
- Other Business: over the counter Narcan is available if needed can gain access through Doorway or Sabin.

Adjourn

At the call of the Chair, the meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm by unanimous vote.