

**OPIOID ADDICTION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2019
2:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Rob Sassi, Chairman,
Kevin W. Hines, Joel Sierra, Janet Sutherland, Darcie Miller

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Barry Cheney, Legislator
Thomas Faggione, Legislator
Kevindaryan Lujan, Legislator
Kathy A. Stegenga, Legislator
Wayne Booth, Director of Operations
Mary Pat Smith, Assistant to the County Executive
David M. Hoovler, District Attorney
Robert J. Conflitti, Executive Assistant District Attorney
Paul Arteta, Deputy Sheriff/Captain
Lacey Trimble, Deputy Commissioner, Mental Health
Tammy Rhein, Director of Chemical Dependency Services, Mental Health

Mr. Sassi called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. All committee members were present with the exception of Ms. Miller who was absent.

Mr. Sassi advised the committee that Ms. Trimble and Ms. Rhein were there in place of Ms. Miller and they were going to make a presentation on Changing the Ecosystem. He added that Dr. Waller was in Orange County this past Friday and provided another update on the opioid epidemic. He noted that this is an educational committee as to what is going on with the opioid epidemic. New York State is floating the idea of legalizing recreational marijuana which will bring many other issues for the Mental Health Department. There are other issues with the legalization such as food, candy, lip balm. Recently at local high school a few kids were arrested for bringing gummy bears into schools which consisted of THC. There a myth that if you legalize it because people want that choice, it will eliminate the black market. Unfortunately, it is the exact opposite, the black market thrives because when you legalize recreational marijuana you buy it from a legal dispensary, the THC levels are regulated. He noted that what took place on Friday was a year long culmination of a bunch of people doing so many things to work on fighting the opioid epidemic. We are moving in the right direction. The movement is slow but it is positive. Dr. Waller pointed out that Orange County is ahead of most in the nation with what we are doing here.

Ms. Trimble and Ms. Rhein displayed a power point presentation and highlighted key points. Ms. Rhein stated that they have always had an opiate task force since 2013 so it was not new. Their original goal was to provide a guidance document. Orange County was the second in the state to do this. In fall of 2017, Dr. Waller came in for a week and they did a value base mapping exercise with all of their stakeholders so there were over 200 people for the week. After two years, they went back to review and they implemented every goal they have after doing the mapping which provided a blueprint.

Ms. Trimble and Ms. Rhein handed out a graph which displayed suspected overdoses and the location where they occurred. This assists them with outreach so they know where there are more occurrences and what areas need to dispatch more outreach and provide more education and prevention. They have it set up so they will get an alert if there are spikes of overdoses in neighboring counties. They had two notifications of spikes so far where they had more than five people overdose. They were concerned because there is an increase in death rates and there are less people accessing help which they want to see improved. They came up with a consolidated vision for the future which is to have universal and standard screening so everyone is asking the same questions, it is a validated tool so they can catch everyone early in the continuum of this disease.

Ms. Rhein explained that they need universal and standard screening so everyone is asking the same questions. They are focusing on just one number to call. It is right now a warm line transitioning into a hotline. It will be 24/7 staffed by clinicians so it will meet the requirements to eventually become a certified lifeline. They plan to use the same software as 911 so they can share information back and forth efficiently. She continued to state that she co-chaired with Jim Conklin from ADAC and there are many people that do education from local schools to community based agencies like ADAC. They try to address a targeted group of people that are at risk for one reason or another. Maybe it is because there is alcohol or drug addiction in the family or a history of overdoses so that becomes a more targeted approach. Then there is a selective group and you know they are already using drugs, already in trouble, and need something different than a universal approach.

Ms. Trimble shared that Narcan training is available for all county employees, free of charge on an ongoing basis and kits are available.

Ms. Rhein mentioned that OBGYN has been identified by the federal government as a priority population. They looked at pregnant women who are very much at risk if they are using and pregnant. To have OBGYNs on board and have them able to prescribe medication assisted treatment is really critical. Crystal Run has done a good job in getting this off the ground.

Ms. Rhein mentioned something else that is really important to all the work they do is the amount of suicides due to overdoses and if they are intentional or not. We will not know some of those answers but what we do know is that those numbers have gone up simultaneous to the overdoses going up. The first issue is the opioid epidemic and the second is suicide.

Ms. Trimble addressed medicated assisted treatment and unfortunately treatment for opioid addiction is not very successful without medication assisted treatment on board. They have been educating the community and trying to help the medical community understand the risks and liabilities in prescribing versus not prescribing in certain situations. She added that they are prescribing now for pregnant women who come into jail, Crystal Run is assisting with prescribing so they can have medical assisted treatment in jail. They are prescribing methadone which is the primary medication that is recommended, suboxone for pregnant woman and limbitrol. Medicated assisted treatment is a big help.

Mr. Sassi mentioned that the Town of Wallkill has approval for a clinic.

Ms. Trimble added that they have not been notified of an update since the approval but she knows it is planned to be a 190 bed facility and this will help with services.

Ms. Trimble mentioned that St. Lukes Cornwall Hospital has recently gone live with being able to provide suboxone in the emergency room. They have since shared their policies and procedures with other hospitals. They have seen an increase in the number of prescriptions for suboxone from 2012 to 2017. They have seen a decrease in opioids being prescribed across the county. She stated that there is a grant application that was submitted through Montifore and Orange County is included. It is for \$30 million which will be spread across the counties that it would be awarded to. She mentioned that the state put out a guidance to providers to help if someone calls, this is how they should respond and how they should provide services to these individuals. There are priority populations that need to be seen immediately.

Ms. Rhein stated that when someone has an overdose within an hour and a half to two hours they get handed a piece of paper and are discharged which is inappropriate. They should be on medication, maybe observed for 24 hours. There has been a push for the emergency rooms to be able to provide suboxone.

Ms. Trimble stated that Access Supports for Living was just awarded a large \$2 million certified Community Behavioral Health Center Grant through Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA). This will be a big win for Orange County because it will offer seven days a week coverage medication.

Ms. Rhein commented that about four years ago she and Commissioner Miller were at a professional development event and they were educated on how the state broke down what the CDC published and Orange County at the time was two to three times at a higher rate in the state for prescribing opiates.

Ms. Trimble announced that new services are coming for children which will be community based.

Mr. Lujan asked if there was something they are not spending money on that they should be.

Ms. Rhein responded that something they talk about a lot is marketing. Their field does not do marketing and that is a big piece because that would provide access to services across the board. They are always advocating and developing so the marketing part is not something that would typically be funded.

Mr. Hines asked if there was going to be staff in the 911 center.

Ms. Trimble responded that there will be staff at the 911 center and it will be a separate number that is called. It will allow them opportunity to cross educate. April 1st is the target date to go live.

Mr. Sassi stated that at the upcoming NYSAC conference, they plan to introduce Orange County's memorialization on classifying certain fentanyl analogues as a controlled substance. This passed the full Legislature and now goes to the committee at NYSAC. He added that we are all working in a nonpartisan way to address this.

Mr. Sassi mentioned he spoke with Chairman Brescia about expanding the committee. The committee is designed to be educational. He thought he could simply add people but now he is told it should be done by resolution.

Chairman Brescia advised Mr. Sassi it could be done by consent. The resolution says there are five committee members but he will have a definite number of members before they do a consent resolution.

Chairman Brescia noted that Legislator Lujan was going to be added and maybe having five Legislators is enough. He added that Majority Leader Bonelli was concerned about duplication of services.

Ms. Bonelli stated that some of the other people Mr. Sassi wanted to add are all part of the task force so she did not think it was necessary for them to be on the committee. She questioned why it would need to be done by consent resolution because there is no urgency.

Mr. Sassi replied that there is no urgency. He thought it would be a good idea to add more people. He felt that having someone from ADAC or Catholic Charities would be good so they could add to the conversation.

Ms. Bonelli added that she thought it would be a good opportunity for those sitting at the table today to talk about it.

On the motion of Mr. Hines, seconded by Ms. Sutherland, the meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.