

**OPIOID ADDICTION COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2019
2:15 P.M.**

PRESENT: Rob Sassi, Chairman,
Kevin W. Hines, Kevindaryan Lujan, Janet Sutherland, Darcie Miller

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Thomas Faggione, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Kathy A. Stegenga, Legislator
Brendan R. Casey, Commissioner of Emergency Services
Jim Conklin, Director of ADAC

Mr. Sassi called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. All committee members were present.

Mr. Sassi addressed the three-digit addiction hotline. He stated that he toured the 911 Center and noted that it is a state-of-the-art facility. They have everything set up and ready to go.

Ms. Miller stated that the call center is fully operational and is set up and working well. They are taking calls and receive 50 to 100 calls a day. She was there for a staff meeting the other day and they are working hard on integrating and it is coming together like they envisioned it would. The 311 number to call will take a little longer than expected which was expected to be working on June 1st. The reason is because all of the phone companies need to be in line with the calls being sent to the 311 center and it can take up to twelve weeks. It may take up until August to get the 311 number working. The number is presently 1 (800) 832-1200. Ms. Miller stated that in discussions with Commissioner Casey, there is money available for DWI prevention and they mentioned whatever campaign moves forward, perhaps they can tap into some of those funds. They are targeting opioids because of the death rate connected to it, although all substances need to be addressed. If this goes away, they previously discussed another drug that will come in its place. She pointed out that alcohol is still the most frequently used and abused drug.

Mr. Sassi stated 130 people a day, nationwide, are dying from the opioid epidemic and shows no signs of it letting up.

Ms. Miller mentioned the Eco System meeting she recently attended had a grant that could help fight the epidemic. Columbia University and Montefiore Hospital System applied for a competitive opportunity through the National Institution of Drug Abuse (NIDA) and were awarded \$86 million. It is a reach focused project and the Department of Mental Health is slated to receive \$2 million. By the end of June, they will know if they are one of the first rounds to receive the funding. There are sixteen counties across New York State will be funded. They were selected based on the percentage of deaths. Of the sixteen, eight will be funded this year and the other eight next year. If it is this year it will be in October. The goal

is to reduce the death rate. Last time she looked at our death rates they were averaging 8 deaths a month in the county. That will put them at 96 deaths by the end of this year, which would be a reduction from last year which was 108. There were six overdoses within a 24-hour period just reported yesterday, not fatal, but they would all love to see a reduction.

Ms. Miller explained that New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse put in their budget this year a mandate that all emergency rooms assess for medicated assisted treatment into discharge planning, related to people who come into the emergency room with opioid addiction.

Mr. Conklin stated that he recently attended a two-day training regarding new ethical dilemmas in a digital age with interaction that families, individuals and practitioners have in the community and the protections that need to be in place to safeguard people. He added that they were working on a project with Employment and Training to add peers to his staff that will work with clients to help re-enter the workforce. They have an essential skills training for people who are in recovery and re-entering the workforce.

Mr. Lujan asked if there was a plan in place for housing since there is a connection with the opioid epidemic and lack of housing.

Mr. Sassi stated that people are in crisis and live paycheck to paycheck and in one little incident they can end up on the street. When they do find housing, it is not usually in the best neighborhood.

Mr. Lujan noted that they talked about this a 1 ½ year ago or even longer with trying to address the chronic homelessness. New York State has done a lot but if they are not doing enough, they need to start looking at what are they doing internally to help.

Ms. Miller pointed out that there was a piece of legislation regarding regulatory requirements for sanctions. If the recommended care for someone is inpatient and if they refuse to do inpatient or if they miss a meeting they are sanctioned from their public assistance, therefore, potentially homeless. The current legislation that is being reviewed would remove those sanctions.

Mr. Sassi stated that there is a large sum of money in the Governor's budget for housing which could potentially offer Affordable Housing, formerly called Workforce Housing and now it is called Intergenerational. If a community hears Workforce Housing, they do not want it. He encourages committee members to visit Bella Vista in the Town of Wallkill.

Mr. Casey addressed the hotline number and stated that they already redirected many of the ten-digit numbers that existed for help which go to the 911 center. He noted that it was a great thing and will be good for the county because now instead of dialing a ten-digit number it will be just the three-digit number.

Mr. Sassi addressed moving forward and discussed an action plan. They have money in the budget, and he wanted to discuss some ideas. He wanted to increase awareness; services available; community outreach to children and families; better leverage data technology to target all the great services; expand access to treatment and get the word out; do something with the jails, when a drug related offender is released, they often go right back to drugs and

overdose, how can they reduce that; employment; lobby state lawmakers. Where will the money be best spent.

Mr. Hines mentioned advertising on billboards and let people know there are services such as Cornerstone.

Mr. Sassi stated that pamphlets are often thrown out.

Mr. Casey mentioned posters can be hung up.

Ms. Sutherland asked if someone was working on an idea for billboards, a marketing campaign or designing them.

Ms. Miller stated that there are three agencies involved and pointed out that marketing is expensive and can be costly. They have already done social media postings.

Mr. Casey stated that they have money in Stop DWI and can have a big television set up on a trailer and go from school to school and tie in the drugs. He discussed this with Mr. Cherry and noted that the District Attorney's office has done a wonderful job.

Mr. Sassi stated that once the three-digit helpline goes live, they might be in a better situation to see what the next move will be, what it will cost and what they will do.

On the motion of Mr. Lujan, seconded by Mr. Hines, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.