

**State of Connecticut**  
**State Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services**  
**November 15, 2023**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Present online:** Rebecca Allen, Janice Andersen, Angela Duhaime, Allison Fulton, Holly Hackett, Pamela Mautte, Allyson Nadeau, Denise Paley, Manuel Paris

**DMHAS Staff:** Commr. Nancy Navarretta, Deputy Commr. Colleen Harrington, Cheryl Arora, Marilyn Duran, Sarah Gadsby, Chris McClure, Arthur Mongillo, Shah Sarju

**Excused:** Chrm. John Hamilton, Sharon Castelli

**Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:30 PM by Pamela Mautte.

**Agenda Item 2: Minutes of previous meeting review and action**

The minutes from the October 18th meeting were reviewed and accepted.

**Agenda Item 3: Commissioner's Update**

**Opioid Settlement Committee update** – Commr. Navarretta met with the committee last week and they approved their first recommendation. \$500,000 was approved to spend on harm reduction supplies that will flow from DMHAS because they are the holder of the money. Right now, DMHAS has about \$70 million. That money will be transferred internally to Department of Public Health (DPH) and DPH will add to their contracts with their existing providers, who have run out of harm reduction supplies. And this will allow them to meet the needs in the community. Chris and Katie have been working on the municipal reporting, in the last legislative session, a law was passed that all the municipalities had to report at a minimum, what dollars came in and what they spent that money on in their communities. Chris added that as of this morning, he had heard from 165 municipalities, which is pretty good. Of that 165 that he heard from, 113 have said that they have not spent any of the money yet. The Attorney General's office has been pushing them to the RBHAOs. He anticipates when this report goes public, there'll be a fair amount of people trying to do things quickly. DMHAS will do what they can to get better information and resources out there for the cities and towns to use. And so that is going to be a balancing act throughout the 20-year horizon we have on this program. So if you have connections to build off what Chris is saying, if you have connections with the local towns, municipalities certainly reach out to them. Commr. Navarretta repeatedly offered up the RBHAOs and DMHAS as content experts. The DMHAS portal is still open and closes on the 17<sup>th</sup>, so certainly there is time for anybody on the call to make a recommendation into the portal.

**Other** – Commr. Navarretta shared some good news. Whiting Forensic Hospital has passed the Joint Commission Accreditation for the first time, and this is the first time they applied, and they were granted accreditation so that's very exciting.

DMHAS along with the RBHAOs participated in Drug Take Back Day.

DMHAS had a successful MOUD and a skilled nursing facility conference on the 27th of October and Joanne Montgomery, Gina Florenzano and others participated in that. Really putting a spotlight and a little bit of pressure on what we had been hearing that our population of people is aging and there are a lot of comorbidities. People end up in the hospital and then if they're on methadone, it's been very hard to transition them into a community skilled nursing facility because people are saying they can't handle somebody on methadone. It was a lot of education and strategies for our obligation to take care of all people and not discriminate against people with substance use disorders. It was very successful.

The Governor's Prevention Partnership received a grant award and again working with RBHAOs and others. They are disseminating deterra bags and conversation starters to get the word out in line with Drug Take Back Day and proper disposal of medications that you may have in your cabinets.

DMHAS did an interview with ABC's of Boston about our continuum of gambling services. Connecticut stands out as an example of having both prevention and treatment services in the problem gambling space. They wanted to find out a little bit more information about what DMHAS does.

DMHAS had a large recruitment effort at a Connecticut Counseling Association on the beginning of this month, the 2nd and Commr. Navarretta did some opening remarks there to get people excited about working for the state or working in our provider network that we are accepting LPC's along with social workers to join our workforce.

BH Care had a groundbreaking in North Branford. They are going to be consolidating their services from Branford to North Branford so they can offer all those services under one roof.

Commr. Navarretta met with KTP this morning and that helps keep her grounded and connected to people that are receiving our services. And so just want to be able to listen and hear what people's visions are and where they see the service system going.

#### **Agenda Item 4: River Valley Services, Sarah Gadsby, CEO**

Sarah started the conversation by providing a brief history of RVS. It was founded in 1988 and created by combining a CVH hospital outpatient clinic with new funded for crisis and case management services. They then ended up separating from CVH in 1996 and have grown from what at that time was three programs to a comprehensive community mental health center and they have been able to maintain continuous Joint Commission accreditation since 1999. Today they have a full continuum of outpatient services, respite and residential programming. They have approximately 200 staff and last year they serviced over 1300 clients. Those numbers don't include the numbers that would come out from their mobile response services and crisis intervention team and embedded in the in the Police Department. They have grown and even in the last couple of years, under the opus of their outpatient service delivery. They now have an Act team that they picked that up in September of 2022 and have the capacity to serve 85 clients. They have that in addition to be their next level of care, which is our Community Support Programming. They have two programs out of Middletown and one program out of Old Saybrook. The Community support programs are designed in which when somebody comes into their services they can have a comprehensive wrap around within a multi service delivery team. One of the nice things is the over the last three years their service delivery and all outpatient teams have recovery support specialists embedded. They have a young adult service team. They also have a residential support program embedded into young adult services. RVS also has a Wellness and Recovery center, which has an array of services including self-help groups, peer support, skill building and prevocational services. They have the Behavioral Health Home and those services are embedded into all of their outpatient programming. More of their acute services have a transitional residential program that was acquired about three or four years ago that used to be under the umbrella of CVH and comes under their service delivery. They have an 8-bed respite which they really try to use as a hospital diversion or if somebody's just really needing some additional support. They have a mobile response team. They also have Jail Diversion, Veterans Jail Diversion and the Assist program as well as a newly Crisis Intervention Team which is embedded in the Middletown Police Department. They also have a housing department which oversees 75 housing vouchers in this area, and they have an Admissions Program.

They are trying to really be very much embedded more within the Community with the CIT program. Saint Vincent de Paul is going to be operating their warming center in Middletown and they are working with them very closely to provide all the training to their newly hired staff. Their mobile crisis team will work very closely with the warming center. Their teams are also providing training to the Middletown Police Department around CIT and the Police Department have started to reach out to us to provide support around debriefing for some of their police officers. It has not only helped individuals not get arrested, but also gets people attached to the resources that they need, including RVS services.

They pay a lot of attention to ensuring that they are continuing to use evidence-based services in our service delivery and spend a lot of time ensuring that our staff forget trained around evidence-based services and looking at fidelity, such as the fidelity with the CSP teams and fidelity regarding some of their other evidence-based programming. They had the Women's Consortium come in and pilot their newest fidelity scale regarding trauma informed care. It can help inform RVS with what they need to improve and the quality of services that they are providing our RVS.

Some of the things that they are working on in the future, they meet as a governing body and have come up with an 18-month strategic plan. The plan is continuing to look at expanding quality clinical services within RVS such as focusing on integrated care, expanding services such as MAT and other substance services to support treating the whole person and not referring people out to different service delivery. And ensuring that our citizenship is expanded into our service delivery, enhancing the crisis continuum which they are doing with CIT and mobile crisis being up and running for a while at 24 hours a day, seven days a week and connecting with local providers in supporting things like the warming center because that supports our clients when they're at the at the most need.

At the end of November, RVS should be down to a 5% vacancy rate, which is very good. When they were bringing on the ACT team, they were down 75% of our nurses.

### **Agenda Item 5: RBHAO Report:**

#### **Region 1 – The HUB**

- QPR / Narcan are on pause until the new year.
- Hub team is getting trained in Meetings Re-imagined and dialogue education
- Team is preparing for Giovanna to leave and delegating work
- Kiersten Naumann is our newest employee who will focus on RFW work.
- Melissa Perez-Constatine is another newer program coordinator focusing on LPC / Tobacco work. She is Daniella's replacement.
- RSAB meeting is 12/14 from 12-2. Two organizations will discuss a suicide treatment program and UCC.
- Hosting a lunch and learn on LETS save lives - AFSP with Region 2 RSAB coordinator Taylor Gainey discussing suicide in black communities.
- Hub launched a new campaign called Ok to Talk about it. This was a response that was discussed in our last 2 priority reports and recommendations. Check out our website: [Ok to Talk About It | End Stigma About Mental Health](#)
  - "OK to Talk About It" is a public awareness campaign sponsored by The Hub to encourage people to start talking about mental health and end the stigma that prevents people from seeking treatment."
- RSAB coordinators will be continuing their education on postvention. More details soon.
- Region 1 communities participated in Drug Take Back Day - Some communities reported to us how many pounds they collected in total = 1318.75 pounds
- Top 3 towns/cities that had the most collection was:
  - Stamford = 508.25 (They DO NOT have take back box)
  - Monroe = 285
  - Stratford = 191

#### **Region 2 – APW**

- Continue to hold QPR / Narcan trainings in our region.
- Drug Take Back Day Promotion and support throughout the region
- Held postvention in-person training in Clinton
- Held Adult MHFA training for New Haven Staff
- Participated in many tabling events / fairs / outreach events
- Continue to collect community data through question boxes in towns
- Sponsored/supported and participated in the CT Council for Problem Gambling (CCPG) Conference
- Continue to provide technical assistance to communities who are rebuilding their Local Prevention Councils
- Provided prevention education to parents in several communities

### Region 3 – SERAC

- We had our NE CAC meeting today and provided a vaping awareness training for them. Also working with the SE CAC to schedule a meeting at SMHA hopefully before the end of the year!
- Drug Take Back Day Promotion and support - Supported 6 local Drug Take Back Day efforts, providing supply bags (Willimantic Police Department, East Lyme Police Department, Waterford Police Department, New London Police Department, Brooklyn Schools, and Putnam Police Department).
- 22 Local Prevention Council applications have been received. Twelve are in the works.
- Increasing trainers for narcan/qpr for the region
- Holding biweekly QPR/Narcan training
- Working with SOR mini grantees to coordinate some regional trainings on prescription drugs and opioid use.
- Approximately 6 SOR local community grant have been received for the 23-24 year.
- Met our goal of 10 business for FRW in 2022-2023 and are beginning to outreach to the new businesses for the new fiscal year.
- There were 32 individuals that attended the SERAC sponsored presentation, Perinatal Mental Health: An Overview of Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders.
- Exploring regional data about subpopulations at risk in the region as well as data related to single vehicle fatal car accidents to investigate whether any might present as a suicidal intent at face value.
- Additional Suicide Prevention outreach to rural communities: Mansfield, Windham, Coventry, Woodstock
- On World Mental Day, a Talk Saves Lives Presentation was provided at the Raymond Hill Library.
- Expanding problem gambling awareness team membership
- Expanding community awareness training and behavioral health awareness training for integration of gambling into ATOD/MH

### Region 4 – Amplify

- Amplify sponsored/supported and participated in the CT Council for Problem Gambling (CCPG) Conference
- All Region 4 Catchment Area Councils continue to meet (Sept – May) and most meetings are in-person or offered hybrid to ensure easy access to attend the meetings.
- Multiple Naloxone (Narcan) and suicide prevention trainings
- In- person RGAT meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss region-wide program updates and efforts.
- 73% of communities have received LPC funding (27 towns) and Amplify is working with the remaining towns to support local prevention infrastructure to ensure those communities receive the support they need.
- Amplify is 1 of 5 Partnership for Success (PFS) grantees and implementation is underway.
- 13/14 mini-grant commitments are underway.
- Amplify recognized Red Ribbon Week and bullying awareness for the month of October.
- See pics and updates on social media (FB & IG)! <https://www.facebook.com/AmplifyCT> [https://www.instagram.com/amplify\\_ct/](https://www.instagram.com/amplify_ct/)

### Region 5 – Western CT Coalition

Drug Free Schools Committee-

- ***The Secret of the Apps***, a parent program on technology and gaming is being held on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

### OPIOID WORKGROUPS-

The Danbury Regional Opioid Workgroup and Waterbury Opioid Workgroup each met this month. WCTC provided naloxone for the Mission of Mercy at Coe Park in Torrington, and provided wellness kits, Narcan training and kits for the Nuvance Mission Health Day held at the War Memorial in Danbury, both on 11/4. Many of our towns contributed to the 9167 pounds of unused Rx drugs collected in CT on DEA Take Back Day, 10/28.

Problem Gambling Awareness Team--College campus tabling events, senior centers and partnering with Bettor Choices at regional programs.

The 3 CACs have new leadership. Leah Maier, Director of Harm Reduction and Prevention at Apex Community Care has volunteered as the Chairperson. Chrissy Martel from the Waterbury Health Dept. is chairing CAC 20 and Melissa Thurmond from the Women's REACH program at McCall BH is chairing CAC22.

LPC contracts have been fully executed and SOR applications have been distributed to our 43 towns.

The RSAB is holding a Postvention 101 Training on 11/29 at the Middlebury Police Dept. for all communities in the Central Naugatuck Valley COG area.

**Agenda Item 6: Other Workgroup Updates/General Updates/Announcements**

Tabled

**Agenda Item 7: Potential Future Topics (need for Presenters):**

- *DMHAS Facilities LMHAs Services*
- *RBHAO's Priority Report*
- *DMHAS Statewide Statistics: on who is being served and what the demographics are and what kind of services people are seeking – Liz Feder*
- *Mental Health and Incarceration – Denise Paley*
- *Access to Beds or lack of for mental health and substance use – Denise Paley*

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 beginning at 2:30 PM.