

Illinois Opioid Crisis Response Advisory Council Meeting

November 18, 2019

MEETING MINUTES

IDHS/SUPR Director Kirby welcomed the group and introduced the presenters for today's meeting on the topic of harm reduction approaches being implemented in Illinois.

IDHS/SUPR Updates

Director Danielle Kirby gave the following updates:

- There are no current funding opportunities to announce. The NOFO for the Oxford Housing project closed about 3 weeks ago. Those applications are currently being reviewed and IDHS will be making announcements soon regarding the grantees who will be award project funding.
- The Rush project's provider MAT training program is currently recruiting its 4th cohort. This training will be expected to happen in January and will have about 20 providers enrolled. They are currently recruiting Chicago providers and then will be doing a down-state training in a few months.

Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Updates

Jenny Epstein, Director of Strategic Opioid Initiatives, shared the following updates:

- IDPH received funds through the CDC for the Overdose Data to Action award and just finished the post award approval process that provided a response to weaknesses in the application. IDPH can now present on what the funding will go towards.
- IDPH plans to continue funding activities started through the Opioid Crisis COAG, the work the surveillance team has been doing on the mortality data, capacity building with coroners and medical providers throughout the state, and working to build a better collaboration with the PMP to improve data-sharing to be able to give the best information to providers.
- The next council meeting will present on Overdose Data to Action grant as well as some the work their harm reduction grantees are going.
- There are no active NOFOs currently.

Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) Updates

Dr. Maria Bruni, Senior Policy Advisor, gave the following updates:

- HFS is still working on implementing of their SUPPORT Act grant from the Center for Medicaid & Medicaid Services to do the 18-month needs assessment and analysis of care gaps for Medicaid members accessing MAT and trying to get contracts in place with project partners, which are Office for Medicaid Innovation, Southern Illinois Healthcare, Cook County Hospital and Health Systems.
- The *Report to Congress: Utilization Management of Medication-Assisted Treatment in Medicaid* by MACPAC came out late October. This congressional report examines 8 states' Medicaid utilization management policies that may affect access to 13 different medications for alcohol and OUD. Illinois' Medicaid program carries all of the 13 medications and was the only state to not require prior authorization for MAT. The

results on Illinois's outcomes look good, for 13 medications used to treat SUD. IL was the only state without prior authorizations for MAT. The report can be read here: <https://www.macpac.gov/publication/report-to-congress-utilization-management-of-medication-assisted-treatment-in-medicaid/>

IDHS/Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) Update

Dr. Sarah Pointer, Clinical Director of the Prescription Monitoring Program, gave the following updates:

- The PMP continues to work closely with IDPH on the Overdose Data to Action plan.
- HB 163 is a piece a legislation coming up that that would change from the end of the next day reporting to real time reporting. It also creates funding for the PMP. They were recently award 2.3 million in high-tech funding. Want to make sure they minimize opposition to other items in that bill.
- HB 3889 is still waiting to see what will happen at the federal level with the 42 Part B. If that gets amended, the PMP is prepared to move forward with requiring the OTPs to also report to the PMP. Goal is to produce language that minimizes opposition to that amendment but also address confidentiality concerns beforehand. They are open to work with legislative teams to make sure that moves forward.

Alliance for Collaborative Drug Checking— Presentation

Lydia Karch from the Chicago Recovery Alliance (CRA) presented on CRA's work on Collaborative Drug Checking project in Chicago. Key highlights of the presentation include:

- Drug checking programs are a form of harm reduction that allows people to test their samples. The kinds of services and machines that programs can use require multiple considerations. Timing is important, as well are technological challenges, such as access to internet and limitations to the machines themselves.
- The CRA has developed a battery of techniques to test samples that involve 3 different technologies: FRIR, HPMS, and Fentanyl strips. Combining these techniques provides close to confirmatory testing. Karch reviewed the relative benefits and weaknesses of each method.
 - To date, there have been 138 samples tested in Chicago: 26% have amphetamine; 23% contain diphenhydramine (Benadryl); 17% contain no heroin or Fentanyl, but 50% of those samples tested have a positive fentanyl test strip.
- Moving forward, there is a need to develop better algorithms by feeding it more data to recognize sample, for example, it can't pick up benzos but HPMS doesn't have as option, HPMS doesn't have great sensitivity and specificity rates which makes it hard to deliver confirmatory slides.
- CRA is conducting interviews of people who have used the service, but most of the interviews are post-use of the testing service.

Overdose Prevention Sites/Safer Consumption Spaces – Presentation

Iliana Espinosa-Ravi, Outreach Specialist and Community Overdose Prevention Program Manager at the Chicago Recovery Alliance, presented on Safer Consumption Sites. Highlights from the presentation include:

- An Overdose Prevention/Safer Consumption Site (SCS) is a facility or space where adults can legally consume substances under trained supervision. A wealth of data

shows that SCSs are associated with positive outcomes without increasing community crime or drug use rates. Models generally fall into two categories: medical and community-based programs, which differ in the numbers of barriers to clients, expense to run, and degree to which they are peer-run.

- Illinois and Chicago have shown some interest in opening one. Kim Foxx, at the invitation of CRA, participated in a visit to several safe consumption sites in Toronto. After this visit, she came out in support of Philly's safehouse and held an event with WA state's attorney Dan Satterberg, who wants to look at prosecuting drug cases differently.

Overdose Prevention and Harm Reduction Act (Syringe Exchange Legislation PA101-0356/ SB 1828) – Presentation

Dan Rabbit of the Heartland Alliance (HA) gave an update on SB 1828:

- HA came together last year to look at how to further harm reduction overdose prevention efforts in IL. SB 1828 was passed in August through that effort with massive bipartisan support. The bill has 3 components: sanctions a syringe access program under IDPH; directs SUPR to promote best practices in the DOPP; and expands the data included in the annual opioid crisis report compiled by SUPR.
- Participants in Syringe Access Programs are 3x more likely to enter treatment than those who don't participate.
- Any group can easily apply to become a Syringe Access Program. Applying to become a Syringe Services Program (SSP) requires writing a formal letter to IDPH about their intent to become a program. Soon, prospective programs can register via the website (forthcoming). The information required to register are: the geographic area and populations intended for the program to serve; a protocol for disposing and distributing syringes; providing safe consumption education and linkages to SUD treatment/mental health treatment; and Narcan or other opioid antagonist distribution.
- The advantage of registering for program is that the law provides immunity to staff, volunteers, and participants for possession of paraphernalia, drug testing supplies, and residue. The state has offered to assist in outreach to law enforcement to make them aware of this component.
- If you are interested in joining the harm reduction and recovery coalition Illinois, let Dan Rabbitt know: drabbit@heartlandalliance.org
- A CDC syringe service program homepage, with a webinar coming up: <https://www.cdc.gov/ssp/index.html>

New Business

- Ally from an Ounce of Prevention's Childcare advisory committee announced that they passed recommendations on November 13th to allow single parents participating in SUD eligibility for the Childcare Assistance Program. DHS is reviewing the recommendations now.

December Council Meeting:

There is currently no December meeting scheduled. The council will reconvene in January. The January meeting date will be confirmed next week.