

Illinois Opioid Crisis Response Advisory Council Meeting

June 15, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

IDHS/SUPR Director Danielle Kirby welcomed the group.

IDHS/SUPR Updates

Director Kirby gave the following updates:

- IDHS is working with other state agencies on the restoration of Illinois and ongoing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been numerous changes in the field to ensure that people with SUD/OD receive services, including increased use of telehealth. SUPR is interested in providers' experience with telehealth; providers are encouraged to share their experiences with their contract director and/or Director Kirby.
- There has been an increase in opioid overdose deaths since March 2020. Data to date suggest that this spike is due to COVID-19 and social distancing (i.e., increased isolation), individuals not being able to access in-person services and supports, and an increase in fentanyl in the drug supply. SUPR is addressing this in several ways: working with Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) programs and Drug Overdose Prevention Programs (DOPP) to ensure that naloxone and naloxone training are widely-available; examining local data and deploying naloxone in communities that are experiencing increased fatal overdoses; ensuring that patients have access to methadone via a blanket methadone take-home policy that allows patients to have a two week supply of methadone; and working with Opioid Treatment Providers (OTPs) to ensure that patients have naloxone.

IDHS/Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) Updates

Dr. Sarah Pointer, Clinical Director of the PMP, gave the following updates:

- The PMP is working with an epidemiologist from Southern Illinois University to analyze PMP data and identify high prescribers. The PMP also continues to work with the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) on academic detailing for pharmacists.
- There has been an increase in PMP connections: 696 healthcare organizations and 10,700 individuals are currently connected to the PMP.
- The PMP has begun discussions with pilot sites for the Admission, Discharge, Transfer (ADT) notification system. This initiative uses PMP EHR connections to alert prescribers and SUD treatment providers regarding opioid overdoses, which would layer in additional data to support rapid deployment activities and allow providers to more quickly connect people to care.

IDPH Updates

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

- IDPH is monitoring the increase in opioid overdoses and working to provide updated data on these overdoses. IDPH recently hired an epidemiologist who will focus primarily on opioids and opioid-related data, including the spike in fatal overdoses.
- Information on IDPH's response to COVID-19, including contact tracing, is available on its website: <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/contact-tracing>.

Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) Updates

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

- A provider notice was recently posted on the HFS website regarding the temporary rate increase for SUD treatment services for March 1-June 30, 2020. This temporary rate increase is intended to ease financial burdens related to decreased admissions that providers have experienced as a result of COVID-19. Providers are encouraged to contact HFS if they need to resubmit billing.

Governor's Opioid Overdose Prevention and Recovery Steering Committee

Director Kirby gave the following updates:

- The Steering Committee held its first meeting at the end of May. They received an update on the Council and its current work. As outlined in the Executive Order, the Steering Committee will guide the development of the next Statewide Opioid Action Plan (SOAP). We will be updating the Implementation Report as part of the SOAP process evaluation this summer. During late summer and early fall, we will work with Council and the Committees to review the updated Implementation Report and develop recommendations for the next SOAP.

Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances

Chelsea McCarron, Health Resources in Action (HRiA), Project Director of the Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances gave the following update:

- The Helpline will conduct a website audit to examine how it can increase traffic to the site. The Helpline is seeking input from current and potential users of the website to help with the audit. Tasks include navigating the Helpline website and participating in a 30-minute Zoom interview. Ten English site users and 3-4 Spanish site users are needed. Interviews will be conducted between June 22-July 10, 2020. If interested, please contact Ms. McCarron at cmccarron@hria.org.

Statewide Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting Systems (SUDORS) Data Presentation

Maryann Mason, Ph.D., Director, SUDORS, gave the following presentation (see attached handouts).

- SUDORS is a public health surveillance system that links information about the “who, when, where, and how” from data on overdose deaths and provides insights about why they occurred. SUDORS is part of the CDC-funded Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) initiative.
- SUDORS collects information on opioid-involved overdose deaths in Illinois counties from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports and toxicology reports. It also trains coroners/medical examiners on best practices on scene investigation for suspected overdose deaths (see www.luriechildrens.org/sudors for more information this training). Counties' participation in SUDORS is voluntary. To date, 30 counties participate in SUDORS. Data are available from 2016-June 2019.
- SUDORS data show exponential increases in suspected overdose fatalities in March-June 2020 due to COVID-19; these also was a spike in overdose deaths in early 2020 (pre-COVID-19). Data also show that fentanyl is increasing involved in overdose deaths.
- Racial disparities in overdose deaths are increasing. SUDORS data show that in 2018-2019, overdose death rates for non-Hispanic Whites decreased by 6.5% but increased for non-Hispanic Blacks by 9.1% and by 4.1% for Hispanics. One of the largest clusters of overdose deaths is in Cook County on Chicago's West, South and far South sides. Other clusters are in Springfield, East St. Louis, Rockford, Joliet, Kankakee and northeast Lake County.
- SUDORS data can be used for monitoring trends over time (e.g., identifying geographic hotspots), understanding factors associated with overdose (e.g., recent release from prison), linking to other data such as the PMP, informing overdose fatality review and research (e.g., differences in hospital versus community overdose deaths). Data also can be used to inform and evaluate interventions, such as the Block by Block program that provides naloxone training to residents in communities highly impacted by overdose deaths.
- SUDORS Community Outreach Specialists are available to speak at community events and shared SUDORS data at a local. For events in Chicago and northwestern Illinois, contact Ed Boone (eboone@luriechildrens.org). For events in central and southern Illinois, contact Lisa Snow (lisnow@luriechildrens.org).
- Discussion: Council members noted that the fentanyl is more likely to be a factor in community versus hospital deaths. Interventions such as safe consumption sites/overdose prevention sites that can test drugs for fentanyl could help save lives.

Jurisdictional-Level Vulnerability Assessment Project in Illinois

Jenny Epstein, IDPH, Cara Bergo, UIC, and Mai Tuyet Pho, University of Chicago, gave the following presentation.

- The Jurisdictional-Level Vulnerability Assessment Project develops zip-code level vulnerability assessments that identify areas in Illinois that are at high risk for opioid overdoses, HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV). It is based on CDC responses to identify jurisdictions vulnerable to outbreaks of infectious disease similar to the HIV outbreak in 2011-2014 in Scott County, Indiana. The goal of the project is to better understand, prepare for and reduce opioid overdoses and related transmission of infectious diseases by identifying vulnerable areas in the state at risk for opioid overdose, HIV and HCV.
- Data sources include 2017-2018 Illinois Hospital Discharge data (non-fatal overdoses), Vital Records (drug-related fatal overdose data), Infectious Disease Reporting System (Hepatitis C counts), Illinois HIV Surveillance System (HIV count and risk factors) and 2013-2017 5-year estimate Census variables (population and other social factors). Zip code and county data are explored.
- The project has developed a conceptual model of community syndemic progression that examines the role of social and environmental factors that predispose a community to disease vulnerability, how these factors contribute to community outbreak of a disease (e.g., HIV) and the role of that outbreak on exposure to a second disease (e.g., opioid overdose), the adverse interactions between disease outbreaks, enhanced disease transmission and progression across communities (i.e., community “spillover”), and negative health outcomes.
- While analyses are ongoing, initial results suggest that vulnerable areas for high overdose and HCV are predominantly rural and have elevated rates of disability, poverty, non-high school completion, vacant housing and economic inequality. Many of these areas are in southern Illinois and are areas that may particularly need greater investment in MAR and health resources.
- Prevention interventions that should be considered for vulnerable communities include: increasing access to harm reduction services including syringe services programs, naloxone and fentanyl testing, testing for injection-related infectious diseases, and linkage and access to treatment and care including mental health, primary care, and HIV medical care for persons diagnosed with HIV.
- Discussion: Council members recommended the vulnerability assessment data be used to guide state and local prevention efforts. They also suggested that these data should be brought to the attention of the Steering Committee and inform discussions on harm reduction, including fentanyl testing. Fentanyl testing resources recommended by Council members include: <https://harmreduction.org/issues/fentanyl> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INSdu-Rlyfk&feature=emb_logo.

August Council Meeting

Due to busy summer vacation schedules, the Council will not meet in July. The next Council meeting will be Monday, August 17, 2020 from 1-3 PM. This will be a virtual meeting. The meeting agenda and information on how to connect to the meeting will be sent out to the Council closer to the meeting date.