



# COUNTY OF HUNTERDON NEW JERSEY

## HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MENTAL HEALTH BOARD



908-788-1253  
908-788-1372  
908-806-4204 FAX

P.O. Box 2900  
Flemington, New Jersey 08822-2900  
(Location: 8 Gauntt Place)

[humansvc@co.hunterdon.nj.us](mailto:humansvc@co.hunterdon.nj.us)

**REFERENCE:**

- Council
- Mental Health
- Youth
- Disability Services
- Substance Use Disorder
- Transportation

Approved March 16, 2022

### LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE

#### Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 2:30 p.m.  
Via Webex

#### MEMBERS PRESENT

L. Smallwood      M. Logan  
D. Laclair         K. Schwartz  
J. Giotis

#### STAFF

S. Becker  
S. Nekola  
M. O'Reilly  
A. DeLuca  
M. Sweeney  
R. Neiber

#### GUESTS/PACADA LIAISON

D. Pagaduan  
F. Crisologo  
C. Moore  
R. Denlinger

#### **I. CONVENE: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT:**

“This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been provided in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News. A public notice announcing this meeting has also been placed in the lobbies of the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services, the first floor of the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street Building #1, Flemington, NJ; the first floor of the Route 12 County Complex, Building #3, 314 State Route 12, Flemington, NJ and County Clerk’s Office.”

The regular meeting of LACADA was opened at 2:30 p.m. with the reading of the Open Public Meetings statement. Introductions were made.

Introductions were made by all participants.

S. Becker stated she is with the Department of Human Services as the Assistant Mental Health Administrator and Drug & Alcohol Director.

Alyssa DeLuca stated she is with the Department of Human Services as a Program Development Specialist; County Alliance Coordinator.

M. O'Reilly stated she is the Human Services Administrator.

C. Moore stated she is the Executive Director for Flemington Treatment Services in Ringoes.

J. Giotis stated he is an educator.

R. Neiber stated he is with the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office.

D. Laclair stated she is a Case Manager for the Hunterdon County STAR Program; the Support Team for Addiction Recovery.

D. Pagaduan stated he is with Pinnacle Treatment Centers at the Flemington facility.

F. Crislogo stated he is a captain with the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office.

K. Schwartz stated he is a part of the recovery community and supports Operation Helping Hands and is a peer recovery coach at Open Door Recovery Center.

M. Logan stated she is a Lebanon Borough resident and community member.

M. Sweeney stated he is the Executive Assistant Prosecutor in Hunterdon County. He works on the Narcotics Task Force with R. Neiber.

R. Denlinger stated she is with Prevention Resources Open Door Recovery Center.

S. Nekola stated she is with the Hunterdon County Division of Social Work Services.

## II. MINUTES:

R. Neiber made a motion and M. Logan seconded to approve the minutes of November 3, 2021. All were in favor. The motion passed.

## III. REPORTS:

- A. County Update: M. O'Reilly conveyed that at the January 4, 2022 reorganization meeting, Commissioner Lanza was sworn in as the Commissioner Director and Commissioner Rich was sworn in as the Commissioner Director. The Commissioner liaison for Human Services will continue to be Commissioner Van Doren. Mr. Van Doren was unable to make the meeting. M. O'Reilly stated the Emergency Rental Assistance Program offered by the Department of Community Affairs stopped accepting applications effective December 15, 2021.

There are some short-term rental assistance programs available in the County either through the Division of Social Work Services or through Family Promise of Hunterdon County. If this rental assistance program opens again, the information will certainly be shared.

The utility assistance programs offered through DCA are still in effect and still have funding. Information had been forwarded out about a mortgage assistance program that will be coming out. The application is not available on the website. As soon as this information is available, she will ensure that it will be shared with the group.

The Point In Time Count is managed by the Tri-County Continuum of Care on an annual basis. The count will take place on the evening of January 25. Social Service agencies will be interviewing clients and completing the Point In Time survey with them. The survey is similar to the one that was used last year. People who are staying in motels possibly couch surfing, people who are literally street homeless and people who may be in the warming center will be screened and assisted with completing the survey. This is a mandatory street count this year.

This count drives a lot of the funding that the CoC receives from HUD, so performance is critical for the CoC to continue to receive that funding.

- B. Municipal Alliance Program:** A. DeLuca conveyed that so far for 2022, Voorhees Municipal Alliance, Central Hunterdon Municipal Alliance and Delaware Valley Municipal Alliance have already met. North Hunterdon Municipal Alliance will be meeting tomorrow, January 20 and South Hunterdon Municipal Alliance is scheduled to meet on Monday, January 24, 2022. Across the board, all alliances are always welcome to new members. They want to build their membership and increase the participation. Attendance at the alliance meetings has been adequate. Two alliances are sitting without coordinator and a chair. It is imperative that all of the alliances have a chairperson and a coordinator. Hard efforts to secure those two vacancies have been ongoing.

In regard to prevention programming, the alliances are going to continue with the same programs as last year. Just about every alliance had run at least one program so far except for South Hunterdon. They had not and are in the process of planning when they are going to run their programs. Central Hunterdon Municipal Alliance had already completed a majority of their programs. Delaware Valley Municipal Alliance, North Hunterdon Municipal Alliance and Voorhees Municipal Alliance have completed at least one program each. The programs have been going well and Prevention Resources, Inc. is very happy to be back in the schools in working with the students.

For the fiscal year 2023 county municipal alliance plan; the grant is moving along very nicely so far. Out of the 26 municipalities, A. DeLuca is awaiting on five forms to be returned. As part of the grant application process, the CASS committee is required to vote on the plan which had been accomplished the prior week at their January 12, 2022 meeting. She conveyed she is looking for a preliminary vote from LACADA to vote on the grant plan for the fiscal year 2023. The plan is exactly the same as what it was the last fiscal year. It's level funding. The programs will remain exactly the same, so voting will be identical to the prior year. A. DeLuca asked for a motion to preliminary vote on the grant plan for the fiscal year 2023.

M. Logan made a motion and J. Giotis seconded to preliminarily vote on the grant plan for the fiscal year 2023.

Alyssa DeLuca thanked the LACADA members for their support and vote.

- C. PACADA Update:** S. Becker stated that PACADA will be conducting the same business as LACADA will be during the Executive Session. She conveyed she is hearing a lot of struggles in the agencies with COVID. Unfortunately, there is a lot of staffing issues. A lot of agencies are experiencing both staff and clientele are getting sick. As far as the agencies that have residential individuals, quite a lot are getting sick, both staff and clients; this is across the state. The agencies are running into issues with people being in quarantine and having enough staff to cover. A lot of the drug and alcohol agencies are having trouble keeping enough staff that are licensed. S. Becker noted that DMHAS is aware of these struggles but do not have a solution or anyone yet. She stated she would keep the committee posted.
- D. HSAC Update:** M. O'Reilly stated she did not have an update. The council had not met since October 2021. HSAC is due to meet on January 26, 2022. She conveyed that at the October meeting, discussion about the Department of Children and Families Needs Assessment took place. The two-year Needs Assessment is coming due in 2022 but will have a six month pause.

S. Becker announced that New Jersey voted to change drug court to recovery court officially. This now embodies what the state is doing on working on recovery and improving life skills. This is very exciting!

Additionally, New Jersey voted to make it easier to have Harm Reduction Centers. A Harm Reduction Center can include things such as needle exchanges, information on recovery and all different practices to reduce harm. There is conversation about whether there will be safe injection sites. So far, New York is looking into this as well. S. Becker will be attending a DHMAS meeting the following week with Harm Reduction Centers on the agenda. More to follow.

**IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** No Report.

**V. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Overdose Fatality Review Team: End of Year Report** – S. Becker conveyed who was on the OFRT and not all information can be disclosed due to the confidentiality of the data. She stated that an OFRT End of Year Report had been included in the LACADA Meeting Packet. She highlighted a few items. The Overdose Fatality Review Team started in 2019 and there had been seven cases so far. She noted the variety of members and participating agencies that are contributing the OFRT.

In covering the decedent case information, S. Becker highlighted the following: In 2021, the Team has reviewed 5 cases. The ages of the decedents range from 26-52, three were male, one female and one identified as female. In the review of the cases the following data has been identified: 100% (5) white, non-Hispanic 60% (3) heterosexual (others unknown) 80% (4) death ruled accidental (other unknown) 80% (4) use of heroin and fentanyl indicated 80% (4) had contact with law enforcement 20% (1) administered naloxone 20% (1) naloxone was not administered 60% (3) naloxone administration unknown 40% (2) had children 80% (4) died in a residence 20% (1) died in a public place 40% (2) had a criminal history (1 in Drug Court) 20% (1) diagnosed with PTSD 40% (2) had spent some time in a residential treatment program 5 20% (1) enrolled in medication assisted treatment 40% (2) were diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder We did not have any reports of decedents having a mental health diagnosis (other than ADHD). We also did not have any reports of childhood trauma or social services involvement.

For identified patterns and trends, all of the cases studied, the decedents had a history of substance use disorder. However, only one was enrolled in MAT (Vivitrol). In the next-of-kin (NOK) interview the parent of this decedent shared that the decedent faced barriers to receiving Vivitrol (cost and insurance coverage).

S. Becker stated there have been some successes in getting the confidentiality process down. Before every meeting, all members must sign a confidentiality form. Every case that is covered is assigned a number, so when it is released to the general group those names are not released; they never refer the decedent by their names. They are also given the names that are to be reviewed that quarter ahead of time. All of that is password protected and various steps are taken to ensure to again, maintain that confidentiality. The names are not to be shared with anyone outside of the group and they are not to discuss with other members in the agency.

S. Becker provided some recommendations. Each case reviewed had its own unique set of challenges and issues which decedents faced during their lives and led them to opioid misuse. It

was noted that many of the decedents had family support while they were in active addiction. During the next of kin interviews the families expressed anger and frustration about the treatment systems when trying to get their family member help. The team noted that often families have to act as case managers. In each one of the cases reviewed, the decedents could have benefited from a case manager to oversee their treatment or a Peer Recovery Support Specialist. They needed someone to guide and support them on their recovery journey.

S. Becker provided a general idea about how the process works. First, a list of names is gathered by the Health Department, the Prosecutor's Office and the medical examiners. The team does not cover cases that are open or still being investigated by the Prosecutor's Office, so they ensure the cases are closed and cleared and then the cases will be discussed. The list is provided to the Overdose Fatality Review Team members. Typically, they have about four or five names and again, it is forwarded in a locked document and the password is sent separately. The team is given about a month or two to research each individual and will do one case at a time. Everyone checks out their private databases whether there is access to Medicare or access to the treatment databases. The Prosecutor's Office takes care of the law enforcement end of it. At that point, the team will enter into a confidential database all of the contact any of the agencies had with the individual and anything that is known about them. Someone conducts a next of kin interview for the team. This person will contact any known family members or friends of this individual and see if they are willing to talk. They are given brief resources and any information they have can be added to this database. The cases are then discussed, and recommendations are made and discussed to hopefully improve circumstances.

S. Becker provided an example that came out of Ocean County. Children experience trauma when there is an overdose in the home or when their parents are arrested. She continued conveying schools are notified that "something" happened in a child's home, but no specifics are provided, therefore, if the child is having a rough day at school, personnel will provide the child with extra support. Counties are now adopting this practice throughout the state.

- B. Reminder of CCP 2024-2027 Planning This Year:** S. Becker stated the CCP planning year is this year. The committee has exactly one year to write the plan. She explained this is the County Comprehensive Plan that spends all of the Chapter 51 monies which is funding by the state for drug and alcohol for adults. Everything that is in the plan is how the monies are spent. The monies cannot be spent on anything else; only on what is documented in the plan.

Upon giving credit to R. Neiber, S. Becker stated she had some tentative ideas she has been thinking about, as well as heard a lot of stimulant use around the county. She stated that Frank Crisologo will be speaking about stimulant use. She believes that in the next CCP which will be from 2024 to 2027, the committee may want to look at getting some education going and talking to the Prosecutor's Office about what the committee can do to lend aid to the stimulant use. Additionally, an idea of adding funding to the Overdose Fatality Review Team in case the state funding goes away. There tends to be a debate in DHMAS right not about whether the Health Department is going to fund it or eventually they are going to put it under LACADA, which is why she is advising the committee of this possibility. Some of the funding may go there. Depending on what the budget looks like, some funding may go to the Innovation Grant; the Hope One Van. Another potential idea is to pare with the Prosecutor's Office and help with the Helping Hands program.

F. Crisologo introduced himself as a captain in the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office. He stated that in 2021, there were 78 overdoses and 19 deaths. These numbers are obtained

strictly through law enforcement contacts. He does not believe the numbers come from the Hunterdon Medical Center. S. Becker stated she gets her numbers from NJ Cares. F. Crisologo commented the numbers are trending upward. He believes this is happening because of the percentage of fentanyl that is being found in a lot of the narcotics. The evidence coming out of the lab reflects that just about 100% of the overdoses state fentanyl is present.

R. Neiber conveyed that there is an uptick in methamphetamine. Overall, there is a rise in methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and straight-up fentanyl. He echoed F. Crisologo's comment that fentanyl is found in almost 100% of overdoses. As far as the confiscated bags of heroin that are sent to the lab, approximately more than 85% of that heroin and fentanyl are in a mixed bag. There are reports of 100% of fentanyl are found in the bags. It is cheaper for the dealer to fill those bags with fentanyl than it is with heroin. R. Neiber conveyed there is also an uptick in the distribution of pills; oxycodin, oxycodone and Xanax are the main pills, as well as illicit business on the street. The Prosecutor's Office continues to investigate all fatal overdoses and if it is fit, they are prosecuted.

M. Sweeney spoke to the legality of it. About five or so years ago, some of the counties, Ocean and Monmouth Counties, took the lead statewide in looking at a lot of overdose scenes as crime scenes. The Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office began looking as drug overdoses as crime scenes and continue to look at them as that. M. Sweeney stated there were several successful investigations over the last couple of years in charging, indicting, getting pleas and very good sentencing. There was a case that went to trial and received a conviction that ended up with a very significant state prison sentence. There are very challenging cases, and they look to those situations as a potential crime, a prosecutable offense. The very significant deterrence effect is what drives them in that. The Prosecutor's Office is letting people know that making money off selling narcotics that there will be significant cost of doing business. These are significant first-degree charges and significant jail time sentences. Statewide, these are challenging cases and look at every one of those as a chance to make the cases. They had come a long way. The trends are increasing and with that, some very successful investigations and prosecutions done for the better of everyone.

R. Neiber thanked M. Sweeney and reinforced there has been a huge transition in law enforcement over the course of the last 10 years or more where there has been a lot more outreach and that is big with Operation Helping Hands. The Prosecutor's Office is excited about the new Operation Helping Hands platform and moving forward with the van project, which hopefully will come to fruition late this year. The office is also excited about partnering with S. Becker and M. O'Reilly. He noted the auto industry is hurting them but am hopeful to see that out on the road by July give or take. This is something the county can be proud of. A large portion of the grant will be to purchase the van and get it loaded up with the necessities they will need. As per the grant, the van must be out on ten different occasions, which has to be completed by August. R. Neiber stated the van will be present at their staple locations as well as the 4H Fair and a lot of community parks, etc.

S. Becker inquired with the Prosecutor's Office personnel if there is a way to close the gap between what statistics of overdoses their office has versus what NJ Cares has. She understands some of them do not necessarily reach law enforcement if an individual dies at the hospital. Is there a way to bridge the numbers and report that information? F. Crisologo replied that is something that must be addressed. The office will partner with NJ Cares and figure out how they are gathering up their numbers to try and understand why they are different and try to coordinate. S. Becker will provide whatever data she has to F. Crisologo. D. Pagaduan

suggested to contact Kelly Levy at 973-648-7446, at the District Attorney's Office about NJ Cares.

**VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION: (All Voting Members May Remain During this Discussion.)**

S. Becker was able to share publicly before conducting an Executive Session is that Hunterdon Drug Awareness Program had closed and declared bankruptcy. They had gone out of business. They are one of the County's biggest Chapter 51 providers. This Executive Session will go into what step processes are required. She asked for purposes of this session, only members are to remain to participate in this meeting. S. Becker exclaimed if resources are needed and place to refer clients to please contact her and she will provide that information to assist.

S. Becker conducted a review of an outside agency that had contracted with the County and declared bankruptcy. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made and seconded by membership. The motion passed and there being no further business. The meeting was adjourned at 3:46 p.m. The next meeting of LACADA is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at 2:30 pm via Webex.