

**GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON DRUG OVERDOSE**  
**FIRST MEETING – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2014 1:30 – 2:30 pm**  
**RI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH                      DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS CENTER (DOC)**

Michael Fine, MD, Director of Health, opened the meeting with a welcome at 1:30 PM. Craig Stenning, Director of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) also expressed greetings. Together they talked about the tragedy of the drug problem in Rhode Island and the importance of the group collaborating to generate new ideas and directions to address the epidemic. Dr. Fine gave examples of what is going on in Rhode Island and the nation, and stressed the importance of including law enforcement in solutions. Dr. Fine and Director Stenning thanked their staff and partners for the excellent work and dedication they had brought to the issue. Attendees introduced themselves, telling a little about their role in the agency they represented. See attached attendance list.

Traci Green, MD, representing the Drug Overdose Prevention and Rescue Coalition, talked about the success of the coalition and its four workgroups to date, including the first responder tool kit and training that is being provided to law enforcement and the increase in access to and availability of naloxone. She also discussed tracking trends, and mentioned that heroin use is higher in New England than in other parts of the nation. She indicated that Rhode Island needs:

- Health insurance coverage of naloxone
- Training on the use of naloxone and the Good Samaritan Law in high school graduation requirements
- Funding

James McDonald, MD, representing the Prescription Drug Abuse Collaborative, spoke about the role that prescription drugs play in addiction and overdose, and invited the group to attend an upcoming workshop sponsored by HEALTH's Board of Medical Licensure & Discipline to be held September 10, 2014 5:30 – 8:30 PM or September 27, 2014 8:00 – 11 AM at the Warren Alpert Medical School, Lecture Hall 170. He gave an update on the work of the Collaborative and its four subcommittees and talked about the need to train doctors in pain and addiction management, and safer prescribing. He spoke about the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PMP) being under-utilized and efforts to increase utilization. Multiple states have mandatory PMP utilization, but not all Rhode Island stakeholders are ready to take that step.

Ana Novais, Executive Director of the Department of Health, Division of Community, Family Health and Equity, spoke about a newly forming Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Task Force, with both HEALTH and BHDDH representation, that will work to 1) inform and educate about neonatal abstinence syndrome to change the culture of opioid use and reporting practices, 2) improve the PMP to be used to inform decisions, communications and legislation, 3) integrate screening and naloxone use into health systems, and 4) develop a formal communication plan to prevent and improve treatment of addiction during pregnancy. She talked about the varying needs of mothers in treatment and about the need to support their families as well.

Linda Mahoney, from BHDDH, reported on the August 11-13, 2014 SAMSHA Prescription Drug Abuse Policy Academy, which was attended by BHDDH, Health and several top state leaders.

The four major objectives to be continued are to 1) increase the use and the infrastructure of the RI Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and leverage the data to provide meaningful analytics so that informed decisions can be made, 2) evaluate and utilize evidence based screening and risk assessment tools to screen for prescription abuse and misuse to assess for indicators for treatment referrals, naloxone or medicated assisted therapies, 3) develop a strategy for rolling out to all providers, a formal communication plan to reduce the stigma of addiction and the need to increase supportive recovery actions, and 4) assemble a team of professionals to work on developing a multi-disciplinary system, with common policies, aimed at 15 to 35 year old child bearing aged women to prevent neonatal abstinence syndrome and to improve outcomes for families.. RI leaders learned that Rhode Island had received national attention for their innovative work addressing the epidemic of drug overdoses.

Dr. Fine discussed action steps for group consideration, and addressed questions from the group. The group talked about proposed changes to PMP regulations that would require alerts to be sent if more than one prescription is submitted, and allowing non-prescribers to check PMPs. Mandatory CSR registration came up for consideration, as well. There is work taking place to improve the flow of information between contiguous states. Pharmacists are using the PMP but not at a level that is needed. Regulation 2801 mandates medication parity and could include naloxone. A Single Sign On icon on physician lap tops might facilitate use. Making PMP part of Current Care and other programs might also help, and efforts are under way to do that. PMP sustainability will require funding.

Director Stenning talked about treatment and recovery and the need to get as many people as possible referred to appropriate levels of care. Individuals can be treated in an out-patient setting and not everyone needs or meets the criteria for residential. Physicians can now get direct assistance for any individual who needs a referral through a new pilot called the Physician Consult Program at Bridgemark Addiction Recovery Services. The phone number to contact Bridgemark for physician assistance is 401-781-2700 and for TTD – 354-7640.

Questions were asked about the disconnect between people, programs and resources. A member of the group brought up the fact that physician's assistants and other non-MD professionals are often overlooked and should be considered in messaging and programming. A conversation began on how to engage more health centers in solutions.

In conclusion, Dr. Fine asked the group to provide feedback on the agenda action items, and to reach out to others who should be represented at future meetings. The group agreed to meet again and will likely hear from HEALTH's messaging group at the next meeting.

Dr. Fine and Director Stenning thanked everyone for their participation. The meeting adjourned at 2:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lauren Counts, Linda Mahoney and Jan Shedd