

10/4/22 Opioid Abatement Committee

Present:

Amy Malone – Rochester City Councilor

Raymond Negron – Executive Director at Positive Transitions

Nicole Rodler – Rochester PD Juvenile Division Coordinator

Palana Belken – NH Harm Reduction Coalition

Ashley Desrochers – Rochester City Councilor

Ashley Wright – Strafford County Public Health Network

Michele Halligan-Foley – Rochester Career & Technology Education Director

Tim Fontneau – Rochester City Councilor

4:37 Meeting started

Everyone introduced themselves as there were two new people from last month's meeting. Malone stated that John Burns was going to try and make it and she will catch him up if he doesn't

Malone did a quick recap of last month's meeting and the discussion of how the funding can be used

Desrochers asked if the funding would keep coming directly to this municipality and Malone stated yes

Fontneau asked what evidence-based practices were. Malone stated there are three types: Prevention, been addicted and need recovery, and still addicted

Malone stated that the community needs an assessment to show what we have for data and what we still need to get

Desrochers stated that the Strafford Regional Planning Commission has some data from the community, but she is not sure if it has been published

Malone stated that the Opioid Response Network has a website that has evidence-based practices. Desrochers stated that that made her think of what other resources were out there. Malone stated that is why the committee has John Burns, Palana Belken, and Ray Negron because they can help with what is or is not working. There isn't anything on a city level combined on what works and what doesn't

Belken stated that the NH Harm Reduction Coalition does have data that is specific to this area that would be worth looking into and that they do an exchange twice a week in

Rochester. Malone stated that shows that Rochester is doing some things. Belken stated it shows changes and what has changed say because of covid

Malone stated that there is a Rochester Mental Health Meeting on 11/2/22 for the public and this is an opportunity to add questions to the survey

Desrochers asked what Malone meant by questions. Malone stated that the meeting is with the school department and community members that will do group work. The goal is to have questions

Malone stated that was it for the first month and it was mostly just data collecting. There is some money but it's not substantial

Wright asked if they found out if the money could be used for food. Malone stated she should know that tonight and she has another potential funder

Fontneau stated that there are a lot of programs in place. Once the committee figures out what is working the best they could support some of these places and helping the existing organizations. Desrochers agreed stating that they can share resources but also give money since they accessed there is a gap on what is needed

Rodler stated that they can purchase deter bags with this money. Wright stated that they can get them for free with their MOU but it is a process. Rodler stated she thought that Cora Long couldn't get any more

Rodler stated that she pulled drug event data that the police department responded to from 2018-2022. There were 146 drug events and 35 overdoses, however she hesitates on putting those numbers out there because it looks like they are ahead of the issue because the numbers drop. However, the only positive is fatalities have dropped. The PD has the first police commission to put naloxone in officer's hands. The data looks like they are way ahead of it, but the reality is they aren't getting the same calls for service. Now, if it is an overdose the police can't arrest. Because of the good Samaritan law, the numbers in the beginning shifted from people not being arrested. The data is hard to look at for a reporting perspective.

Belken stated they record data of people telling them they administered narcan and how many doses

Rodler stated if people are using at a drug event and narcan is used, it's still an overdose even if EMS shows up and they don't use narcan

Desrochers asked if the Harm Reduction Coalition would have the data. Rodler stated that the coalition would have the surface. The PD has the stories.

Belken stated you can look over the course of years based on an identifying number but not names

Desrochers stated that often terms that are used are dehumanizing. Instead of saying this is what it looks like, say this is what someone in our community is experiencing. It can paint another story.

Rodler stated that the data is a snapshot in time that is not accurate. That's why Belken and Negron have great data

Malone stated that there are 90 people in the tri city area that are treated for homelessness but the data point is 65 so they know they aren't accurate

Rodler stated that surveys at schools help too. Students don't know that for example if you are staying on someone's couch you are considered homeless

Malone stated that there is an education stigma and the language used needs to be changed. If someone is doing a prevention lesson and talks about how bad drugs are they can be talking about parents, aunts, etc. If you tell someone they are too smart for drugs, they then think their dad is dumb. DARE was to scare you out of using drugs but it didn't work. Evidence based wasn't a thing back then. For example if you say you're too good for drugs, the person can think I'm probably not too good because my parents aren't too good

Rodler stated that the PD shifted because DARE wasn't evidence based

Halligan-Foley asked if they should we come up with questions today and Malone stated yes

Negron stated for them to proceed forward they need to see what data points they need and then what organizations can supply this information. If they don't know what data they need they won't have a direction. Before evidence based it was theory based. Is the system they are going to be using outdated like DARE was. Are they trying to do the same thing they were doing before. Instead of paying someone money to just sit there they can reach out to other cities and incentivize them to come to the city.

Desrochers stated that data from the Harm Reduction Coalition is going to be the most telling and the best data for Rochester

Malone asked Belken what data points does her system pull – Age, veterans, gender? Belken stated age and gender breakdown. Veteran status is not attached to it

Malone stated the Dana Berlin wanted to make sure LGBTQ is represented

Rodler stated that the veteran population would be huge. Belken stated that they definitely serve them but they don't have the data. However, she can get the rest

Rodler stated that somewhere down the road, a lot of things that are free now are not going to be free and would be good to fill in those gaps

Malone stated that the ARPA funds are ending so they have had to scale back

Wright asked what gaps are in the data that they have questions for and if they can get those by the 11/2/22 meeting or not. Desrochers stated to bring everything on 11/2 and then they'll know if they are missing anything

Rodler stated that there are kids that could be identified if parents can give them drug tests

Halligan-Foley stated that the school has had so many suspension lately that they can't keep up with it

Rodler stated that kids are going to court under the paraphernalia statute that aren't going to her for diversion. Wright stated that that is a gap. Desrochers stated that there seems to be a middle ground of using but not using enough to be in diversion

Rodler stated that parents have no clue that their kid is vaping. If they could drug test them they would know and can get them help

Negron asked how many parents go to the PTA meetings. Halligan-Foley stated that there is no PTA in the high school. Malone stated that the PTA in the middle school is somewhat new

Fontneau asked if the kids that are getting suspended for drug use get interviewed. Halligan-Foley stated that they work with their LADAC

Fontneau asked if the kids get asked if their parents use. Halligan-Foley stated that that is confidential. Desrochers asked what substances and Halligan-Foley stated marijuana

Rodler stated it's all THC oils, it's not marijuana. That it's the drug paraphernalia statute that they can hold the kids on

Belken stated that no one knows what is in a bad batch so you don't know what help they need

Halligan-Foley stated they aren't educated to look at things like lollipops and water bottles

Desrochers asked what questions they should pose and to ask about substances specifically

Malone stated they are going to get good data from NHHRC from people that use drugs. But they can also get good data from actual individuals and parents

Wright stated that the question to fill the data gaps is to ask what services do people have access to and what services would they like access to. Ask parents what would they do if they found out their kid was vaping. This is the opportunity to ask the community about those kind of things and gaging the readiness and perspective of people

Malone stated that programs don't matter if people don't know what they are

Desrochers stated that they need to use the word guardian as parent is not the inclusive word for Rochester

Malone stated that ongoing community assessment will have to continue happening

Rodler stated she would love to get a youth focus group as she has kids that say they self-medicate because they don't want to see a counselor. Kids are also sitting on a wait list for community partners.

Malone stated that if a person isn't court mandated, they aren't in trouble enough to get help

Desrochers stated that another gap is that it is really hard to find sponsors. If a person is in recovery there is no support. Rodler asked isn't that what recovery services is supposed to be doing. Negron stated that one of the requirements in AA is to find a home group. He was putting pressure on people to find a sponsor and they would end up with someone that is subpar which would then cause more harm than good

Wright stated that AA/NA is specific. SOS Peer Recovery support work is an all recovery approach

Desrochers stated that for somebody trying not to use, there is a gap when someone does not want to go if there's a chance someone there is at the group they don't want to be around

Negron stated that a recovery center is missing. Rochester has 2000 more people than Dover but most people go to Dover Triangle Club. Rochester needs a place with an emphasis on recovery surrounded by positive people. Wright stated that is what SOS is

Malone stated that Infinity doesn't want people that use drugs, but SOS will take them. That there is a disconnected continuum...SOS is doing this, NHRC is doing this and Infinity doing this

Desrochers stated that a safe injection site is needed in Rochester. Belken stated that there were hearings on that today in the State House

Malone stated that they now know what they want and have their questions:

- What do you know are out there for resources
- What do you use for resources
- What is your knowledge of resources

Wright asked Malone if she shared the panel information they talked about. Malone stated the Rochester Mental Health Group is doing a panel on 11/2 with stake holders and community members where they are asked similar questions as to what they see is the biggest issue surrounding mental health. Wright stated that they are hoping to use that as a promotion tool for the mental health meeting in November

Malone motioned to adjourn

Fontneau seconded

5:43 adjourned