

12/6/22 Opioid Abatement Committee

Present:

Amy Malone – Rochester City Councilor

Dana Berlin – Rochester City Councilor

Palana Belken – NH Harm Reduction Coalition

Nicole Rodler – Rochester PD Juvenile Division Coordinator

Ashley Wright – Strafford County Public Health Network

Michelle Halligan-Foley – Rochester Career & Technology Education Director

Cora Long – Strafford County Public Health Network

Nicole Dale-Hogan – Spaulding HS LADAC

4:32 Meeting started

Wright asked for a synopsis of the last meeting since quite a few people missed it and Rodler gave the update.

Wright stated that the HRETA Project (Harm Reduction Education and Technical Assistant Project) did a great job. Belken stated that the HRETA Project was a great resource on harm reduction for first responders

Rodler suggested having Phoebe Axtman from the NH Harm Reduction do a lunch and learn session to talk about harm reduction

Wright stated that she has a side list of what she wants to do and one has to do with the HRETA project first responder report. Looking at the recommendations and thinking strategically. One could be to support the lunch and learn.

Rodler stated they need to pull the fire department to the table more with harm reduction. Wright stated that Adam Hughes is Rochester's Deputy Chief of Prevention. Rodler stated she will invite him

Belken stated she has data but it's not printed out and gave a synopsis regarding overdoses in the Tri-City for the last years:

- Rochester seems to account for two thirds
- In 2020 participants reported 620 overdoses
- In 2021 participants reported 800 overdoses
- In 2022 participants report 486 overdoses but there was also a decline in services

Wright asked if there was a way to take those numbers and get SOS's numbers. Belken stated that that is the idea

Belken continued with the data:

- In 2021 the syringe service saw 3729 transactions throughout the year
- In 2022 the syringe service saw 1921 transactions
- There were 200,000 syringes distributed in 2022
- The exchange rate of getting syringes back is at 93%
- Out of 100 referrals, 20 people completed treatment
- On average every person is grabbing supplies for 2.2 more people

Rodler stated that they are seeing the use of drop boxes decline because people are moving further and further out and asked if they are looking at putting drop boxes in periphery locations. Wright stated that the way the locations were chosen in Dover was based on complaints. They talked with the Dover PD, Belken, John Burns and used social media. It passed the City Council unanimously. But they do need to think strategically about where to be in Rochester and if on city property they need to get approvals

Belken stated in the proposal for drop boxes it broke down how NHHRC purchased the containers and John Burns volunteered one of his people to change them out

Wright stated that NHHRC is purchasing boxes. The Public Health Network is running point and managing grant applications. SOS will manage the condition and work with NHHRC with disposal. If anything was to happen to them, the Public Health Network and the City of Cover will manage repairs.

Rodler stated that the cost to do a cleanup of an encampment is huge and SERVEPRO has to comes in

Long asked if they have records on the cost. Rodler stated that they do. And when there are needles at an encampment the cost goes up exponentially

Wright stated that if drop boxes were something this group wants to explore it's easy to reproduce but it did take a year in Dover to get to where they are

Rodler stated that now that we have the containers they can get a good sense of if they are getting used. They are bringing them out to the encampments but the people keep moving

Malone asked where are the people at the encampments supposed to bring them back to. Rodler stated it was her hope that they would do the exchange

Belken stated that there is a struggle because people get pushed back and then end up in Maine. Maine does have SSP (syringe service program)

Malone asked what a rough cost would be for the drop boxes. Wright stated that the funding request for Dover was \$5100

Halligan-Foley asked how much funding does Rochester have. Malone stated that \$150,000 was approved to move to the opioid committee

Berlin asked if the \$5100 was total. Wright stated it was. It was for two drop boxes and included staff wages of \$1800 for SOS staff to manage and swap them out

Berlin asked much are the boxes. Belken stated they are around \$200

Wright state that the budget was meant to show the true cost: staff time, mileage, etc so the community can see the real cost not just the drop box cost

Berlin stated that there are three different organizations that are teaming up together to cover these boxes. What happens if one says they can't and you have not budgeted for that. Wright stated that's part of the proposal and why they are calling it a pilot and identifying what the processes are. Most organizations are grant funded so they are interested in talking to more departments like police, fire, and DPW. But if SOS did back out it would fall on the rest

Belken stated that NHHRC would budget for disposal if drop boxes were purchased in other cities

Wright stated she will send out the proposal with the budget so everyone can see it

Rodler stated that she thinks when they do it, they do it with sustainability and work with someone like Stericycle

Berlin stated that based on the numbers there is a 93% return rate, so are they trying to capture the 7% of improper disposal. Wright stated it is a smaller target but there are costs associated with the improper disposal that outweigh the cost of a program like this. Wright also stated that it is a low hanging fruit that does not solve all the problems but is a cost effective first step

Rodler stated that when an encampment is cleaned up there is an additional cost when they have needles:

- Big camps cost around \$12,000 to clean

- Smaller camps cost between a few hundred to a few thousand

Dale-Hogan asked what the next step is as it seems they are all on board. Malone stated they will go to the City Council and explain how Dover is doing it and break down the data

Dale-Hogan asked with Matt Wyatt doing the press releases, will this be the first project. Malone stated in her opinion it's a low hanging fruit and they need to make sure their costs are similar

Malone asked when Dover's drop boxes were being installed. Wright stated that there is a meeting with Dover next week to talk about location.

Malone stated that for their next meeting in January, they should get some of the missing details and figure out what the drop boxes would look like in Rochester

Dale-Hogan stated they need to have the first press release out so the community knows where the money is coming from

Malone stated they won't be presenting to the City Council in January, but they should be able to have the first conversation with Matt Wyatt out

Dale-Hogan stated to make sure it's known that this is a very specific project with a very specific money use and is not city dollars. That they need to lay a foundation so when the committee has a project they have the ground work laid

Halligan-Foley asked that when Malone meets with Matt Wyatt she lets him know the key players so it is known it's not just council members it's also the community involved

Rodler asked if the NHPR article got done. Malone stated she didn't think so and it is about human rights and substance use

Wright asked if there were other things that were discussed last month that they still need to discuss

Rodler stated the vape detectors and her question/concern is a certain dollar amount that went up and up

Dale-Hogan stated that they should work collaboratively with the school because it's such a high priority. Halligan-Foley stated that the school spends so much time searching bags

Malone asked how they could tie into it. Wright asked if they could invite some kids to be a part of this group. The vape detection would be for the kids that are vaping

Dale-Hogan stated it would have to be at a different time for kids to participate. Malone stated they could do it at Waypoint where it's more kid friendly

Wright stated there is the family resource center through Waypoint or the Community Center and if they had to change the time they could figure it out. Wright stated that most kids don't vape or drink alcohol so engaging with the kids now in things like this while they are getting started and doing these listening sessions with kids is a good opportunity to engage with the youth. Malone stated that they could also feed them

Berlin asked if they already knew the cost of vape detection. Dale-Hogan stated the school has their own network and it's also in the bathrooms

Berlin stated he is thinking about what he would have done in high school and if he was going to the bathroom to vape and there was a vape detector he would break it. Rodler stated that he would be on camera. Berlin stated that now a student has broken property and the likelihood of getting money back from that student is not going to happen so there can be a significant ongoing cost

Dale-Hogan stated that if there is something in the detector's vicinity it sends an alert

Malone stated that is a valid point and you could have students in recovery who won't use the bathroom

Wright suggested some next steps and asked who would like to be the person that the committee send questions about the vape detectors to so they are all in one spot and that person can get the answers. Dale-Hogan stated it should be Halligan-Foley

Wright stated for the committee to send Halligan-Foley the questions before Christmas so she has time to field them and answer them

Halligan-Foley asked if Justin Roy should come too since he is the principal. Wright stated that they should try and at least get a couple youth invited

Malone stated the school would just be coming back from break by the time of the next meeting is so should they put it on for February. In January they can still identify the young people they want to talk to

Wright stated the next steps for the Rochester Mental Health Alliance is they are applying for funding and it would be wise to talk about what comes from that

Discussions for next meetings:

January: Drop Boxes

February: Vape Detectors

5:46 Meeting adjourned