

## Medina County Opiate Task Force

August 27<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 9 a.m.

**Welcome:** Mr. Titterington welcomed all in attendance for the Opiate Task Force meeting.

### Community Updates:

**ADAMH Board Updates:** Mr. Titterington thanked all those who are working in the behavioral health field at this time. He acknowledged the challenges facing the workforce, such as an increased demand and low supply of staff. He stated that the ADAMH Board appreciates all that these workers do, and are looking at how workforce concerns can be addressed. Mr. Titterington encouraged everyone in attendance to take a minute to slow down and practice some self-care.

**Crisis Services:** Mr. Titterington indicated that crisis services continue to be available through Alternative Paths and their 24/7 Crisis & Behavioral Health Helpline. Linkage to detox and residential services are available through Hope Recovery Community. Most times, an individual can get into services that day or the next day. Mr. Titterington stated how appreciative he is of all the partnerships that exist in Medina County.

**MAT Services:** Mr. Titterington reported that MAT is being offered by multiple agencies with no waitlist. He stated that this is a significant improvement from four to five years ago, with several agencies stepping up to provide this services.

**Child and Family Trauma-Informed Outpatient Facility:** Mr. Titterington shared that capital grant funding has been approved through OhioMHAS for the ADAMH Board to move forward with its new youth and family trauma-informed outpatient facility project. OhioGuidestone is taking the lead on this project.

**Medina County Housing Network:** Mr. Titterington indicated that the homelessness prevention subcommittee has a lot of momentum, including a great deal of support from the county commissioners and Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority (MMHA). There is a three prong approach, with a consultant who is aiding with data and vision of the project:

- 1. Emergency – providing immediate shelter. Considering a shelter or building.
- 2. Rapid rehousing – get those who need it into stable housing.
- 3. Permanent supportive housing. – Extra support for those who need it, alongside their housing. Currently a partnership between the commissioners and MMHA will add ten permanent supportive housing units in Medina County.

**Medina County Health Department (MCHD) –** Ms. Wasowski provided updates related to COVID-19, and indicated that there is a great deal of mental stress as numbers are ramping up. She stated that the Delta variant is bringing new challenges, not just because of numbers, but also due to division across the nation regarding masking and vaccines. In Medina County there have been 312 new cases in four days. She also indicated that:

- Two days ago Medina County exceeded the highest month of Covid-19 cases ever, and there are still several days left in the month.
- There are a high number of youth cases (91 this week) which effects families.
- This is an Ohio statewide wave, and other locations are suggesting that the wave declines two weeks after the peak. Medina County has not reached the peak yet.

- Medina County is currently at 92 cases a day and climbing.
- Previously 1.4 people were infected per case on average, but with the Delta variant, an average of more than 4.2 people are infected for every case. This is causing an exponential growth of cases.

Ms. Wasowski stated that both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons are experiencing a range of symptoms from mild to more severe, however people who are fully vaccinated likely spread virus for a shorter amount of time and have a far greater chance of not being hospitalized. She indicated that if someone who is vaccinated tests positive, they should still stay away from others and be cautious, as they still might be able to infect others. She said that hospitalizations have increased in our region considerably since August 5<sup>th</sup>, as typically, ten days after a wave, hospitalizations increase.

Ms. Wasowski reported that the Medina County Health Department (MCHD) will not be making any mask mandates, as legislature has removed their ability to make mask mandates and agencies and businesses will have to make decisions for themselves. Since August 1<sup>st</sup>, the MCHD is back to wearing masks in the office, regardless of vaccination status. Ms. Wasowski stated that the MCHD still has a readily available supply of vaccine and is providing all three vaccines (you can check the website ([www.medinahhealth.org](http://www.medinahhealth.org)) for dates and locations of vaccination sites.) Pharmacies are also providing vaccine, and you can call ahead if you are looking for a specific type.

**Medina County Drug Task Force (MCDTF)** – Mr. McCune presented on behalf of the MCDTF and stated that there has been a decline in opiate seizures recently. He stated that methamphetamines are still the most prevalent drug in Medina County, in addition to a slight increase in cocaine and crack cocaine use rates. MCDTF was awarded a Recovery Ohio Grant and will be announcing two new prevention awareness and enforcement strategies in the coming months. Mr. McCune also stated that MCDTF are happy to be participating on the Overdose Fatality Review board.

**Medina County Opiate Response Team (MCORT)** – Ms. Vasicek presented as the new clinician for the MCORT and stated she is working on increasing community engagement programming such as school events, and Narcan trainings to increase awareness. The ORT has been very successful this year in its outreach:

- 937 - Total number of referred overdoses in the community and those who test positive in the jail since the program started.
- 85% - were successfully reached by the ORT.
- 53% scheduled a first treatment appointment after successful contact.
- 49% attend their first appointment.
- 48% continued to be involved in treatment after 30 days.
- 28-34 referrals have been received per month, except for a spike in November.
- 12 referrals were received from out of the county for individuals that live in Medina County.
- 34 Medina County individuals were referred after overdosing in another county.

Anyone who needs a referral can use the Alternative Paths website at [Medina County Opiate Response Team \(alternativepaths.org\)](http://www.medinahhealth.org/alternativepaths).

**Opiate Fatality Review:** Mr. Titterington provided an update on how the Opiate Fatality Review board has been created through the MCHD. This group is in its early stages and meets to confidentially review overdose deaths and identify trends for prevention efforts. He stated that this program was proactively implemented prior to the legislation that is pending in the State, which is a testament to Medina County partnerships. Representatives of the recovery community are included in the meetings. So far a trend has

emerged with polysubstance use of fentanyl. Any other insights gained will be directing future work. Mr. Titterington thanked members for efforts on the committee

**Cathy's House** – Mr. Robinson presented that their Level 1 men's house opened at beginning of the month. This house is a transition/step down from Cathy's house. Individuals who stay there have had 6-9 months of uninterrupted sobriety, and are working full time with a good history of rent payment. Mr. Robinson indicated that Cathy's House Level 1 and Level 2 homes are both MAT friendly. A men's house manager is currently residing at the Level 2 house to help provide stability, as many long term residents transition to the Level 1 house. Cathy's House has also placed a female staff member at women's house during peak times to support female residents. Mr. Titterington indicated that the Human Services Levy has allowed the ADAMH Board to support both Level 1 and 2 recovery housing projects under the Cathy's House umbrella.

**OhioGuidestone** – Ms. Robinson presented that the Open Access MAT clinic through OhioGuidestone is getting three to five people connected quickly every week thanks to ADAMH Board and State Opioid Response (SOR) 2.0 funding. Ms. Robinson introduced the new OhioGuidestone peer navigator – Ms. Caroline Healey, indicating that she will be working to address any gaps in services such as support for their recovery housing residents, connecting with Feeding Medina County, resource connection, transportation, and much more. The OhioGuidestone peer support program now has 13 certified peer supporters serving over 300 individuals. Medina County is now employing 32 plus people in recovery that were not employed 36 months ago

Ms. Romain shared that OhioGuidestone is coordinating with Caresource and the MCHD to give out COVID-19 vaccines on Sept 9<sup>th</sup> at Black River Schools from 10 -12, and at OhioGuidestone's Medina office from 2-4 for anyone age 12 and up. Those with Medicaid will receive a \$100 gift card if it is their first dose of vaccine.

**Discovery Recovery House (DRH):** Ms. Robinson indicated that DRH is a Level III recovery house with 12 beds that opened in June. Although the house is currently full, they have a wait list and expect to have openings soon. Those with questions can contact Ms. Robinson. DRH is staffed 24/7 is MAT-friendly, already supporting all methods of MAT in the house within the first eight weeks.

**Northern Ohio Recovery Association (NORA)** - Mr. Heller commented that NORA just opened a new Women's residential facility in Cleveland, and has beds open for both women's residential treatment and sober supportive housing. He stated both facilities are open for all women with substance use disorder treatment needs including those with co-occurring mental health or other issues. He stated it includes those who are pregnant and he stated women can bring children under 10 with them.

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**Hope Recovery Community (HRC)** – Ms. Robinson presented that Medina is one of 22 cities to receive a visit from On the Road Recovery, who are filming a documentary and plan to include Medina due to the robust programming here. HRC is open seven days a week and has 15 staff, 12 of which are in recovery. The other three staff members are family peer supporters who have been trained using a family peer support model from Pennsylvania. Medina is the only county in Ohio to train family peer supporters and there are currently 13 families receiving this service. Ms. Robinson indicated that HRC is offering peer support at HRC, in the Medina County Jail, at Medina County Job and Family Services, and through the Alternative Paths 24/7 Crisis & Behavioral Health Helpline. HRC's Saturday night programming serves 75-100 people every week. She stated there is a LGBTQ meeting on Thursday nights. Ms. Robinson shared that Tuesday August 31<sup>st</sup> is Overdose Awareness Day at 6:30 p.m. at the Church of the Nazarene in Brunswick to honor those who have been lost and raise awareness. HRC's Ride 4 Recovery fundraising event is on

September 18<sup>th</sup>, and they are seeking sponsors and raffle baskets. Ms. Robinson stated that Medina has a strong Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) and that lives are being changed by this. She said that HRC has partnered with the MCHD and Project Dawn to train and distribute Narcan.

**Alternative Paths** – Ms. Althen presented for the Suicide Prevention Coalition. She indicated that a LOSS (Local Outreach for Suicide Survivor) team, was implemented in July. She stated that the LOSS team is made up of clinicians with training about how to respond to a suicide. Officers or the coroner’s office will call a clinician to meet with family who has had a loss. Ms. Althen reported that officers are excited to have support so that they can focus more on the crime scene. She indicated that the clinician gives a packet to families that includes books, journals, resources, and materials from Cornerstone of Hope. The LOSS team is considered to be postvention work because those that have lost a loved one to a completed suicide are at a higher risk for suicide themselves. Ms. Althen stated there has been two deployments of the LOSS team since July. She indicated that the team will follow up with the family after the suicide if they were not on scene. She reported that middle aged men are one of the highest populations at risk, and that this year’s numbers are expected to surpass the number of suicides compared to past years.

The **Suicide Prevention Coalition walk will be October 17<sup>th</sup>** at Medina County Square. Registration is at noon, with the walk beginning at 1:00 p.m. It is a one mile walk, and additional activities will be offered for those who are unable or not wanting to walk. People can register at [Events \(alternativepaths.org\)](https://www.alternativepaths.org). Free t-shirts will be given to the first 300 people that register. Ms. Althen stated that over 100 people have registered so far.

**For the Good of the Order:**

**MCHD** – Ms. Phillips presented that the MCHD has funding from Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) to train and distribute first responders on Naloxone. She indicated there is also additional funding from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) through project DAWN to provide Naloxone to anyone else who would like to be trained. The Health Department’s partnerships with HRC have greatly expanded Naloxone distribution. Ms. Phillips stated that people can contact her to get trained or if you know of an agency that would like to set up a service agreement with the Health Department to be a dispensary site of Naloxone. There are several agencies in Lodi and Wadsworth, and Ms. Phillips is interested in finding a distribution partner in Brunswick as well. The MCHD will be at the Overdose Awareness Day and also at the Ride 4 Recovery to distribute kits. Ms. Phillips thanked partners for distributing naloxone.

Adjourn 10:55am