

**Medina County Opiate Task Force**  
**August 28, 2020**

**Welcome:** Mr. Phillip Titterington welcomed all gathered.

**Community Updates:**

**Overdose Numbers for Medina County:**

Ms. Wasowski provided an update on overdoses and overdose deaths in the county for 2020. The health department monitors emergency rooms visits and overdose deaths. Thus far, in 2020 countywide there has been 226 visits to Emergency Rooms. The county has experienced 22 overdose deaths that are not opiate specific. Last year at this time, the county was at 15 deaths, 32 total. In 2018, there were 38 deaths, and in 2017, there were 48. This year's numbers are trending similar to those in 2018.

**ADAMH Update:**

Mr. Titterington reiterated the information that Ms. Wasowski provided. The ADAMH Board receives weekly updates from their state association, OACBHA. He indicated taking a deep dive into data provides the opportunity to determine what type of resources would benefit the community as well as offering provider's guidance in identifying needs and gaps in programming.

Mr. Titterington went on to update those present on the ADAMH Board's providers. In response to COVID, their providers transitioned to telehealth services, and are now doing a blend of telehealth and in-person services. Telehealth services are meeting the needs of many people, and the agencies have capacity to serve. ADAMH is also working with providers on a plan to be prepared for potential substance abuse and mental health surges.

Construction on the new women's recovery house, the Discovery Recovery House, is complete, and the house is the process of being furnished. OhioGuidestone will manage the project and they have hired a house manager. The ADAMH Board has also purchased a building next to the recovery house, with the plan to build a Child and Family Trauma-informed Care Center and Alternative Paths will operate it. However, the project is on hold for now, due to delays with the state's capital project funding. These buildings are a part of the ADAMH Board's vision to broaden the current campus of services.

The ADAMH Board is funding evidence-based prevention programming for each of the county schools for grades K-12. They have also expanded detox and crisis stabilization beds through regional funding, and continue to advocate for flexibility in funding at the state level. Representatives Hambley and Kick are supportive and helpful in monitoring overdoses as well as advocating and promoting services at the state level. The ADAMH Board has secured 1,000 Deterra bags from their state association to use as a harm reduction tool in the community.

Mr. Titterington took a moment to thank all those on the virtual call and in the community for their support. He shared that without the funding from the Human Services Levy, many programs would not be viable. The levy has provided funding to; increase crisis services, offset costs of treatment for multi-system high risk youth, and assist with the COVID emergency. It has also assisted with the Discovery Recovery House costs and services through Hope Recovery Community. Lastly, Mr. Titterington announced that The Communities Project will be providing a leadership training opportunity free of cost.

**Cathy's House:**

Mr. Robinson shared all is going well at Cathy's House and that their capital improvement project is complete thanks to funding they received from the ADAMH Board. Cathy's House is now able to accommodate eleven males and seven females. All rooms are full. They have also transitioned to a four-phase model for residents that occurs over the course of a year. Their length of stay has increased by thirty days.

Residents have received a tremendous amount of support from the community during COVID. During the Stay at Home Order, 85% of the residents were unemployed and Cathy's House was able to offer five weeks rent-free due to support of the ADAMH Board. In addition, Heartland Community Church, Marie's Café, and Cups Café provided residents with three meals a day.

**Medina County Drug Task Force:**

Mr. Darren Stout provided an update on the Medina County Drug Task Force. He reported five non-intentional fatal overdoses and twenty-eight non-fatal opiate specific overdoses through the end of July. Narcan was administered 30 times out of 33 fatal and non-fatal overdoses. The three that were not administered Narcan had been down for several days. These numbers are on par for 2019 and better than years past.

Mr. Stout also shared that there is an increased aggression with prosecution of higher-level drug charges. An Akron man was recently convicted and will serve twenty-three years in federal prison for the fatal overdose of a Medina County resident in Wadsworth.

Current trends in Medina County include an increase in Meth Amphetamines. Mr. Stout stated this is not traditional meth, and it is imported from the southwest border of the country. This meth is cheaper than buying supplies and making one's own. The county has had three overdoses from meth this year. Opiate use is down.

The task force is gearing up for the MCDAC levy. Promotional materials are coming out. Rep. Hambley indicated he is willing to assist with the levy promotion.

**Opiate Response Team:**

Ms. Houk indicated the Ohio Attorney General's Office has renewed funding for the Medina County Opiate Response Team. The MCORT has also received funding from the ADAMH board since it began in November of 2017. They have received 648 referrals to date. These referrals come from the general community, hospitals, and law enforcement. They have made contact with 498 of the 648 referrals. Of the 498, 54% were scheduled an intake appointment for services, and 95% were active in treatment beyond the thirty-day mark. Sixty-six individuals were referred multiple times. There was a ten percent uptick in referrals from June 17<sup>th</sup> through July 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Paris shared she started face-to-face contacts back up in June. Three officers at the Sheriff's Department are a part of the response team. She also updated the group about the referral process at Alternative Paths. Since changes were implemented she is able to get folks in for a diagnostic assessment much more quickly.

**SOAR Analysis Follow Up:**

Ms. Rickbrodt reviewed SOAR Analysis results from the February OTF meeting. This analysis identified Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results that were generated by the task force. As a group, the task force was able to identify some results we would like to see in the community. However, it was determined surveying the recovery community for feedback is essential in providing the task force direction. The results demonstrate how successful we are as a community. We surveyed the community and received responses from 85 individuals.

The good news is the feedback we received from those in recovery aligned with the feedback received from this group. Hope Recovery Community also completed a survey which again received similar feedback.

Some of the feedback included:

- Programming and support for kin families
- Additional, affordable sober housing
- Increased transportation options
- Peer support for both mental health and addiction (dual diagnosis)
- Support guidance for families while family member is in rehab and beyond
- Increased services for children including prevention
- Decreased stigma
- Veteran treatment court
- Increased employment opportunities
- Increased awareness of current services

The feedback from the SOAR Analysis is to be incorporated into the Opiate Task Force Strategic Plan.

#### **Hope Recovery Community:**

Ms. Robinson provided an update on Hope Recovery Community. During the initial COVID pandemic, HRC moved to a virtual platform. At this time, they have reopened with a mix of in-person and virtual services and are offering 25-30 integrated meetings weekly. In recent months, HRC has averaged placement of 35-40 people into treatment per month. Many new sober social offerings are available. Some of these include fishing, softball, and gardening.

On Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, Heartland Community Church is hosting an Overdose Awareness event in collaboration with HRC. HRC is holding a garage sale over Labor Day Weekend. Their Ride to Recovery event is in September and they are currently working on obtaining sponsorships. The Ohio START Program is moving forward and HRC has a staff member integrated into JFS to work with families during the reunification process. The staff hired has personal experience with the process. Ms. Robinson thanked the ADAMH Board for its continued support.

#### **Suicide Prevention Coalition:**

Ms. Houk gave an overview of the Suicide Prevention Coalition's initiatives and activities for the past year. The coalition meets six times annually with participation from community partners. The health department provides data to the coalition in order to identify at risk populations in the county. Recent data indicates middle-aged men are at the highest risk, and this aligns with national data. Last year the group developed and implemented a "Cling to Hope" and "Coaster Campaign" geared towards this age group. Other initiatives include partnership with Cornerstone of Hope to work with suicide survivors, the annual youth poster and video contest, banners at local stadiums, and the Annual Suicide Prevention Walk. This year the coalition was unable to hold the walk, however all event sponsors that donated funding committed to walk. Ms. Althen continues to provide prevention education in the community. She attends community events and health fairs. She works with higher risk youth at Claggett Middle School and is a trainer for the Hope Squad at Medina High School. She provides prevention classes at the Juvenile Detention Center as well.

This year the county has documented fifteen suicide deaths. Of those, thirteen were male and two were female. In 2019 the county experienced 32 suicides, and in 2018 25 deaths.

**Crisis Services Update:**

Mr. Allen was able to provide an update on crisis services for the community. The crisis line is now the 24/7 Crisis & Behavioral Health Helpline. This helpline provides support, referral access, and crisis services. In 2019 the crisis line received 1,320 calls. This year with expansion of the line, they are on track to receive 5,000 calls. Alternative Paths has changed access and the delivery model for the hotline. The types of calls received vary. They include those seeking community resources, experiencing psychosis, suicide, depression, or relational issues. Staff work with law enforcement to develop rescue plans or provide wellness checks when appropriate. AP also as a full-time staff member at Medina Hospital ER for after hours. Their motto is “when in doubt, reach out.”

**Good of the Order:**

- Rep. Hambley shared that Sen. Obhof recently announced some of the capital projects are going to be prioritized in order to ensure projects are able to move forward. He will keep the group updated.
- Mr. Brandt indicated that Family Matters has a new meeting location at Montville Police Department. They have in person and virtual participants. Robby’s Voice is continuing to offer virtual programming for the school year.
- Ms. Carr from the Attorney General’s office introduced herself along with sharing her contact information.
- Mr. Heller shared they are offering a new meeting in NEO a MARA group.
- Mr. Menche from New Season in Akron introduced himself and shared their services.

Adjourned

Next Meeting Date: Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am.