

Medina County Opiate Task Force

April 29th 2022 at 9 a.m.

Medina County Health Department

Community Updates

ADAMH Board – Phillip Titterington presented:

Mr. Titterington provided updates about the ADAMH Board's current capital projects. He reported that the ADAMH Board is in the process of negotiating two construction contracts. The first is a capital grant that will expand Hope Recovery Community by adding over 3,000 square feet and additional basement to their location at 200 Highland Dr. The second capital grant is for a youth and family resiliency center that will provide a trauma-informed care environment to youth and their families. Mr. Titterington also reported that the homelessness prevention initiative continues to move forward and that an emergency shelter could be built and led by Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority (MMHA), with support of the County Commissioners. He indicated that this project will also add 10-11 permanent supportive housing units, as well as a physical building to serve as an emergency shelter with wrap-around services. Mr. Titterington stated that workforce continues to be a challenge, however the ADAMH Board has been working closely with contracted agencies to ensure staffing support for a variety of services and programs. The ADAMH Board is seeing an increase in individuals reaching out to seek services, and he stated he is thankful for the high levels of collaboration between agencies in the community.

OneOhio – Commissioner William Hutson presented:

Mr. Hutson stated that as part of the opioid crisis settlement with drug manufacturers, Medina County is slated to receive funding once a charter is developed outlining how that money will be spent. He indicated that there are 19 regions throughout OneOhio, and that Medina is located in Region 19, along with seven other counties. Commissioner Hutson has been working with commissioners from the other counties, and it has been determined that for Region 19, there will be two representatives from each county: one will be a county commissioner, and the second person is proposed to be someone that represents the cities, villages, and townships. Mr. Hutson stated that he is advocating to have the second representative be a person selected by the Board of Commissioners, and he would like to appoint a member of the Opiate Task Force to provide a connection to the community and representation from those who understand the opioid crisis. He stated that Mr. Titterington, the Executive Director of the ADAMH Board is someone he would like to consider as a potential representative for Medina County. Mr. Hutson stated that the legislature is striving to be intentional with this funding, in order to avoid the money being absorbed into general funds similar as to what happened with the tobacco settlement funding. The goal is to keep the money circulating as some of the settlement money will be paid over the course of years. He stated there is over \$855 million dollars in the initial settlement, and that funding will go to the lawyers, the state of Ohio, individual counties, and directly to OneOhio. It remains to be seen how OneOhio will distribute the money. The purpose of the regions is to filter proposals that are submitted by the counties, and he stated that this mechanism of distribution may allow for collaboration with other counties and regions. Commissioner Hutson stated that Opiate Task Force members could good go to the OneOhio website for further information: [OneOhio Recovery Foundation | RecoveryOhio](#)

Health Department – Kristen Hildreth presented:

Ms. Hildreth presented that the Medina County Health Department levy is on the ballot this May. She shared that vaccines are available at the Health Department by appointment on Tuesdays. She also noted that Covid-

19 cases have been decreasing, while flu numbers are on the rise. She encouraged people to visit the Health Department's website to see updates regarding outbreaks: [CDC Weekly Data | Medina County Health Department \(medinahealth.org\)](#)

Medina Municipal Adult Probation Department, Valor Court – Matt Esterle presented:

Mr. Esterle, Chief Probation Officer, Medina Municipal Court, shared two videos that outlined the benefits of veteran specific programming and described the work of the Valor Court:

- <https://youtu.be/PrpytvX3YSE>
- <https://www.news5cleveland.com/news/local-news/new-court-in-medina-county-designed-to-help-veterans>

Mr. Esterle stated that more than half of all veterans come back from deployment with mental health conditions from their service and that readjusting to civilian life can be very difficult. He shared that many veteran's charges are often related to trauma, and that veteran's treatment courts offer options to support them while allowing them the opportunity to get their life back on track. Mr. Esterle reported that treatment is more effective than incarceration, with a 90% success rate. He said that over a year ago, Judge Werner, the Citizen's Advisory Board, and the Bureau of Justice collaborated to start a specialized docket for veterans in Medina County, called Valor Court. In October 2021, the program accepted its first client, and they have assembled a great team with excellent support from county agencies. Judge Werner presides over the program, which received OhioMHAS funding through the ADAMH Board. Mr. Esterle stated there are four phases of the program, and the intensity of supervision changes as clients move through the phases, with the goal of achieving independence and transitioning into the community. He stated the minimum length of the program is 12 months, and the current capacity is 15 veterans. Mr. Esterle stated that to be eligible, a person must have served in the United States military. He stated that veterans with a dishonorable discharge could also be accepted. It was noted that the largest proportion of charges in Valor Court are related to alcohol misuse. Mr. Esterle stated there is currently no version of the veteran's program for individuals with felony charges, but that there is work in progress to move the program to the common pleas court to expand jurisdiction to the whole county. He noted that the program incorporates a community service component, which is achieved through a partnership with Feeding Medina County. He indicated that community safety is the primary priority of the program, along with restoring victims to wholeness through evidence-based programming. Mr. Esterle stated the program in Medina has received a three-year certification from the Ohio Supreme Court, which goes through December 2024.

Medina County Drug Task Force – Darren Stout presented:

Mr. Stout, Director of the Medina County Drug Task Force reported that methamphetamines is still the most prevalent drug in Medina County, followed by THC derivatives such as edibles and extracts. He stated that the Drug Task Force will be participating in Drug Take Back Day over the coming weekend. He indicated that medication drop boxes are available 24/7 around the county, and suggested Opiate Task Force members go to the website to find a drop box at: [Community Resources \(mcdtf.org\)](#). Mr. Stout stated that due to a successful grant from Recovery Ohio last year, the task force has re-applied this year in hopes of expanding their school-based drug free role model initiative in collaboration with Ohio Dream. He indicated Wadsworth City Schools has expressed interest in being the school partner for this program. He stated last year the program was able to get an officer and a K-9 unit assigned, and that this year, the focus will be on a youth engagement officer to help break down stigma and barriers while approaching law enforcement officers.

Mr. Stout stated that the Drug Take Back programs do not accept needles, and he advised Opiate Task Force members to place needles in a hard-plastic sealable container, such as a laundry detergent bottle, then wrap it or tape it up and write “sharps” on it before placing it in the trash.

Cathy’s House – Jon Robinson presented:

Mr. Robinson expressed gratitude for the support and collaboration of the community as Cathy’s House has expanded. He shared that Cathy’s House started conversations about a Brunswick location in October/November of 2021 and opened the Brunswick house in March through support from the ADAMH Board and a partnership with the Brunswick Church of the Nazarene. He said the Brunswick location is a Level 2 Ohio Recovery Housing (ORH) certified house for men, and that with this new house there are a total of 28 beds for males in the county – 22 are Level 2, and six are Level 1. Mr. Robinson stated that with the help of six staff members, all forms of MAT are available at all locations. He reported that the Level 1 house that opened in July 2021 has been consistently full, and that the length of stay fluctuates. He indicated that individuals typically come to the Level 2 house for 6-9 months and transition to Level 1 to stay as long as needed. Mr. Robinson shared the average length of stay at Level 1 housing is 394 days, which is unheard of in recovery housing. He stated that February and March were very busy, with 47 bed requests in March. He noted that this was the highest number of requests on record in 24 years. There is currently a waiting list, which is maintained efficiently by conducting a phone interview initially that takes 10-15 minutes to determine eligibility. After that, Mr. Robinson stated updates are provided to those on the wait list every week, and that individuals can also be linked with support services while they are waiting, as well as other recovery housing locations and assessments for outpatient services. Everyone on the wait list is linked to peer support and wrap around services as soon as they are out of inpatient services. Mr. Robinson advised the Opiate Task Force members that the annual Cathy’s House fundraiser is a Corn Hole Tournament scheduled for July 31st at Buffalo Creek Retreat.

OhioGuidestone, Discovery Recovery House (DRH), and Hope Recovery Community (HRC) – Stefanie Robinson presented:

Ms. Robinson stated that the peer recovery support program at OhioGuidestone started four years ago and is going very well. She indicated that today there are ten peer supporters helping over 300 individuals, and the program continues to grow. She shared that recent research is showing that peer support works; increasing engagement in other services, reducing relapse rates, decreasing engagement with hospital systems, and decreasing involvement in crimes. At OhioGuidestone they are generally getting people assessed and connected with services within one week, as the goal is to make MAT available very quickly. There is an Open Access MAT clinic with available assessment times every week.

Ms. Robinson stated that at the Discovery Recovery House (DRH), all forms of MAT are utilized. She shared that DRH is a 12-bed, Level 3 house, which means it is staffed 24 hours. She noted that the house is currently full with a waiting list and that those on the waiting list are offered support and are connected elsewhere if needed while on the list. Ms. Robinson expressed gratitude for donations received for DRH during their virtual housewarming event.

Ms. Robinson shared that Hope Recovery Community (HRC) continues to be a model and mentor for other counties. She stated that Medina went from lacking in services to being a standard in recovery care. Ms. Robinson stated that 40-50 people visit HRC every day, and that they average 2,000-3,000 recovery touches every month. She shared that there are over 30 hours of organized programming and support groups every week, with an average of 15 different pathways to recovery presented weekly. Currently HRC is fully staffed

and looking to support recovery workforce expansion in the community. Ms. Robinson stated there used to be only five trained peer supporters, but HRC has assisted 45 people in getting trained over the last two years, with at least 30 of those individuals working in Medina County. She stated that HRC currently has 16 staff members, who are all in recovery except three who are family peer supporters. HRC has a variety of family support programming, as well as grief, art, and cooking groups. There is also a new motorcycle rehab program which will link recovery life skills with motorcycle mechanics training. Ms. Robinson indicated that HRC places 300-400 individuals in detox, residential and/or recovery housing every year and that in February and March there was a huge increase in the number of people requesting placement – 45 in February and 54 in March, which appeared to be statewide trend.

Ms. Robinson shared that HRC continues to partner with Medina County Health Department to distribute naloxone kits, with 25 being distributed just last week. The partnership also extends to education and outreach programming regarding HIV, tobacco, and healthy living, etc. She stated HRC also partners with Alternative Paths to provide peer support in the jail and through the Crisis line. They also provide peer support at Cathy's House and at Job and Family Services. The family peer support program at HRC has helped 45 families in 2022. Ms. Robinson stated that a new program, the Hope Link recovery link service, was started in order to support individuals who are waiting to be connected with treatment services. This is a 24/7 service that can provide ten days of support until treatment services are able to be put in place. Within the first 60 days, the program has received 80 referrals. She also stated that a new partnership between HRC and Feeding Medina County has led to having a recovery supporter at every food distribution over the summer.

Ms. Robinson indicated that she is excited about HRC's current expansion project. The ADAMH Board has obtained a capital grant to add 3,000 square feet onto their current location at the Highland House on 200 Highland Drive. She indicated that currently, some individuals do not attend certain programs because they are so full, and that to best provide trauma-informed care, expand services, and collaborate with organizations around the state, the increased physical space is needed. Ms. Robinson stated that the new HRC Brunswick location is opening soon and they will be the first recovery community organization to have two centers in the same county. HRC has a goal for the future to expand into Lodi and Wadsworth as well. She indicated that their Ride for Recovery fundraising event will be in September. HRC offers a plethora of opportunities for agency trainings, such as on stigma, substance use 101, and recovery supportive language.

Alternative Paths – LOSS (Local Outreach for Suicide Survivors) Team, Opiate Response Team (ORT) – Gail Houk presented:

Ms. Houk shared data regarding the Opiate Response Team and Loss Team (**see attached PowerPoint**). She stated that all individuals booked into the Medina County Jail are drug tested, and referred to services regardless of which substance they test positive for. However, individuals who test positive for opiates or report a history of opiate use, are referred to the Opiate Response Team. In terms of services, the ORT is able to connect with 92% of people referred. Of all community referrals, 44% are still involved in treatment services after 30 days. Of those referred to the ORT, there has only been one subsequent overdose.

Loss team – Ms. Houk stated that this program exclusively serves family members of individuals who have died by suicide. The team is called by law enforcement and responds to the scene, and also follows up with the family afterwards. She stated there have been 13 calls since the program started in July 2021. She reported that all but one family has been very receptive to the support of the LOSS team. She said that suicide rates continue to be most prevalent among middle aged males, who most often attempt suicide by gunshot or hanging. The LOSS team has received very positive responses from the coroner and law enforcement.

Ms. Vasicek shared that the Opiate Response Team recently presented to 13 Wadsworth Middle School classes. She stated students had lots of questions, often about a family member. She reported Naloxone trainings for families and treatment providers are ongoing, and that the ORT has been outreaching hotels and training hotel staff as well. A chaplain at a local truck stop has also been trained in naloxone distribution and will hand out resource information. Ms. Vasicek reported the ORT also continues to outreach locations known to have high rates of overdose. She stated they provide resource information for Medicaid applications, Community Action, and others.

Medina County Health Department – Holly Phillips presented:

Ms. Phillips recognized community partners and thanked them for their participation in the Deaths Avoided with Naloxone (DAWN) project. She shared that since 2012, Project DAWN has expanded to more than 295 distribution sites that cover 73 of the 88 Ohio counties. This program was initiated through the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), and was implemented in Medina in 2015, with support from the ADAMH Board. Ms. Phillips reported that currently, the program is funded through an integrated Naloxone grant from ODH and federal (State Opioid Response) SOR grant funds from OhioMHAS which provides a grant for first responders to receive naloxone. She stated the grant supports dispensing naloxone as well as building evidence-based sustainable infrastructure to get naloxone to Medina residents and engage community organizations. Currently the program is improving distribution by reducing barriers and adding secondary distribution sites through Hope Recovery Community, the Medina County Opiate Response Team, Alternative Paths, Community Assessment & Treatment Services, LCADA, and they are looking to add A New Day in Lodi. Ms. Phillips stated that adding these sites improved distribution, noting that in quarter one of 2021, 16 kits were dispensed and in quarter 1 of 2022, over 150 kits were dispensed, which is an increase of 837%. She stated there are also more overdose reversals reported.

Ms. Phillips stated that on May 2nd there will be a launch of a new project DAWN website, including updated flyers, smaller rack cards, and leave behind cards with a QR code to go directly to the new website with resources and secondary locations listed. She shared that through the website, you can request to obtain naloxone as an agency, or complete an order form for citizens online which can be mailed or picked up. There will also be listing of local, and state resources as well as DUMP locations for unused medications. Ms. Phillips stated that Medina county data for emergency room visits and fatal overdoses will be on the data report webpage, and that currently 90-91% of overdoses are poly-drug use with 80% involving opiates.

Ms. Phillips stated the Medina County Health Department is collaborating with the planning activities throughout the month of August for Overdose Awareness Day, and that Hope Recovery Community is taking the lead for this event on August 31st. The event will be held at the Brunswick Church of Nazarene with a candlelight vigil, chimes representing lives lost, as well as resources at community tables. This will lead into September which is national recovery month. More updates to come about Overdose Awareness Day.

Ms. Phillips clarified that naloxone is the generic name for the overdose reversal drug. The brand names are Klaxodo (8 mg dose) and Narcan (4 mg dose). Both come with two sprays in one box. If you suspect an overdose, call 911, use naloxone and rescue breathing is also encouraged.

Community Comments:

Community Assessment & Treatment Services – Mr. Newman

Mr. Newman noted that at CATS in all of 2021, there were 13 individuals that identified methamphetamines as their primary drug of choice, however in 2022, so far 67 individuals have already identified methamphetamines

as their primary drug of choice. He stated that the second most common is still opiates, and that a Law Enforcement task force and DEA/FBI report indicated that 57% of all drugs confiscated so far this year have included fentanyl analogues, which is driving overdose rates in northeast Ohio.

Mr. Newman indicated that six weeks ago, the CATS Cleveland facility saw a trend of nine overdoses in one weekend, and all were administered naloxone with no effect. He stated the symptoms initially looked like a stroke with partial paralysis, then individuals suffered cardiac arrest. All drug testing came back completely negative for any drugs. The Adult Parole Authority and Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's (ODRC) director for the region reported that the prisons are seeing inmates smoking paper sent in letters that have been soaked in bug spray. A few weeks later a similar instance occurred with paper that looked like a child's drawing. Inmates would scrape off and smoke the crayon wax, which was the same bug spray substance.

Next meeting is July 22, 2022 at 9 a.m.