

Opiate Task Force Meeting Notes – January 24, 2025

Krista Wasowski - Medina County Health Department

- In 2023 there were 27 unintentional overdose deaths. So far in 2024 there have been 18, which is similar to this time last year. The numbers won't be finalized for several months and may increase.
- MCHD is working with HRC to put a vending machine in place with Narcan, safer sex kits, and other supplies.
- The Overdose Fatality Review will be held soon to look at five cases.

Phillip Titterington – Medina County Mental Health and Recovery Board

- Over the last five years the MHRB has been fortunate to receive State Opioid and Stimulant Response (SOS 4.0) grant funding. This year, the requested funding amount was cut by 55%. SOS 4.0 programming includes peer services in the jail, family peer support, bridge peer support, Hope Link peer line, OGS Discovery Recovery House, and MAT walk in clinic services.
- Local agencies are doing a great job providing services and treatment.

Curt McCune – Medina County Drug Task Force

- 172 felony drug cases were investigated in 2024, with 141 arrests.
- Full two-year funding through the COSAP grant will implement a full-time harm reduction coordinator, which will be helpful for collaboration.
- Staff are currently attending the Ohio Deflection Conference alongside Alternative Paths' staff.
- COSAP funding allows a continuation of current work. The funding goal is to reduce substance use and enhance treatment and education programs.

Whystal Worthy and Clarissa Jones - Hope and Healing Survivor Resource Center

- Hope and Healing provides comprehensive services to survivors of domestic violence, rape, or human trafficking. Through specialized case management services, advocates help individuals understand rights as victims and offer free support groups and free trauma therapy.
- Their office works with individuals who have a dual diagnosis of SUD and trauma to help them work towards recovery.

- Trained in SMART recovery and also trained in Seeking Safety Curriculum for those with PTSD and SUD.
- Currently trying to expand their presence in Medina. Now offering drop-in services with Hope Recovery Community. Hoping to have more support groups in Medina.
- Whystal Worthy oversees the new Medina shelter which can accommodate up to 25 people and offers 24/7 Crisis Intervention. They house men, women, and children.
- The goal is to support individuals in transitioning back to their own living space, while helping with employment support and life skills. They often refer to other local agencies.

Commissioner Hambley - OneOhio

- Fifty-five percent of opioid settlement dollars get distributed to the regions. They currently have \$3.4 million to distribute. Commissioner Hambley is the representative for our region, and Phillip Titterington is his alternate and they have reviewed over 100 grant requests.
- Agencies in Medina County that have been awarded funding include Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Community Legal Aid, and Hope Recovery Community for Level 1 recovery housing expansion.
- First grant cycle provided lessons learned for future grant funding.
- The Commissioners' newsletter has provided information about the application process for County funds that will be available.

Stefanie Robinson - Hope Recovery Community (HRC)

- Trying to find creative ways to supplement funding and work with the MHRB due to changes in funding.
- Over 70 people are at HRC every day, and HRC is open for over 100 hours a week. HRC served 300 families with Christmas giveaways and did pictures with Santa. HRC continues to provide peer support services to Alternative Paths, Job and Family Services, and United Way. Hope and Healing is doing drop-in days at HRC.
- HRC's Basic Needs Store is supported by a MHRB grant. They also work with Goodwill to provide gas cards and with other agencies to provide phones and clothes.
- MMHA and the Next Step Up shelter are collaborating with HRC to provide peer support services.

- HRC is working to increase services to LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities.
- The Hope Link peer line served over 111 people in the month of October. HRC is working to handle increased capacity. Currently HRC does not advertise the program.
- Youth programing is starting up working with community members.
- The Farm has sent over 4000 lbs. of produce into the community. HRC worked with the Cleveland Clinic ER to do a produce pantry. Other food banks are reaching out and asking for specific food to be grown. Recovery Farm housing and all other HRC recovery housing is full with a waiting list.
- Residents are staying longer than ever before. Only able to place 15% of people who are eligible. Current average wait is 64 days. There is a need for expansion, especially for Level 1 housing.
- Current programming has been extremely successful.
- Renovation started on a newly purchased a condo, which will be the first Level 1 Women's recovery house in Medina, to support individuals as they transition from the Discovery Recovery House.

Robert Newman – Community Assessment & Treatment Services (CATS)

- Had a huge turnout for a Narcan training and many families interested in Narcan trainings and programming with MCHD.
- Currently there are six beds open for residential treatment. Outpatient programming has tripled in size.
- Hope to have a significant announcement at the next meeting.

Gail Houk - Alternative Paths (AP) – Opiate Response Team and Loss Team

- The **Opiate Response Team** had 547 referrals in fiscal year 2024. So far in FY25 they have had 212 referrals. They are seeing a decrease in positive drug screens for opioids. Twelve overdoses have been reported in FY25, and contact was able to be made with six.
- Kelsey Vasicek is doing more activities in prevention, as community referrals have decreased to the Opiate Response Team.
- The **Loss Team** has not seen a consistent trend with recent suicides, but there was a significant increase in LOSS Team responses, from 15 total responses in FY23 to 21 responses in FY24.
- 30% of referrals are middle to older age males with a medical diagnosis.
- There have been three male deaths ages 22-27 in past 4 months.

- The LOSS team has also provided support after a traumatic event, and they partner with Cornerstone of Hope for grief specific services.
- Cornerstone is seeing an increase in families served from Medina County. Families are following through on referrals. Continue to get positive feedback from those who go to Cornerstone.

Skip Sipos – Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority (MMHA) and Next Step Up Emergency Shelter

- Next Step Up will be open 24/7, will serve men, women, children and will be pet friendly as much as possible.
- Lots of collaborations with other agencies are in the works; JFS & TANF funding, the VA, the Health Department, HRC, and Feeding Medina County
- A separate 501C3 has been established to allow additional philanthropic campaigns.
- Very close to opening. Still trying to fill three positions. Will not have ribbon cutting ceremony, as they expect to rapidly become full of individuals.
- Currently there are eight households and 17 individuals in hotels that will likely fill the shelter quickly.
- The state doesn't fund shelter in entirety, but funding was secured for year one and there are lots of efforts to get philanthropic funding to cover the \$600,000 yearly budget.
- Many organizations have donated items – Sealy provided mattresses and water heaters, Westfield has made donations, and local churches etc.
- Hoping to have a flexible fund to help people transition and get what they need like first and last month's rent and security deposits. Next Step Up will be intentional about requests related to household start up donations.
- Guests will have rights and responsibilities, which will include working on a case plan.
- They have been working hard to hire great and experienced individuals.
- Professional pictures will be on the website soon. There won't be a grand opening, but community partners will be informed.
- January 28th is the HUD mandated Point in Time Count to count individuals who are unhoused across the county. MMHA will partner with volunteers and law enforcement to do the count.

Next meeting tentatively will be April 25th 2025