



John Bel Edwards
Governor

State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DRUG POLICY

Kristy Miller
Director

Dr. Shayla Polk
Prevention Systems Manager

DRUG POLICY BOARD
July 27, 2023; 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Kristy Miller, Director of the Governor's Office of Drug Policy and Chair of the Drug Policy Board, called the meeting to order at 10:12AM

Welcome and Introductions

Kristy moved on to introductions. Kristy did a roll call for Voting and Of-Counsel members seated around the table. She then introduced Voting and Of-Counsel. After introductions, quorum was achieved with 13 voting member present. A list of all members and stakeholders who attended the meeting is included at the end of this document.

Old Business

- **Review and approve minutes from previous meeting**

Minutes were approved for April 27, 2023 meeting with no objections.

- **Post-legislative session review of bills' status**

Kristy informed attendees that she would not go through the post-legislative session review of bills, but that everyone should grab a packet, as each packet included that document.

New Business

Kristy spoke prior to the beginning of the presentations. Kristy also shared that as the Edwards administration was winding down and the final legislative session had been completed, she found an opportunity to take a step back and provide the members of her DPB with much-needed examples of local initiatives that had made significant impacts in communities across the state.

Kristy stated that when she decided to invite local initiatives leaders to present, she was intentional about their roles in the process.

Furthermore, Kristy emphasized the importance of these presentations going beyond mere "feel-good" stories. Each presenter, she explained, had been asked to provide "takeaways" in the form of two to three recommendations on how state-level systems, policies, procedures, funding, priorities, and more could be improved to enhance the effectiveness of everyone's work.

In addition, Kristy shared her ultimate goal, which was to document the identified gaps from local initiatives leaders during this meeting and then invite regional and state leaders to offer their perspectives and identify any additional gaps at the next meeting.

Kristy also expressed her hope that the resulting report, compiling these gaps and potential recommendations for improvement, would serve as the foundation for the Drug Policy Board and Office of Drug Policy's work under the next gubernatorial administration.

- **Presentations: *Local Initiatives Making Big Impacts in Drug Misuse Across Louisiana***

- A. Prevention Coalition with OBH's Partnerships for Success grant program – Donna Desoto, Avoyelles Community and Youth Coalition**

Donna shared that Avoyelles Parish is a rural parish situated in Central Louisiana, with a population of approximately 42,000 residents. The parish seat is Marksville, and it includes other communities such as Mansura, Moreauville, Simmesport, Cottonport, Bunkie, and Hessmer. Avoyelles Parish is known for its vibrant festivals and church fairs, and its friendly residents create a welcoming atmosphere. Notably, the parish is a diverse melting pot, with various ethnic groups represented, including: White: 66%, African American: 29%, Hispanic: 1%, Asian: below 1%, Native American: 1%

Donna highlighted the significant contribution of the Native American community to the parish's workforce and its support for economic growth. She also discussed the accomplishments of the Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition, particularly its success in gaining Tunica Biloxi as a stakeholder. Donna noted that the Ready 2 Roll Driving Academy has become a key stakeholder, helping to address the needs of the disparate population in Avoyelles Parish. She also shared that the Avoyelles Parish School Board and local law enforcement agencies continue to play a vital role as strong stakeholders in the coalition's efforts.

Donna further shared that the primary challenge faced by the coalition lies in addressing cultural and community norms related to alcohol consumption and underage drinking. She emphasized the coalition's mission, stating, "The mission of the Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition is to recognize health and wellness in the communities in which we live and work and how it impacts our well-being. The Avoyelles Community & Youth Coalition encourages and supports healthy choices, and it is our mission to help reduce destructive decisions and to decrease underage drinking among ages 9-20 in Avoyelles Parish."

Donna provided an overview of the coalition's groundwork, which involved using SAMHSA's strategic prevention framework and CCYS data to identify high-needs. They successfully recruited student ambassadors to assist with their mission. Donna also highlighted various initiatives, including billboards, commercials, and mailers, among others. She ended by sharing coalition's successes and outcomes.

- B. Prevention Coalition with Drug-Free Communities grant program – Bridget Bailey, TRACC Coalition**

Bridget Bailey shared that the TRACC coalition is dedicated to its mission of creating healthy attitudes and community safety for all Tangipahoa Parish citizens. Their primary focus is on addressing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse as serious safety concerns, public health issues, and social problems. TRACC was established in 2008 when Tangipahoa Parish Government received a prevention grant from the state. The grant aimed to reduce alcohol use among 12 to 29-year-olds in the parish by implementing the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) process.

Since its inception, the coalition has expanded its scope to tackle other substance abuse issues, including tobacco, marijuana, and emerging drug trends. Bridget emphasized the importance of their

mission by highlighting the state's identification of alcohol use as a cause of increased reports of violent crimes and motor vehicle crashes in 2007.

The root causes contributing to underage substance use, as shared by Bridget, include community norms, social availability, retail availability, promotion, enforcement, and individual factors. Effective strategies for success have revolved around policies and laws, enforcement measures, and public support.

TRACC's progress has been significant, and they have applied the SPF Process to address alcohol use, tobacco use, marijuana use, and prescription drug misuse. Data collection and community involvement have been crucial aspects of their work.

Bridget also shared the educational opportunities provided to law enforcement since 2009, including training programs such as Juvenile Underage Drinking Enforcement (JUDE), Make the Case DWI Workshops, and Standardized Field Sobriety Test Training, among others.

A noteworthy initiative highlighted by Bridget is the KEYS Alliance Youth Leadership, which hosts an annual Youth Leadership Forum, bringing together student leaders from area high schools and junior highs. Over 700 students have attended these forums since their inception in 2009. The KEYS Alliance Youth Leadership Group, comprising students in grades 6 to 12, has trained over 100 students as Teen Advocates in the SPF process since 2011.

Looking ahead, TRACC's goals include reducing substance use and improving community-wide wellness. Their current objectives involve decreasing social access to alcohol by underage youth, increasing the perception of risk related to youth tobacco electronic product use (vaping), and enhancing the perception of risk related to youth marijuana use in the community.

Additionally, TRACC is actively addressing other community health concerns, including adequate mental health services for youth, young adults, and justice-involved residents, increasing intervention and treatment options for those with substance use disorders, and identifying or creating peer support services for individuals in recovery.

C. Harm Reduction Services Provider (as a piece of their prevention and treatment services portfolio) - Edward Carlson, MA, M.F.T., Odyssey House Louisiana

Ed Carlson shared that Odyssey House Louisiana (OHL) was established in 1973 with a mission to provide holistic and client-centered services in a safe environment to address the full continuum of special care needs for the state of Louisiana. Their comprehensive system of care includes detox, treatment, behavioral and medical healthcare, life-skills, counseling, and case management. Through their services, OHL empowers individuals to become active participants in their treatment and recovery to reclaim functional, productive lives.

He also discussed the importance of harm reduction, which involves equipping individuals, particularly substance misusers, with the necessary tools to minimize harm to themselves and others until they are ready for treatment. Harm reduction helps mitigate the risk and spread of infectious diseases, and it is considered a public health necessity. Examples of harm reduction measures include naloxone distribution and training, fentanyl test strip distribution, HIV and hepatitis screening and treatment, and medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) such as methadone and buprenorphine. Some more controversial aspects of harm reduction include syringe service programs (located mostly in metro areas) and safe consumption spaces, which currently do not operate in Louisiana.

Ed highlighted harm reduction as it relates to treatment, emphasizing that it involves relationship building in the community and should be oriented toward connecting individuals with treatment services. He stressed the importance of recognizing that not everyone will be ready for treatment, but the relationship with the provider matters when they are. Treatment is essential as it is a demand reduction strategy, and responsible policy-making can help reduce substance misuse and associated illicit activities.

The full continuum of services offered by OHL includes the need for detox beds, which are particularly crucial. Short-term residential treatment of 28 days is often insufficient, as it is less than one-third of the recommended minimum length of stay per ASAM (American Society of Addiction Medicine). Long-term residential treatment beyond 28 days is not covered under Medicaid, making it necessary for providers to find creative funding solutions, often through partnerships with local governing entities. Individuals are equipped with naloxone upon release from OHL programs due to the statistically higher risk of fatal overdose for those exiting treatment. Sober living, housing, and case management play essential roles in the recovery process.

Ed also discussed various treatment barriers, including willingness to access services, access to treatment, appropriate length of stay, and rates. Willingness to access services is often a key barrier, and providers must focus on outreach and relationship building. Access to services, including a bed and transportation, must be readily available when individuals are ready for treatment. Ensuring an appropriate length of stay is a challenge, particularly given the involvement of managed care organizations and authorization procedures. Ed also provided an outreach example from OHL's Prevention Department, focusing on individuals experiencing homelessness or those exiting a treatment program, who are at increased risk for fatal overdose and should be equipped with naloxone.

In conclusion, Ed emphasized that treatment is the ultimate goal, and harm reduction is a tool to reach that endgame. Treatment providers are in a prime position to integrate harm reduction and prevention capabilities and ensure access to treatment. More resources should be invested in treatment, screening, referral to treatment, and case management, with treatment being the first and standard course of action.

D. Collegiate Recovery Program – Annette Newton-Baldwin, SELU's LION UP Recovery

Annette Newton-Baldwin shared valuable information about Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs) and their role on college campuses. These programs are not treatment programs; instead, they provide extended recovery support, creating a safe harbor and a community of like-minded individuals for students. Students are required to attend weekly seminars, participate in at least two recovery support meetings a week, and engage in CRP events, including monthly celebration of recovery meetings and sober tailgating.

The key elements of a Collegiate Recovery Program, as shared by Annette, include having dedicated recovery-informed staff, a physical dedicated space on campus, embracing multiple paths to recovery, being housed within institutions of higher education that confer academic degrees, providing recovery protection services and recovery capital resources, fostering a community of students for peer support, potentially offering recovery housing, and having a pre-planned response for returning to use, including referral to treatment and other support services when needed.

Annette also stressed the scope of need, emphasizing that substance abuse significantly affects student retention rates, with more than 40% of attrition cases involving substance abuse in some studies. Substance use hinders overall student retention, wastes resources, and fails both university missions and students.

She highlighted the prevalence of substance use disorders among full-time college students and young adults, with statistics indicating that 22.9% of college students meet the medical definition of drug addiction. In Louisiana, a high rate of overdose deaths further contributes to the challenges faced by students impacted by the foster care system, justice involvement, and orphaned students.

Collegiate Recovery Programs have both direct and indirect spillover effects. Directly, they improve long-term recovery outcomes, increase retention and graduation rates, and lead to higher-than-average GPAs. These programs also serve as recruitment tools for universities and community colleges, promoting proactive leadership toward wellness. Approximately 92% of students in CRPs remain in recovery, with these benefits persisting after graduation.

Indirectly, CRPs have a "Curb Cut Effect," benefiting vulnerable groups and reducing stigma. They strengthen the local recovery community and contribute to a broader cultural shift. By providing recovery support, universities can impact surrounding communities by becoming known as recovery allies, fostering communication on how to support those in recovery and improving access to treatment. These programs complement existing resources like college counseling centers, offering hubs for peer-to-peer support and ongoing, low-intensity support.

Annette concluded by sharing a brief background of the SELU (Southeastern Louisiana University) and LION UP Collegiate Recovery Community, along with major initiatives. Madison Searcy, a Southeastern Louisiana University student, also shared her experiences with the LION UP Collegiate Recovery Program.

E. Tunnel of Hope Foundation - Dr. Dan Schneider

Dan gave a brief overview of MOUD (Medicines for Opioid Addiction, Opioid Use Disorder), which was an evidence-based treatment and harm reduction strategy.

Other Business

A. Office of Drug Policy updates

Kristy shared that she would send a reminder email to everyone regarding any resolutions they wished to be considered by the Drug Policy Board. Member agency updates

Public Comments

There were no public comments

Upcoming Meetings

Kristy informed everyone the Drug Policy next meeting was scheduled for October 26th at 10:00 AM.

Adjournment

Kristy Miller thanked the attendees for their participation. Meeting was adjourned at 12:23PM

MEETING ATTENDEES

VOTING MEMBERS

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	In Attendance
Alcohol industry representative	Kody Thompson (proxy for Buddy Schilling)	Yes
Attorney General's Office	Chris Alderman	No
Board of Pharmacy	Joe Fontenot	Yes
District Court Judge	Scott Schlegel	No
Federal agency with AOD ed/ treat/prev responsibilities	Vacant	--
Governor's Office of Drug Policy	Kristy Miller	Yes
House member, Committee on Health and Welfare	Representative Bob Owen	Yes
Louisiana Commission on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse	Vacant/Comm does not exist	--
Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement	Linda Gautier	Yes
Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services	Daniel Doyle	No
Louisiana Department of Education	Michael Comeaux	No
Louisiana Department of Health	Dr. Leslie Freeman (proxy for Quenetta Womack)	Yes
Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections	Shelley Edgerton(proxy for Blake LeBlanc)	Yes
Louisiana District Attorneys Association	Warren Montgomery	No
Louisiana Highway Safety Commission	Lisa Freeman	Yes
Louisiana Office of Alcohol & Tobacco Control	Deatrice Henderson(proxy for Ernest Legier)	Yes
Louisiana Public Defenders Board	Remy Starns	No
Louisiana Sheriffs' Association	Shannon Dirmann	No
Louisiana State Police	Rebecca Chiasson	Yes
National Guard	MSgt Amy Thomas(proxy for Lt. Col Beverly Couto)	Yes
Physician	Dr. Joseph Kanter	No
Private organization involved in SA prevention	Edward Carlson	Yes
Senate member, Committee on Health and Welfare	Senator Gerald Boudreaux	Yes

OF-COUNSEL MEMBERS

Member Agency	Appointee/Designee	In Attendance
LA State Board of Medical Examiners	Dr. Vincent Culotta	No
Advisory Council on Heroin and Opioid Prevention and Education	Dr. Jim Hussey	Yes
Drug Enforcement Administration, NOLA Office	Steve Hofer	Yes
Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area	Greg Lowther	No
Tunnel of Hope Foundation	Dr. Dan Schneider	Yes

STAFF

Shayla Polk, Governor's Office

GUESTS

Jules Edwards - JOC

Lonnie Granier - Odyssey House Louisiana

Ashley Tillison - LSU

Austin Matthews - LSU

Taylor Chrisman - House Committee Attorney

Shelley Lee - OBH

James DeSoto - ACYC

Donna DeSoto - ACYC

Madison Searcy - SELU

Annette Baldwin - SELU

Chawuna Parker - ATC

Bridget Bailey - TRACC