

## Minutes of the DuPage County HOPE Taskforce

**Meeting Date: March 23, 2018**

The meeting of Heroin Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Task Force met on Friday, March 23, 2018.

The meeting was called to order by HOPE Taskforce Co-Chair, Dr. Lanny Wilson at 9:00AM

The following is a list of those members in attendance.

<b>Task Force Member Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Attended</b>
Bob Berlin	State's Attorney	X
Daniel Guerin	Chief Judge	X
Dr. Richard Jorgensen	Coroner	X
Dr. Darlene Ruscitti		X
Frank Bibbiano- representing John Zaruba	Sheriff	X
Grant Eckhoff	Board Member	
Jeff York	Public Defender	X
Dr. Lanny Wilson	Vice - President	X
Karen Ayala	Executive Director	X
Bernadine Howard	Program Manager	X
Ed Sailer	Police Chief	
Jim Burke	Fire Chief	X
Rich Veenstra	Mayor	X
Mark Piccoli	Director	X
Dr. Aaron Weiner	Director of Addiction	
Christin Kruse	Associate Vice President of Advancement - AMITA	X
Jim Scarpace	Executive Director	X
Michele Worobiec	Chief Counsel	X

The following individuals from the audience introduced themselves: Anna Kubas, Congressman Peter Roskam's office, Dr. James Morrone, and Stephanie Frank, DHS- DASA.

Dr. Wilson asked for a consensus to accept the minutes of the February 23, 2018 minutes as presented. There were no corrections. The minutes will be filed as presented.

Public Comment: Doug O'Brien from the Department of Health and Human Services addressed the Taskforce and shared a federal perspective to the opioid crisis and spoke to the commitment at the federal level to provide the support and resources necessary to make an impact in local communities. Mr. O'Brien shared that the President of the United States perspective is three pronged - Education/outreach, interdiction, treatment and prevention. Mr. O'Brien thanked the Taskforce for their work in addressing this issue and looks forward to working with the Taskforce moving forward.

### **Comments from the Chair(s)**

- Dr. Wilson asked for the consensus for the adoption of the HOPE Taskforce framework. A copy of the framework is included with the minutes. There was no objection and the framework was formally accepted by members. Members also signed their names in support of the framework.
- Dr. Wilson stated that the focus of the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting is to discuss the opioid crisis and the impact on the criminal justice system and impacts for first responders.

### **Dr. Wilson introduced Fire Chief, Jim Burke from the Itasca Fire Department. Chief Burke shared the following issues experienced by first responders and feedback he has received from Fire Chiefs regarding the issue of heroin/fentanyl overdoses and impacts to first responders.**

- agreement that Narcan is effective, but fire chiefs have expressed concerns to what happens to the person after the administration of Narcan by first responders, including unclear guidelines about transporting an individual to the hospital and an individual's right to refuse transport. This uncertainty, at times, results in multiple calls in the same day for repeated overdoses. The law permits Fire/EMS to transport to emergency rooms only.
- concerns surrounding EMS experiencing cross contamination relating to fentanyl and first responders becoming symptomatic. Fire Chiefs have questioned the need for carrying Narcan on fire rigs/response rigs.
- DuPage Narcan training programs – Chief Burke shared that his understanding is that there is a need for increased communications for fire/ems personnel on what is involved in the training to assist leadership in fire and EMS with a broader understanding on how to promote the training out to the communities.

Dr. Jorgensen addressed several of the concerns of Chief Burke and his philosophy, is that all individuals should be transported to the hospital to receive medical care, but also expressed that it would be difficult to forcibly make someone go, based on an individual's civil rights. Dr. Jorgensen shared there are multiple states that have laws that require admittance to the hospital

after an overdose. Dr. Jorgensen strongly agreed regarding the risk to first responders and shared that there is fentanyl like drugs on the streets that 100x stronger than fentanyl and fentanyl is 100x stronger than morphine. These drugs put first responders at great risk and emphasized the need for protective gear for first responders.

Dr. Jorgensen emphasized that his hope is, that his office will work with fire personnel and EMS regarding any training concerns. Dr. Jorgensen highly recommended that EMS document the number of cases they respond to similar to what is state mandated for the coroner's office.

**Dr. Wilson introduced DuPage County State's Attorney, Bob Berlin.**

Mr. Berlin shared the following.

Number of cases in: 2013 - 57 heroin possession cases and 26 prescription drug cases

2018 – 149 heroin/fentanyl possession cases and 111 prescription drug cases

- State's Attorney's office is trying to steer many cases into drug court. Over 79% of current drug court cases are addicted to heroin or similar substance. Drug court recidivism rate is 8%. Mr. Berlin stated while it is a difficult program, it is an incredibly successful program.
- In December DuPage County along with Lake, McHenry, Will, and Kane counties filed civil lawsuits against multiple pharmaceutical companies, with the hope to recoup the financial losses suffered by the counties as it relates to this issue.
- Mr. Berlin and Dr. Jorgensen have been hosting educational forums throughout DuPage County. Advertising of these forums has been multi-faceted, but the challenge has been low turnout at these events.
- Senate bill 30-23 is pending in Springfield, which gives law enforcement a 3<sup>rd</sup> option outside of arresting or not arresting someone. It allows law enforcement to develop a program to steer someone who has a substance use disorder to be entered into community-based treatment programs, deflecting them from the criminal justice system. The bill is supported by the Illinois State's Attorney Association. Members of the taskforce discussed supporting this measure, however due to the taskforce being an appointed body of the County it cannot take any formal actions. State's Attorney Berlin will research and advise the taskforce on the parameters for appointed bodies as it pertains to supporting measures.

**Dr. Wilson introduced Chief Judge Daniel Guerin**

Chief Judge Guerin shared the following.

- A dangerous gap exists in the criminal justice system on how the current approach is handling first time drug offenders. Judge Guerin expressed that this issue needs to be addressed immediately. Drug court is for individuals with a long criminal record who are trying to stay out of the state penitentiary. First time drug offenders do not have a record and are trying to keep a federal offense off their records. First time offenders are generally younger and just starting out and are not often ready for the rigors of drug court. Their cases are handled in six different felony court rooms with six different judges.
- There is a need for a unified specialty court. Current challenges for first time offenders include: sanctions that are imposed vary because each judge handles it differently, and probation officers are not trained at the same level as those who handle drug court.
- Recommendations – first time offenders must appear before the judge regularly. Training for probation officers is needed, including the need for probation officers to complete reports which should be regularly filed with the judges. Violations need to be handled with consistency. There is a need for education components to be added to a first time offender’s requirements, including having first time offenders learn what a felony conviction on their record would mean to their future. There is not enough structure surrounding first time offenders.
- There is need for an additional individual in the Public Defender’s office to be the person responsible for the coordination of these efforts.

Director Ayala added that from a public health standpoint, the sooner you can intervene in a disease the better the outcomes.

**Dr. Wilson introduced Bernadine Howard, Program Manager for Drug Court**

Ms. Howard shared the following:

- Drug court is considered a wellness court and diversion program with a goal of breaking the cycle of addiction and criminal behavior and focuses on treatment vs. incarceration
- Ms. Howard provided an overview of the program. There are currently 54 individuals enrolled, 13 pending applications, and 170 graduates since 2002.
- Challenges – treatment beds available, issues surrounding insurance, affordable housing for long term recovery, residency requirements
- Ms. Howard expressed support of Chief Judge Guerin’s recommendations

Superintendent of schools, Dr. Ruscitti added comment and addressed the need to also explore the root cause of the issues in addition to solutions. Since Parkland, Dr. Ruscitti has spoken to educators, parents, students, SRO officers at different forums and events on safety and the number one issue that is repeated is – *the needs of children are greater than they seen over the*

*last 25 years.* They see greater trauma, students with less skills, and students with more stress and anxiety.

Member Kruse concurred with Dr. Ruscitti and added since Parkland, they have seen an uptick for applications to therapeutic schools for children dealing with stressors.

Member Scarpace added that under the conversation on drug court that exploring what other counties are doing would be valuable, including the exploration of grants.

### **Dr. Wilson introduced Chris Hoff, staff member, DuPage County Health Department**

Mr. Hoff provided an update on the subcommittee that met on March 13, 2018.

The purpose of the meeting was to review successful models and discuss potential opportunities for DuPage County. Bill Gentes, from Lake County Health Department and Project Coordinator for *A Way Out* Program, provided a summary including data, logistics, challenges and successes. *A Way Out* is a countywide initiative with 11 participating police departments. The program is not limited to Lake County residents. Since the program's inception, 21 months ago, it has served 345 individuals.

Meeting attendees were also asked for input on where funding could assist DuPage County residents. Attendees were supportive of the following strategies:

1. Supplementing the current DuPage Narcan Program with treatment linkage and other supports with a pilot program.
2. Expanding drug take back programs in DuPage County through partnerships with pharmacies and companies.
3. Focusing efforts on the criminal justice population for treatment and support services (jobs, housing, education).

Chief Burke added the importance of the drug take back programs and referenced the overwhelming amount of prescription drugs collected and how this impacts police department collection sites. Mr. Burke suggested that pursuing legislation at the state level that would require all pharmacies to implement take back programs would be beneficial. Currently the costs associated with some of the current take back programs are paid through county funds and Mr. Burke added these funds could be better allocated. Mr. Burke suggested this cost should be absorbed the pharmacies.

### **Final Remarks and Next Steps**

- Dr. Wilson summarized recent action taken by the Board of Health in the form of a resolution supporting increased access to substance use disorder treatment.
- Dr. Wilson also requested that task force members give consideration of recommendations for the use of the allocated funds by DuPage County towards

addressing the heroin and opioid epidemic. These recommendations will be discussed at the April meeting with final approval tentatively to occur in May. Dr. Jorgensen asked what the parameters are surrounding the use of these funds.

Director Ayala responded that the recommendations need to adhere to the taskforce's framework.

- There is development of a HOPE taskforce website underway.
- The Health Department will be developing an anti-stigma campaign around substance use disorder which will launch in the fall of 2018. If staff members have any recommendations, please let Karen Ayala know.
- Chris Hoff provided an informational graph to taskforce members on the number of successful reversals through the DNP program. Mr. Hoff also highlighted another handout which shows the funding that the State of Illinois has received towards the heroin/opioid epidemic.

Dr. Wilson closed the meeting at 10:56AM. The next meeting of the HOPE taskforce is scheduled for Friday, April 20th @ 9:00AM

respectfully submitted,  
Penny Chanez  
Executive Assistant