

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**OPIOID AWARENESS AND RECOVERY MEETING MINUTES**

**August 10, 2017**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Lynnwood Roberts Room**

**First Floor, City Hall**

**117 W. Duval Street**

**Topic:** Opioid awareness and recovery

**Attendance:** Council Members Bill Gulliford, Jim Love, Greg Anderson, Reggie Gaffney, and Sam Newby; Paige Johnston – Office of General Counsel; Colleen Hampsey – Council Research Division.

Also: Dr. Raymond Pomm – River Region/Gateway/UF Health; Mark Rowley and David Castleman – JFRD; Alison Hewitt – Department of Health.

See attached sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

**Convened:** 5:30 pm

Councilman Gulliford convened the meeting and asked for introductions. Dr. Pomm, River Region/Gateway/UF Health, presented an update on the upcoming city funded pilot program which is being created to address the public health crisis of opioid addiction and deaths. This collaborative program involves partners from River Region, Gateway, St. Vincent’s Hospital, UF Psychiatry Department, DCF, JFRD and the Department of Health. The pilot program is still in the planning stages and the key partners have been meeting weekly to prepare for a potential start date of October 2.

The opioid overdose pilot program includes intervention and wraparound services immediately after overdose. There will be one point of entry, the St. Vincent’s Hospital Emergency Department, where after the patient is stabilized they will meet with a peer recovery specialist and be offered the opportunity to participate in the program. If the patient agrees, there will be a mental health assessment which will determine the course of action – detox, residential treatment or outpatient services. For all manners of treatment, the patient will be transported to the appropriate location to eliminate the chance for relapse if their “feet hit the street”. The participants will receive MAT (medically assisted treatment) like Buprenorphine and a series of support services during and after the process. Data collection is essential to determine the program’s success and will be evaluated on a rolling basis throughout the pilot program to assess the achievement of the primary objectives – reducing opioid overdose deaths and recidivism.

Councilman Gaffney asked about how JFRD decides which emergency room to transport patients to during an overdose call. Dr. Pomm explained that the pilot program has to have one point of entry and the other city emergency departments serve as control groups to clinically assess the pilot program. Chief Castleman, JFRD, explained that overdose patients are treated at the scene and transported to the closest hospital based on medical need. Councilman Newby asked why St. Vincent’s was selected for the program instead of UF Health. Mr. Gulliford said that the administration at UF Health determined that the pilot program would overburden the already busy emergency department, so St. Vincent’s agreed to participate based on its capacity.

Mr. Gulliford spoke for a few minutes about the impact opioid addiction is having on the workplace, reading news articles that described how many businesses are facing problems with potential and current employees who are not able to pass drug tests. Opioid addiction also leads to employees’ absences and attrition. Councilman Anderson then asked about the scale of the pilot program and how many may be helped, potentially. With the resources and number of treatment beds available, the goal is to have half of the overdose victims agree to participate, which would include approximately 300 participants during the six month pilot program.

Richard Boensch and Scott Frantz, Retail Theft Analysis, spoke to the group about a crime trend that is helping to fund the opioid epidemic – people are stealing merchandise, return the item, receive a gift card, and then sell the gift card on the secondary market for cash. Their company is funded by retailers to track stolen gift cards and report them to local authorities. This retail theft deprives the state of sales tax revenue, an estimated $45 million per year.

Lt. Rowley, JFRD, spoke about the current local trends for opioid overdoses, which are increasing (a 105% increase since 2015). JFRD is transporting approximately 350 overdose patients per month. Mr. Rowley also made mention of recent Florida legislation, HB 249, which will be an asset for data sharing among rescue departments throughout the state. The de-identified demographic data will aid in combatting the opioid epidemic by recognizing trends and hot spots.

Councilman Anderson asked about the supply side of opioids, particularly from where the super-potent drugs like fentanyl and carfentanil are coming. Mr. Gulliford informed him that there are ways to purchase the drugs over the internet from China and it arrives through the mail. After that, the opioids become available on the streets. Councilman Gulliford emphasized that in his discussions with members of the police force, it has been stated that this crisis can’t be solved by law enforcement alone. Instead, a real solution will involve the support and involvement of the whole community, assistance to those already addicted and efforts to reduce demand.

**Adjourned:** 6:33 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research Division

Posted: 8.11.2017 2:00 pm