

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC, VAPING, AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**July 23, 2020**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Zoom Virtual Meeting – No Location**

**Attendance:** Council President Tommy Hazouri, Council Members Ron Salem (Chairman), Michael Boylan, Terrance Freeman, Ju’Coby Pittman, Brenda Priestly-Jackson, Randy White; Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division; Tiffany Pinkstaff – Office of General Counsel; Chief Mark Rowley,Laura Viafora Ray - Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department; Assistant Chief Steve Gallaher – JSO; Dr. Raymond Pomm- UF Health/Gateway; Dawn Lockhart - Mayor’s Office; Dr. Lori Billelo - UF Health; Dr. Kendall Cortelyou-Ward – Project Opioid

Virtual meeting held via Zoom. No physical sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

**Convened:** 2:03 pm

Chairman Salem convened the meeting and acknowledged Council President Tommy Hazouri to give opening remarks.

Council President Hazouri welcomed and thanked the Council members for agreeing to serve on the committee. He briefly reviewed the committee’s charge highlighting the addition of Mental Health Resources as a focus. He thanked Council Member Terrance Freeman for joining the committee.

**Project Save Lives Update - Dr. Raymond Pomm, UF Health/Gateway**

Dr. Raymond Pomm provided an update on Project Save Lives. Since the inception of the program, 1281 patients have consented to participate. To date, there have only been six (6) opioid death-related cases. Dr. Pomm referenced the overwhelming impact of peer services versus traditional services based on the statistics. He states the program continues to work for those who accept services.

Chief Mark Rowley, JFRD, shared that PSL is developing a community-wide Health Record System that will determine and coordinate resource availability in real-time. An additional technology resource includes implementing a data system that will automatically notify PSL peers when an overdose patient is being transported. This system will ensure that peers are informed of transportation, which will assist with quicker contact with the patient. Chief Rowley discussed statistics regarding overdose reports. The calls for service have increased to approximately 15 calls per day. However, over the past week, the number has peaked to 20 calls per day. Many cities are facing a spike in overdoes cases due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Jacksonville is fortunate to be a three-time recipient of the Department of Health Hero’s Grant. The funds assisted JFRD with the purchase of approximately 4700 doses of NARCAN. He mentioned the media campaign regarding the availability of NARCAN is a collaborative effort and is ongoing.

**Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Project - Laura Viafora Ray**

Laura Viafora Ray provided a brief summary of the SHN Project. It aims to prevent and decrease opioid overdose deaths in Jacksonville. The project is funded through a $1.5 million grant awarded to the JFRD by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The goals include expanding community access to NARCAN, educating community partners and first responders on recognizing signs of overdose and availability and use of NARCAN, connecting and referring persons with substance use disorder to treatment and recovery services, and collecting and analyzing data to develop data-driven strategies to prevent opioid overdose deaths further. The project has distributed 1220 NARCAN kits. 56% of the kits have been distributed in the High Need Zip Codes. A total of 640 people have trained during the 29 sessions offered by Drug Free Duval. The results of individuals being trained have been positive, and efforts are being made to promote future trainings. The kits are available to individuals and groups. SHN is open to partnering with treatment centers or community-based organizations to distribute the kits.

In response to Chairman Salem’s inquiry, Dr. Pomm shared that all documents have been signed to incorporate Peer Services with the UF Health facility. The implementation meeting has been scheduled with the ED staff, followed by meetings with consultation staff and the Department of Psychiatry, to ensure that peers are part of the consultation team.

Council Member Michael Boylan expressed concern regarding the number of refusal patients and inquired about possible strategies to provide follow-up. Unfortunately, the patient’s refusal prevents any tracking or monitoring. After 30 years in the field, Dr. Pomm is still seeking a capable and legal strategy to follow up with refusal patients.

Council Member Ju’Coby Pittman inquired about the recidivism rate of consented patients. Dr. Pomm commented that 90% of patients placed on an appropriate treatment plan do not relapse. He stated the major issue involves the homeless population. If placement is located for a homeless person, the problem becomes their ability to pay upfront costs. Thus, with COVID-19, it becomes more challenging to place this population.

**Project Opioid – Orlando Model - Dr. Kendall Cortelyou-Ward**

Dr. Kendall Cortelyou-Ward explained that Project Opioid (PO) is a coalition of influential leaders fighting against the thousands of lives being lost every year to drug overdoses. The goal of Project Opioid is to transform lives by reducing overdose deaths, opioid misuse, and mental distress in communities across Florida. The impact of COVID-19 has magnified the opioid epidemic tremendously. PO is focused on creating a new community frontline to impact the lives of potential overdose patients progressively. This approach seeks to connect with business, faith, and philanthropic leaders, where people are mostly engaged. The goal is to reduce opioid overdose deaths in Florida by 50% over the next 36 months. PO has a grant through the Florida Blue Foundation to establish a coalition similar to the PO around the state. Jacksonville has been selected as a site. Dr. Cortelyou-Ward shared information about the various media campaigns, including STOP! Campaign and What’s the Fix? She requested that anyone interested in being a partner to establish the Jacksonville coalition to contact her at kendall@projectopioid.org. In response to Chief Rowley’s inquiry, Dr. Ward confirmed that the PO educates employers to understand an employee's positive results with proper documentation.

**Update on Opioid Lawsuit - Tiffiny Pinkstaff, Office of General Counsel**

Tiffany Pinkstaff stated the final settlement agreement is still pending between the Attorney General’s Office and the “Big Three” opioid pharmaceutical companies. Mediation is ongoing with the Perdue case.

**Report from Sheriff’s Office – Assistant Chief Steve Gallaher, JSO**

Asst. Chief Steve Gallaher provided an update on enforcement strategies related to the pandemic and the increase in overdose death/homicide investigations. Year to date, there have been 217 overdosed deaths in Jacksonville, which is a 34% increase from last year. Patrol Zones 2, 3, and 4 consistently show the highest frequencies of OD deaths. It should be noted that typically where a person dies is nowhere near where they purchase opioids. Asst. Chief Gallaher provided a brief summary regarding the possession of opioids being legal or illegal. There is a database for doctors and pharmacies to maintain more efficient control of controlled substances.

Joe Licandro stated JSO had made progress on some homicide arrests along with identifying suppliers and dealers. He will provide a presentation on the process of an opioid investigation case at the next meeting.

**Report on Data Collection - Dr. Lori Billelo, UF Health**

Dr. Billelo is still processing data from Vital Statistics on all deaths from November 2019 to April 2020. The purpose of data collection is to compare the death rates of patients receiving treatment versus refusal patients through PSL. Dr. Billelo expects to provide an update at the next meeting.

**E-Cigarettes and Vaping Initiative - Council Member Ron Salem**

Chairman Salem announced that four proposals were received for the $200,000 grant. CM Salem participated in the scoring process. He stated the grant was expected to be awarded within the next few days to allow that company to begin its campaign for the upcoming school year. Additional information will be provided at the next meeting.

**Mental Health Analysis – Dawn Lockhart, Mayor’s Office**

Dawn Lockhart briefed the committee on the resources regarding mental health. Florida ranks as one of the country's lowest states as it relates to providing mental health funding. Mayor Curry included $200,000 in the proposed budget to implement a mental health awareness campaign to reduce the stigma of mental illness. Jacksonville’s current environment is focused on a care coordination approach and understanding the role of trauma-informed care. Through a community-wide care movement, virtual training will be offered August 4th – 6th to address the importance of trauma on mental illness. Also, a training program called Mental Health First Aide teaches adults and youth how to identify signs and symptoms of mental illness. Ms. Lockhart reviewed the inventory list of all Northeast Florida Mental Health resources receiving government funding. The list does not include private and philanthropic funding entities. There are some analyzes needed to determine gaps in services, compare financing available for inpatient versus outpatient services, and distinguish funding associated between substance abuse and mental health.

Chairman Salem noted that jail is probably the largest mental health provider in the city. He has discussed with judges, a representative from JSO and SAO regarding a program that diverts individuals with a mental health issue and misdemeanor charges to a proper facility to receive treatment. He hopes to schedule experts from around the state to come and discuss this concept. There is a cost-saving when individuals are diverted from the criminal justice system into treatment and reduce the recidivism rate.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Stanley Scott stated self-esteem must be addressed to reduce the impact of the opioid epidemic.

With no further business, Chairman Salem adjourned the meeting at 3:34 pm.

**Adjourned:** 3:34 pm

Minutes: Yvonne P. Mitchell, Council Research Division

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Posted 07.30.20 9:00AM

Handouts: Project Opioid, Overdose Death Responses, Mental Health Summary, PSL and JFRD OD Report July 21 2020