

# *Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.*

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## CLINICAL DIRECTORS MEETING November 21, 2022 M I N U T E S

### **Providers Present:**

Kim Porter  
Bob Lamb  
Erin Morrison  
Lea Harvey  
Dina Pollack  
  
Andrew O'Brien  
Liz Morrison  
Lauren Coyle  
Korin Danchise-Curtis  
Theresa Benonis  
Christine Salerno

### **Providers Present:**

Amanda Lockerby  
Lynsey Reiss  
Zach Fisher  
Denise Merritt  
Anthony Fluellen  
  
Mary Neal  
Amy Maurizio  
Samantha Brooks  
Lauren McTague  
Kimberly London  
Katerina Kostic

### **BCDAC, Inc. Staff Members Present:**

Cindy LaBar  
Mallory Perrotti  
Avery Saul  
Mike Banach  
Brian Wilson  
Tara Fitch  
AJ Dalessandro  
Kerissa Arkins

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Cindy LaBar welcomed everyone and thanked the Clinical Directors attending the meeting. Cindy asked staff and attendees to introduce themselves to the group.

### **RESOURCE EDUCATION: FAMILY EDUCATION GROUP – Kim Porter and Bob Lamb**

Mallory Perrotti introduced Kim Porter and Bob Lamb, who are from the ***Be a Part of the Conversation*** organization, which is held in surrounding counties. Kim is the Executive Director and Bob is the Director of Operations and Programs. They are looking to introduce this in person program to Bucks County, tentatively by spring (course can also be held virtually).

Kim shared that the ***Be a Part of the Conversation*** program is a community based, grassroots organization. It includes programs that addresses substance abuse, pathways to recovery, and family resources.

The programs can be found in Bucks County, Montgomery County, and Chester County, specifically in school districts, businesses, wellness fairs and faith-based organizations. Much of their content is curated on the YouTube channel, which includes many resources for anyone looking for information on various drugs, recovery housing, etc.

***Parent Partnership*** is a program under the ***Be a Part of the Conversation*** program, which are ongoing meetings, free to attend and fashioned after AL-ANON meetings. The meetings are offered via Zoom and in person.

Kim shared that the second program, ***Family Recovery Course***, is a three-part series of peer-led interactive educational trainings for parents or guardians whose child, at any stage of life, have struggled with addiction to drugs or alcohol.

The series includes:

- *Addiction 101* – Exploring the complex disease
- *Family Foundations* – Addiction is a family disease
- *Family Recovery* – A recovery plan for life

Enrollment is limited to a maximum of 12 participants for each course. More information on this program can be found at [conversation.zone/frc](http://conversation.zone/frc). The website includes a list of criteria to see if the program is a good fit. The program meets on three separate occasions, three consecutive weeks for two hours, totaling six hours.

A grant from the Kauders Foundation helped to develop the ***Family Recovery Course*** program. The course development came from the ***Be a Part of the Conversation*** staff members, treatment professionals, volunteers, and instructors. Registration is open and can be located on their website. Bob shared that they provide a pre and post survey for all participants for additional feedback. He added that they are seeing positive outcomes; an increased knowledge of addiction as a disease and the impact that addiction has on the family, decreased shame about their child's addiction, etc.

Cindy shared the Healthy Horizons flyer from the YMCA. It is a 12-week free program designed to promote physical health and well-being and encourage community connection for those in the mental health recovery process. For more information, please contact Nicole Martorella at [nmartorella@ymcabhc.org](mailto:nmartorella@ymcabhc.org).

Cindy mentioned that the Clinical Directors meeting may be renamed to Provider Meeting, or something similar. Meetings will continue to be held every third Tuesday of every other month. The agenda and link will be sent to everyone prior to the scheduled Zoom meeting. Please note that Chris White is no longer the Clinical Director for BCDAC, Inc., but he will be a consultant for Drug Court. Any drug court questions should still be sent to Chris.

### **NEW RECOVERY HOUSE COORDINATOR FOR BC-ROC – Welcome Brian Wilson**

Cindy introduced Brian Wilson as the new Recovery House Coordinator for BC-ROC.

- Brian shared that BC-ROC scholarships are available for residents of Bucks County who have Magellan/ Medicaid.
- In October, there were 40 applications which has been the highest number of scholarship requests.
- We have 25 total houses, and that number continues to increase.
- Last June there were issues with DDAP's licensing regarding getting recovery houses licensed. Currently, we are starting to see pre-licensing numbers.
- We are looking to transition the BC-ROC application from paper to REDCap, hopefully in the new year. This should streamline the process for everyone.
- If an individual is approved for a BC-ROC scholarship, they will have their first month of rent covered at full cost by BCDAC, Inc. After that, there is a review process where a provider can send in a request for a subsequent 30 days which would cover 50% of their recovery house rent. Kimberly London asked if clients are limited to one scholarship. Brian answered that we have receptive to loosening the restrictions, and each request is a case-by-case basis. If an individual backs out of a recovery house and later requests funding, Brian will have a conversation with the individual to see about receiving funding again.
- Cindy shared there is also SCA Recovery House funding for individuals who are uninsured; we would cover them for treatment for four weeks. (Treatment was previously covered for two weeks, but last fiscal year it increased to four weeks because two weeks was not enough time for someone to stabilize and then find a job.)

### **NEW AOC HOUSE CASE MANAGER – Welcome Tara Fitch**

Cindy introduced Tara Fitch to the providers.

- Tara's contact information is [tfitch@buckscounty.org](mailto:tfitch@buckscounty.org), phone number (215) 262-6008.
- Tara will be reaching out to individuals and/or providers for any AMA or AWOL from any LOC.
- Individuals discharging from inpatient.
- All individuals who are assessed and not placed.
- Individuals with complex needs or multiple treatment admissions for inpatient and outpatient.
- Individuals transferred from inpatient mental health treatment to inpatient drug and alcohol treatment.
- Individuals who need assistance at the time of the community call or GPRA follow-up interview.

Cindy added that the goal of Tara's position is to make sure individuals get support and to follow up on their specified and recommended care. For example, individuals in inpatient who are recovering will be referred to Tara for aftercare with the goal to get them connected to long term support. Providers were encouraged to contact Tara if they had anyone that could benefit from her services.

Kimberly London asked if Tara's position crossed over for individuals who are chronically homeless. Cindy relayed that Tara can be contacted in this instance, as she can refer them to Mental Health or any other resources that individual would benefit from.

Lea Harvey asked if Tara only works with SCA funded clients, Tara answered that if they do have Magellan that she could still work with them by connecting them to services, much like a warm handoff.

Mike Banach shared that recently he started to reach out to individuals via phone who were discharged from residential. He was working with one individual who had called Mike several times to share his struggles and request help. The individual was appreciative of Mike calling to check on him throughout his transition.

### **DRUG TRENDS**

Cindy shared that our department is seeing a small number of individuals, so the percentage has decreased since Covid, even though our assessments are increasing. Residential spending has increased by 17% in this quarter, which is significant.

Cindy explained that from September 2022 through November 2022, AOC received reports that alcohol is the primary substance of choice. Cindy asked the providers if they had seen an increase of alcohol use in their assessments.

Kimberly London mentioned they are seeing more clients with alcohol usage, her nurse confirming that alcohol usage is the predominant admission at this time, with the other substance being fentanyl mixed with meth. Additionally, they are seeing clients come in saying they have a history of using crack cocaine with alcohol, the combination allowing them to drink more.

Lea Harvey added that for the month of September in Lower Bucks, they saw 43 people with alcohol as their primary drug of choice. In 30 days, it increased from 43 people to 47 people, continuing to trend upward. She also mentioned that with alcohol as the main substance, they are still seeing meth usage closely behind it.

Liz Morrison from Center of Excellence has had 3 clients in the last three weeks actively seeking the Tranq dope after relapsing, which is new. Meth and alcohol numbers remain the same.

Cindy shared they are not seeing xylazine from self-reporting, but in Philadelphia it is in pretty much everything. She asked if anyone else saw an increase in xylazine cases.

Mike Banach said that moving forward for every pre-certification clinical review for SCA funded clients they will be asked if there was xylazine use or any noticeable open

wounds. Also, as a reminder, especially for Gaudenzia, if your staff needs help with bed searches for SCA, remind Lisa and Alexis to let us know, we are always happy to help. Lea Harvey requested that Lisa please be invited to the next Clinical Director's meeting. Cindy answered she will include her on the next invite.

Kimberly London stated they are seeing a decrease in open wounds, whereas a couple of months ago it was more prevalent. Also, she stated she did not think any of her clients coming in for an assessment knew they were on xylazine. They had to inform clients that they were on it, and they would inquire what it was. Cindy replied that she has heard both scenarios; some people seek xylazine to extend the high of their fentanyl/heroin use (both have short shelf lives).

Cindy said she is doing research on wound care kits, much like the ones Philadelphia's Prevention Point provides. Uninsured people with open wounds can get their wounds cleaned and are provided a wound care kit to take with them. We are currently looking to see if we can potentially provide wound care kits to Bucks County residents. Cindy offered the link to anyone interested <https://ppponline.org/node/158/medical-services/wound-care-clinic>

### **FENTANYL TEST STRIPS**

Cindy informed that the fentanyl test strips bill is no longer being defined as drug paraphernalia. Many organizations are looking to get fentanyl test strips in their agencies. Lea Harvey shared that Lower Bucks has been looking into receiving fentanyl test strips. When they do receive the strips, the other Gaudenzia sites will also receive them with 3.7 WM. Lea also mentioned that she was not sure if Lower Bucks Gaudenzia would be giving out fentanyl test strips, but that they do test for it in the lab work. Cindy clarified that the fentanyl test strips can be used for client's urine drug screening at the time of assessments, but the goal would be to individually give clients fentanyl test strips when they go home and continue to use as a harm reduction protocol. Liz Morrison added that the Center of Excellence are ready and willing to give fentanyl test strips out along with education on how to administer it to themselves. She added they also provide Narcan and rescue breathing education at the Center of Excellence.

Kimberly London inquired that she is open to fentanyl test strip training due to not understanding the fentanyl test strips for at home use. Brian countered that a lot of people are going to the city to get their drugs and they do not know what is in it. With the current intensity of fentanyl and overdoses increasing, this will allow people the ability to test the bags they are purchasing to see if fentanyl or heroin are present. There is talk of xylazine test strips down the road. At this point, drug samples from Philadelphia showed 90% of it included Tranq in it. Kimberly asked if Narcan will not work with Tranq. Brian answered no, but people are still encouraged to use it for what may be fentanyl in the system. Kimberly asked if Narcan would not work with Tranq. Brian answered it does not, but people should still use it in case there is fentanyl in their system.

Lea asked when the last time was anyone saw heroin in their client's assessments. Liz Morrison answered 2016, Lea replied that a year and a half ago was the last client they saw with it. Liz added that xylazine is in over 90% of the dope supply in Philadelphia,

which is already trending in Trenton, Camden, and Montgomery Counties; all counties bordering around Bucks County. She said they have not seen a rise in wounds like Philadelphia since the number of individuals who are homeless in Bucks County is lower than Philadelphia, which they have access to bathing, washing and such. Liz concluded that her office guides clients away from using IV's, and to smoke or snort the drug, in addition to offering the 1-800 Never Use Alone number.

### **CORE TRAINING UPDATES**

Avery updated everyone on DDAP information regarding core training requirements. Prior to the new Case Management Curriculum, there was a 6-hour Case Management Overview training. The previous version was discontinued at that time. Anyone who can show a certificate for completing the 6-hour Case Management Overview course prior to June 2021, is not required to take the new version. However, anyone who has completed the online 2-hour Case Management Overview does need to complete the Case Management Skills training.

Avery added that she will be making in person visits at all facilities to oversee the monitoring training certificates.

Lastly, Avery stated that staff who complete ASAMs and/or conduct continued stays need to complete all core trainings, including counselors. Staff have 365 days from today (11/21/22) to complete all the core trainings. Staff can request exemptions for Addictions 101 and Screening & Assessment if they have prior course work/training and experience. If an individual works in treatment only, they are not required to do any functions of case management, just Addictions 101, Confidentiality and the ASAM trainings. Larger agencies have their own UR departments, so those UR staff will need to complete the Case Management Core trainings.

A question was posed (name was not shown), if staff have worked for over 10 years do they have to go back and complete these trainings or is this guideline for new staff (for example, a Case Management training was never required for a counselor to take in the past just because they did an ASAM). Avery replied when she visits the facilities, she can go over their training grid with staff. Another provider mentioned she was having issues locating the Case Management Skills training, Avery answered that our agency is in the process of planning one in the spring. Cindy countered that she would investigate grandfathering individuals. Kimberly London asked if the Management Skills trainings can be held on multiple days since many need to take it and facilities struggle with an entire staff being out to attend it. Cindy said she would research the request. Kimberly also asked if Targeted Case Management would count for Screening and Assessment. Cindy informed that she looks at their college coursework, resume experience, employment, and then an approval can be made. Most individuals are approved due to the experience.

## **TRAIN PA**

Train PA courses are free and include:

- Case Management Overview (Core Training)
- Substance Use Confidentiality (Core Training)
- HIV for Substance Use Disorder Professionals
- ASAM Risk Rating
- Level One: Cognitive Behavioral Strategies for Treating Individuals with Substance Use Disorders
- MAT 101
- Xylazine: The New Addictive Drug
- Substance Use Disorders & PTSD: Research-Based Strategies & Treatments
- PA-DOH: Clinical Foundations for HIV and Viral Hepatitis 12 July 2022 Bucks County SCA #1 (Webcast of Live Event)

## **ANNUAL ASSESSORS TRAINING**

- Certificates are being emailed to participants as we speak.
- Is there anyone by the name of "Eiman", we do not have record of anyone registered for that training.
- Recording will be added to the provider portal.
- Schedule another one in early 2023.

## **ASAM TRANSITION**

- DDAP ASAM Technical Assistance is scheduled every 1<sup>st</sup> Monday at 10:00 am unless it is a holiday.

## **NEW GPRA TOOL**

- Cindy shared that a new version of the GPRA tool has been created.
- All previous protocols will remain the same with the new GPRA including timeframes for completing intake and 6-month follow-up.
- Will continue to consist of an intake, 6-month, and discharge GPRA.
- Protocols for completing an administrative follow-up/discharge will also remain the same as under the previous tool.
- Implementation of new tool will begin December 10, 2022.
- Beginning on December 10<sup>th</sup>, any intake GPRA completed for individuals receiving any version of SOR funding will utilize the new tool.
- Any follow-up GPRA due on or after December 10<sup>th</sup> will utilize the follow up associated with the new tool.
- Any discharge completed on or after December 10<sup>th</sup> will utilize the discharge associated with the new tool.
- The last day to utilize the old version of the GPRA is Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Therefore, any intake, follow-up, or discharge GPRA completed utilizing the old will need to be entered into PA WITS by the end of the day on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Our

office is happy to support these efforts, especially for Gaudenzia and Silver Linings.

- Beginning on December 10<sup>th</sup> the old version of the GPRA tool will no longer be available within PA WITS.
- On December 10<sup>th</sup> we will need to transition completing GPRAs on paper as work is completed to make the new version of the tool available.
- Our office will start to track the number of intake GPRAs and follow-up GPRAs completed each month and share with DDAP how many GPRA's will need to be entered into PA WITS.
- All providers will need to upload their intake/discharge GPRA's to BCDAC, Inc. REDCap Database to allow us to track the number of GPRA's completed so we can assist with inputting the GPRA's into PA WITS once the new tool has been added into PA WITS.
  - Adding additional questions to the RFA and additional attachment uploads added for intake, 6-month follow-up and discharge GPRA.
- Unfortunately, no time frame was given to us for how long GPRA will be down.

Lea Harvey asked if there was a tool that we could use as a template in REDCap instead of reverting back to paper. Cindy answered she will research it to see if it is possible but feels most likely the GPRAs will be submitted via paper.

Cindy shared we have not started our new funding yet, as we are currently going through SOR 2 funding. SOR funding for treatment has been used, the remainder for Case Management and remaining GPRA incentives. We are awaiting some answers from the state to see how we are moving forward regarding switching between SOR 2 and SOR 3.

#### **GPRA CASE MANAGEMENT/INCENTIVES EXTENSION**

- Close to utilizing the remainder of our funds for reimbursement for GPRA Intakes and gift card for the completion of the GPRA follow-up interview.
- Look out for communication from our office for an official end date for funds.
- If you have any intake GPRAs that you need to invoice for please do it soon since we are close to running out of our funds.

#### **PENDING/DENIED**

Pending/Denial status has been based on the following:

- No PA WITS entry
- No GPRA Entry
- Date incorrect on ASAM
  - Admission date incorrect
  - Continue stay ASAM date incorrect
    - It needs to match the last cover date
- A sample email was shown when an entry was pending or denied.



## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- Goal is to have them out in the next month
- Alert will be sent out with policies and procedures requesting sign off that you have read and understand the policies
  - Sign off includes statement of neutrality

## **OPEN FORUM**

Mike Banach reiterated that if any of the assessment sites need help with bed searching for SCA funded clients, to please reach out to our office.

## **WRAP UP**

- Resource Presentation: YMCA Healthy Horizons
- Provider Presentation: Family Service
- Next Meeting: January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 PM.