Surry County

Opioid Response Advisory Council (ORAC) Meeting

Partners Behavioral Health, 200 Elkin Business Park Drive, Elkin, NC 28621

Tuesday, July 10, 2018

**Members/Representatives in Attendance:**

Director Mark Willis, Opioid Response  
Assistant District Attorney Tom Langan, District Attorney’s Office   
Director Kristy Preston, Department of Social Services   
Commissioner Larry Phillips, County Board of Commissioners   
County Manager Chris Knopf, County Government   
Director Samantha Ange, Health and Nutrition Center   
Dr. Jason Stopyra, Medical Director   
Director Jeffery Eads, Partners Behavioral Health   
Cynthia Altemueller, Elkin City Schools  
Sheriff Jimmy Combs, Sheriff’s Office  
Pastor Dennis Barnette, Faith Based Representative  
Chief Monroe Wagoner, Elkin Police Department  
Supervisory Special Agent Dirk Ballou, DEA Greensboro Resident Office

**Members Not in Attendance:**

Judge William Southern, District Courts  
Director John Shelton, Emergency Services  
Chief Dale Watson, Mount Airy Police Department  
Chief Daryl Bottoms, Pilot Mountain Police Department   
Chief Shawn Myers, Dobson Police Department   
Dr. Travis Reeves, Surry County Schools   
Scott Baird, Pharmacist Representative  
CEO Paul Hammes, Hugh Chatham Hospital   
Dr. Kim Morrison, Mount Airy City Schools   
President Todd Tucker, Economic Development Partnership

**Guests in Attendance:**

Supervisor Bryon Bruce, DEA Diversion, Greensboro Resident Office  
Supervisor Stephanie Evans, DEA Diversion, Greensboro Resident Office

1. Director Willis called the meeting to order. No minutes were read as this was the first official meeting of the Opioid Response Advisory Council (ORAC) since the introductory planning meeting.
2. Director Willis provided the following assessment of the County’s assets available to address the opioid crisis based on his first four weeks of investigative effort:

-Prevention efforts exist primarily through the Health and Nutrition Center’s mission to provide substance abuse education. There are other drug prevention efforts already in action in Surry County by Insight Human Services, a 501(c)(3) organization and the Sheriff’s Office D.A.R.E. Program. There are multiple independent efforts to provide prevention and education about opioids, most notably Mr. Frankie Andrews representing the National Coalition Against Prescription Drug Abuse. None of these efforts are coordinated despite the fact they target the same audiences.

-Treatment services for opioid addiction are almost entirely provided by Daymark Recovery Services. Daymark’s treatment services are underutilized. As of May 30th, Daymark had the capability to treat up to 75 patients at a time but had only 12 patients in their Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Program (SAIOP). Insight Human Services and Pinnacle Therapeutic Services have recently initiated treatment services in Surry County.

-Intervention protocols (defined as a process to move substance abusers into treatment) for law enforcement, EMS or the Emergency Rooms do not exist. The primary source of clients for Daymark Recovery Services are voluntary admissions and referrals from Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) case managers who work for the court system.

-Recovery programs are limited in availability. Daymark offers a relapse prevention program following SAIOP concurrently with medication assisted treatment (MAT). Several churches offer substance abuse recovery programs, but availability will require further exploration by the ORD as to their content and methodology. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) offers meetings in either Mount Airy or Dobson every day except Friday and Saturday and in Winston Salem at multiple churches every night of the week. NA programs and Daymark treatment programs may be in conflict. MAT programs offered by Daymark utilize Suboxone, an opioid medication combining buprenorphine and naloxone. The NA 12 Step program requires abstaining from any form of narcotics.

-To ensure that law enforcement, EMS, emergency rooms and the Health and Nutrition Center are looking at the same information for opioid overdoses, an effort is underway to geo-plot overdoses through entries into ODMAP, a program offered by the Baltimore Washington High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program sponsored by the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

1. A review of the present vision statement offered by the facilitator during the first strategic meeting of the ORAC was discussed. The present vision statement not yet officially adopted is**:**

“To act, courageously and with compassion, to prevent, address, and ultimately end the opioid crisis in Surry County. The Response Advisory Council will promote a common language for understanding, align County resources, and model accountability to holistically respond to our County’s epidemic.”

Council members were provided guidance on the recommended structure of a vision statement. Director Willis offered two alternatives to the proposed vision statement:

“Stay out of the cycle. Get out of the cycle. Don’t return to the cycle.”

“Act decisively to build a cohesive, continuous and lasting system designed to prevent opioid abuse, swift intervention for treatment to those in the cycle of opioid addiction and a strong and stable program to keep those in recovery from returning to the cycle of addiction from which they came.”

The council agreed to study the information on vision statements, evaluate the offered vision statements and be prepared to discuss in depth the vision statement at the next meeting in August.

1. Director Ange provided an overview of the prevention and substance abuse education efforts of the Health and Nutrition Center. The Health Department will present to the Superintendents of the three school districts the plan for prevention and substance abuse education on August 2, 2018.
2. Sheriff Combs noted that education on the abuse of pharmaceuticals was needed as the D.A.R.E. Program provided only one class on the topic to 5th and 7th grade students. Abusers of pharmaceutical pills were a close group, and they have established lines of communication. They are known to even rent pills to other abusers of narcotics. The problem of opioid abuse in Surry County is multi-generational as children are affected by the pills provided by their parents. We, as the council, should find ways to break the cycle of addiction so that opioid abusers do not return to the cycle. The Sheriff’s Office spends an inordinate amount of time on cases involving involuntary commitments for mental health issues. To resolve this problem, the Sheriff’s Office needs to establish better communication and protocols with Daymark Recovery Services. The Sheriff also noted that County residents who have addiction or mental health issues find it difficult to find help as there is not a focused single point of contact for assistance.
3. DEA Supervisory Special Agent Ballou provided a strategic overview of his office’s efforts to address opioid abuse issues in Surry County. There is a definite relationship between the transition from prescription narcotics to heroin, primarily due to the higher availability and reduced cost of heroin over opioids. SSA Ballou assigned one Diversion Investigator to oversee the investigations of two pharmacies in Surry County that are exhibiting abnormal distribution patterns. In addition, SSA Ballou assigned two Special Agents (S/A) to assist the Surry County SO Narcotics Unit with advancing investigations involving methamphetamine, heroin and prescription pills. The S/A’s will provide training on how to conduct investigations involving the diversion of legal opioids and the distribution of counterfeit opioids. The primary focus of the S/A’s, and one that will have the most significant effect on Surry County’s opioid abuse problem, will be to identify, investigate and dismantle the organizations and sources of supply that are distributing illegal drugs that are brought into the County. Seizures of drugs by the SO Narcotics Unit are impressive, but seizures alone will not change the dynamic of drug use in Surry County. The most effective investigative method to decrease the supply of illegal drugs in the County is to remove the organization that is conducting the distribution.

1. SSA Ballou also recommended to broadcast specific prevention and drug education information to the target audience for public messaging via the most effective method, which may be to cell phones directly.

1. DEA Diversion Supervisor Bruce noted that Surry County’s drug abuse issues may be impacted by a “balloon effect” caused by the more advanced efforts of Forsyth County to the east and Iredell County to the south to address their own drug abuse problem.
2. All council members were provided a package of information on a Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program. LEAD is a pre-arrest diversion program that allows law enforcement the option to divert certain people who are drug abusers and fall within certain guidelines, the option of enrolling in a drug treatment program vice being taken to the magistrate and entering into the criminal justice system. Both the Forsyth and Iredell County coalitions have initiated LEAD programs. Director Willis requested that all council members review the LEAD package and be prepared to discuss the potential of employing a LEAD program in Surry County.
3. Members of the council agreed to reserve the second Tuesday of every month for future meetings of the ORAC. The next meeting of the ORAC was set for August 14, 2018, at 10:00 am, at the Surry County Government Center, 118 Hamby Road, Room 335, Dobson, NC.
4. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark J. Willis, Opioid Response Director