

## Minutes of the DuPage County HOPE Taskforce

May 20, 2022

The Heroin Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Task Force met on Friday, May 20, 2022

Dr. Wilson called the meeting to order at 8:32AM.

Members did an introductory round table. Of special note, Chief Krestan shared information on the fire department's recently developed phone app. The app. provides the public information on the fire department's activity. The app also links to the DuPage Narcan Program and the HOPE Taskforce website.

Task Force Member Name	Title	Attended
Greg Hart	DuPage County Board Member	X
Bob Berlin (Mr. Murray)	DuPage Co. State's Attorney	X
Dr. Richard Jorgensen	DuPage Co. Coroner	X
Dr. Darlene Ruscitti	DuPage Co. Regional Office of Education	X
Sheriff Mendrick (Mr. Drugan)	DuPage Co. Sheriff	
Jeff York	DuPage Co. Public Defender	X
Dr. Lanny Wilson	Vice-President, DuPage County Board of Health	X
Karen Ayala	Executive Director, DuPage Co. Health Dept.	X
Bernadine McFarland	Program Manager, DuPage Co. Probation Dept.	X
Greg Vesta	DuPage Police Chief's Association	
Keith Krestan	DuPage Fire Chief's Association	X
Rich Veenstra	Mayor of Addison	X
Jim Scarpace	Executive Director, Gateway	X
Lisa Schvach	Community Development	
Brad Gerke	Community Member	X
Deb Lewin	Path to Recovery	X
Laura Crawford	President, Chamber630	X
Andrew Anselm	Illinois State Police	X
Chief Judge Kenneth Popejoy	Chief Judge – 18 <sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit	
Greg Schwarze	DuPage County Board	X
Karyn Charvat		X
Megan Corrigan		X
Dr. Michael Nelson		X

## **Health Department and DuPage County Staff:**

Penny Chanez, Christopher Hoff, Mila Tsagalis, Scott Kaufmann

DuPage County Board members:

## **II. Acceptance of the Minutes**

Mr. Hart asked for consensus to accept the minutes of the February 25, 2022 meeting as presented. The minutes will be filed as presented.

## **III. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **IV- FOCUS and Drug Court Update – Judge Athanikar**

Judge Athanikar provided the following updates with the Taskforce:

- Judge Athanikar recently spoke at the Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative which encompasses nine different states. The purpose of the initiative is to collaborative and share ideas to improve outcomes. DuPage County and Judge Anthanikar's program was chosen as one of the programs representing the State of Illinois. Judge Anthanikar presented on the work of the HOPE Taskforce which was the most well received presentation by attendees.
- Currently oversees and will continue to preside over the felony drug court that encompasses the low risk/low need and the high risk/high need drug court cases.
- The focus court received an approx. \$600,000 Department of Justice grant for programming to expand the work of the FOCUS Court.
- The court continues to see cases involving the use of heroin and fentanyl and derivates/analogs of fentanyl. Is also seeing increases in the possession of fentanyl and in greater amounts.
- Judge Athanikar is leading a team from DuPage County to attend the National Drug Court Conference in July. Approx. 45,000 people attend the conference. The conference consists of a cross sector of professionals in the field who share the most cutting-edge information to address the drug crisis.
- Judge Athanikar also shared that in her experience the intersection of opioid crisis and mental health is crucial and that one does not generally exist without the other and also stated that addressing mental health is critical in addressing the opioid crisis.

## **V. 2022 HOPE Awards and Process**

- Mr. Hart shared that a press conference will occur after the meeting at 11:15AM to award the HOPE Taskforce grant funds to those organizations chosen through a selection process which included a team of reviewers.
- Another round of grant funding will be offered later in the year.

- Chris Hoff thanked all the reviewers for their levels of expertise and who helped to determine recipient of the grant monies.

## **VI. HOPE Updates**

- Dr. Jorgensen provided an update on the coroner's report:
  - a. Toxicology reports for deaths attributed to overdoses are showing not one single drug, but multiple drugs in the individual's system.
  - b. While the most recent coroner's report indicates a decrease in opioid related deaths, that is supplanted by the increases in deaths from cocaine and deaths associated with illicit drugs with legal names.
  - c. The entire country is seeing increases in deaths associated with opioids and we are losing twice as many people to drug overdoses than were killed in the Vietnam War. Drug overdose is the leading cause of death of young people.
  - d. There were 130 drug related deaths in 2021 in DuPage County compared to previous year of 112.
  - e. Dr. Jorgensen provided information on the drug Xylazine, a horse sedative and shared that he has had six cases in the last two years. Increased cases have been found in other counties.
  - f. Dr. Jorgensen also addressed questions relating to suicide deaths and shared that the manner of death is not listed in the coroner's report. Suicide are higher this year and occurring in all age groups.
- Dr. Jorgensen shared that the Overdose Fatality Review team has been restarted to review what could be done differently and what has been learned in cases of individuals who have died from a drug overdose.
- Chris Hoff shared the recent County Health Rankings conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. DuPage County was named the healthiest county in Illinois for both health outcomes and health factors but there continues to be work that needs to be done. The recent community wide survey conducted by Impact DuPage indicated that areas of improvement are needed for issues of mental health/substance use and access to affordable safe housing.
- Mila Tsagalis reviewed the DuPage Narcan Project's (DNP) annual report. The Narcan program started over 8 years ago and now has 100 percent participation of police departments carrying and using Narcan. The program will continue community wide Narcan training and education.
- The Prevention Leadership Team (PLT) will have a resource fair on June 22, 2022 discussing teen mental health and substance use trends. A second event is scheduled in Sept and will focus on recovery.
- Sheriff Mendrick provided updates on the work that the Sheriff's office is doing with incarcerated individuals, including working with individuals to obtain their GED and helping individuals with gang related tattoo removals.

Taskforce Member Mr. Brad Gerke spoke to the issue of Recovery in DuPage County and provided the following information/updates.

- Mr. Gerke addressed the challenges individuals experience when they complete treatment for substance use disorders and are in recovery. One significant challenge is the lack of support and guidance after treatment.
- Mr. Gerke also addressed the importance of spreading awareness and education resources and meeting the basic needs of an individual where they are at in order for them to become an active member of society. Mr. Gerke shared that there is a small window of opportunity to provide assistance when an individual is seeking help.

Mr. Gerke introduced Jared Burton a Peer Recovery Support Specialist and Coordinator for the ROSC program at Serenity House in Addison.

Mr. Burton spoke on a recovery-oriented system of care (ROSC). A ROSC focuses on multiple pathways to recovery and is a coordinated network on person-centered, community-based services and support, building on the strengths and resilience of individuals, families and communities to achieve improved health, wellness and quality of life for those with or at risk of alcohol and drug problems.

- The ROSC at Serenity House meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed. every month @ 3:00PM. More information is available at: [Dupagerosc.org](http://Dupagerosc.org)
- Mr. Burton also shared that currently there is recovery coach training free of charge to the public. 40 members of the community have been trained as recovery support specialists.
- Upcoming reentry courses will be taught beginning in the next few weeks at the DuPage Correction Center.
- A community needs assessment will be distributed in the next month. The purpose of the assessment is to gain insight on the attitudes in the community on the services being provided and the gaps in the community to address substance use issues. The data collected will help will inform the work that the ROSC needs to do in DuPage County.
- The ROSC also works on de-siloing organizations to work more collaboratively to address substance use issues and the ROSC will work as a network hub.
- The most important work of the ROSC is creating a culture of recovery in DuPage County

## **VII - Opioid Settlement Discussion**

An estimated 10 million dollars is anticipated to be coming to the Health Dept. over 18 years. There currently is no information on how the funds will be allocated. More details will be shared as they become available and discussions with community partners is anticipated to avoid duplication of services.

There was no further discussion and the meeting adjourned at 10:49AM. The next meeting of the HOPE Taskforce will be scheduled for Sept. 23, 2022.

respectfully submitted,

Penny Chanez  
Executive Secretary