

Minutes of the DuPage County HOPE Taskforce

April 28, 2023

The Heroin Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Task Force met on Friday, April 28, 2023

Dr. Wilson called the meeting to order at 8:32AM and noted that DuPage County has for the third year in a row been named to the healthiest county in Illinois by the Robert Wood Foundation.

Task Force Member Name	Title	Attended
Bob Berlin	DuPage Co. State's Attorney	X
Dr. Richard Jorgensen	DuPage Co. Coroner	
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	DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference	X
Jim Scarpace	Executive Director	X
Lisa Schvach	Community Development	X
Brad Gerke	Community Member	X
Deb Lewin	Path to Recovery	X
Andrew Anselm	Illinois State Police	X
Chief Judge Kenneth Popejoy (Brian Jacobs)	Chief Judge – 18 th Judicial Circuit	X
Greg Schwarze	DuPage County Board	
Karyn Charvat	PowerForward DuPage	
Megan Corrigan	Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital	X
Dr. Michael Nelson	Cook County Health	X

Health Department and DuPage County Staff: Dennis Brennan, Alex Pulaski, Scott Kaufmann Penny Chanez, Christopher Hoff, Mila Tsagalis, Dennis Brennan

II. Acceptance of the Minutes

Dr. Wilson asked for consensus to accept the minutes of the January 23, 2023 meeting as presented. The minutes will be filed as presented.

III. Public Comment

Rob Zander from My Child's Life Matters presented comments on the need for accountability that has robbed people of their loved ones from the trafficking of fentanyl and requested that opioid settlement dollars be used to help the victims in a tangible and meaningful way.

IV DuPage County FOCUS and Drug Court Presentation

Brian Jacobs, currently presides as the Judge for the Drug Court and FOCUS Court program.

- Discussed program structures. More information can be found at https://www.dupagecounty.gov/electedOfficials/stateS_attorney/specialtyCourts.php
- Individuals seen primarily are experiencing heroine and opioid addiction. 90 percent in FOCUS Court are opioid addictions related to Fentanyl
- 102 individuals are currently in the program with 8 applications pending. At the completion of the drug court program a graduation occurs. Graduations are online, and taskforce members are encouraged to view the inspiring success stories. More information can be found at https://www.dupagecourts.gov/18th_judicial_circuit_court/programs/drug_court_program.php#collapse70870b0
- Alumni update – 2 individuals with successful outcomes are recovery coach trainers, other individuals are now working successfully in the business community.
- Challenges
 - a) The increase use of Xylazine, a veterinary medicine and individuals appearing in court with open wounds associated with its use. Individuals need treatment but placement of individuals with open wounds presents a challenge; treatment centers not accepting individuals with open wounds due to concerns of infectious diseases.

V. Current Drug Trends

Jose Chairez, Director, DuPage Metropolitan Enforcement Group(DuMEG), Est 1985, a multi-jurisdictional law enforcement agency dedicated to serving communities. DuMEG conducts investigation on illicit drug trafficking, distribution, gang activity and weapon offenses with a primary focus on felony cases. Updates included

- Information on the impact of social media to investigating crimes and how social media is used in drug sales including SnapChat where messages are not saved
- Information on shipping challenges and the difficulty of tracking transportation of illicit drugs
- Addressed importance of awareness of payment methods on media platforms as Apple Pay to unknown individuals, should be a red flag especially to parents.

- Spoke on the difficulty of determining legitimate vs. counterfeit pill by visual observation.
- There has been a rise in investigations and arrests, 203 individuals arrested in 2022 – 52% were residents of DuPage County.

VI. HOPE Updates

Ms. Tsagalis, DuPage County Health Dept.

- DuPage Narcan Program – draft version of the 2022 annual report was distributed to members. DuPage County first responders are featured on the cover.
- Provided flyers with information on upcoming presentations that will be given by Director Chairez of DuMEG and Dr. Anthony Wiener on the use of psychedelics and behavioral health.

Jarrett Burton, DuPage ROSC (Recovery Oriented Systems of Care)

- The ROSC recently completed a series of focus groups in partnership with the DuPage County Health Department to learn more on the gaps in services for those seeking recovery services.
- Currently working with the Health Department to increase Narcan vending machines placements across the County.
- Expanded work with the DuPage County judicial system
- Creation of the new DuPage Recovery Community Organization with a focus on tangible nonclinical recovery services in DuPage County including distribution of fentanyl and xylazine test strips. Mr Burton noted that xylazine test strips are newly available. Other services will include grief and loss groups and prevention education in schools.
- Focusing efforts to provide fun, safe and sober activities in DuPage County including partnering with the DuPage Conservation Foundation's DuPage Rx Program that focuses on the healing power of nature.

Kathy Carey – DuPage County Health Dept.

- April is Mental Health Awareness Month and Ms. Carey shared information on the agency's newly developed social media toolkit, including promoting the 988 lifeline to assist individuals experiencing a crisis.

Geri Kerger – NAMI

- Provided update on their upcoming gala event and shared that NAMI will be recognizing the HOPE Taskforce.

Ms. Brink - District 88 provided the following update on their school district's efforts to become a certified Mental Health First Aid site:

- 8 staff members will be trained in youth mental health first aid and will teach approx. 40 other staff members with a goal of identifying student who are in crisis.
- The second component will involve curriculum on teen mental health which will be taught to approx. 1000 students in the fall of 2023.
- Ms. Brink noted that this school year, District 88 had 59 hospitalizations, 35 initial evaluations, 33 referrals for substance abuse and 50 cases of school avoidance. These statistics showcase the need for this initiative.

VII. Opioid Settlement Status and Statewide Efforts.

DuPage County State's Attorney, Bob Berlin provided the following information on the opioid settlements and statewide efforts.

- On Feb. 15, 2023, DuPage County received the Janssen settlement. This amount represents the accelerated Janssen 1-4 year payments as Illinois met the maximum participation threshold. To date approx. 1,850,000.00 has been received.
- National Settlements with 2 manufacturers, Allergan and Teva, as well as the 3 largest retail pharmacies, CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart, has been reached and similar amounts to the Janssen settlement are expected.
- DuPage County is anticipated to receive a gross recovery of 10 to 10.5 million dollars. This is in addition to 10 to 10.5 million dollar initial settlement.
- Tentative agreement with Meijer has been reached. An additional \$50,000 is anticipated for DuPage County.
- All monies will be sent to DuPage County.

Director Ayala – DuPage County Health Department serves on the Illinois Opioid Remediation Advisory Board responsible for recommendation of the distribution of 87 million dollars. The fund must be used for forward-looking opioid abatement core strategies to combat the overdose epidemic as established in the Illinois Opioid Allocation Agreement.

Director Ayala shared the following updates:

- Encouraged public participation to support distribution to the local level of the dollars received by State of Illinois.
- DuPage County Health Department submitted a proposal for \$5 million dollars per year for two years which would be in addition to the funds that will be coming directly to the County. Currently there is not a formal process to apply for the dollars from the State.
- Ongoing discussions are occurring on the agency's proposal which will focus on getting money to the partnerships already developed through the work of the HOPE Taskforce for prevention and education activities, treatment and recovery, harm reduction initiatives, recovery supports, grief support.

In closing, Dr. Wilson on behalf of the entire Taskforce also recognized both Dr. Darlene Ruscitti from the Regional Office of Education and Executive Director, Karen Ayala for their work on the taskforce. Both are retiring and this will be their last meeting serving on the Taskforce.

VI. HOPE Member Taskforce Updates

Members were asked to email Penny with any updates they wished to share. The meeting concluded at 10:30AM

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Chanez
Executive Secretary