

MINUTES

Purpose: Engage Okaloosa County community members in a health improvement process through an open, two-way dialogue to reduce the number of adults engaged in substance use.

Attendees: Petra Maddens, Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa); Lauren Hobbs, DOH-Okaloosa; Emily Pickens, DOH-Okaloosa; Amanda Colwell, DOH-Okaloosa; Veronica Ebuon, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Emily King, Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Program; Jenna McElyea, Bridgeway Center; Stephanie Wedel, Freedom Life Compass; Deb Willis, West Florida Area Health Education Center; Michael Jacobs, Shalimar Police Department; Steve McCosker, Crestview Police Department; Ken LaPee, Okaloosa County Sheriff; Briley Kennedy, United Way; Larry McFarland, Bridgeway Center; Robert Bage, Fort Walton Police Department; Jason Fulghum, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office; Aaron Murray, Northwest Florida State College Police Department; Emily Morgan, DOH-Okaloosa; Remeeka Wilson, Bridgeway Center; Ashli Tillman, Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Program; Carolyn Shearmen, Lakeview Group; Troy Williams, City of Destin; Mary Travis, CareerSource; Cozette Costanza, Bridgeway Center; Ian Tomson, Office of State Representative Patt Maney; Brent Couch, Simply Healthcare; Sabu Williams, Okaloosa County NAACP.

Welcome & Introductions – Petra Maddens

- Petra opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. She reviewed the meeting's purpose and agenda.
- Emily Morgan shared Community Engagement Survey results from the previous meeting. Comments were positive. Attendees felt there was adequate time and feedback.
- Minutes from the September 12, 2023, meeting was reviewed and approved.

Action Plan Updates – Emily Pickens

Pre-Arrest Diversion Discussion

- Emily Pickens opened discussion about pre-arrest diversion (PAD) by sharing an [article from the International Association of Chiefs of Police](#). It shares the various types of diversion and its use in building a healthier community. She reminded attendees that previous meeting discussion best aligns with 'officer intervention' diversion.
- Chief Robert Bage shared he recently spoke with Pensacola Police Department's Chief of Police. They expect to launch their program in the next 30 to 60 days. He will invite their Chief to a future meeting once the program begins.
 - Chief Bage also shared the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce recently held a Quality of Life Luncheon to discuss pressing issues in the community. He believes many misdemeanors that would qualify for PAD align closely with the topics discussed at the chamber.
 - He shared he recently learned some significant statistics from model programs, like that in Leon County. He asked Emily to share details.

- Emily read Leon County follows what the [Civil Citation Network](#) calls a [model PAD program](#). The recidivism rate for rearrests after completing the program was 9%. The rearrest rate for the same misdemeanors is generally 40-45%. This illustrates an 80% reduction in rearrest among PAD participants that complete the program. She also shared the completion rate for Leon County's PAD program is around 78%.
- Chief Bage emphasized the program would allow our county to add more resources, and in turn help more people.
- Chief Steve McCosker shared his experience in another county experiencing with the neighborhood restorative justice program, a type of after-arrest program. This program was first required by juveniles and transitioned to an all-county PAD program after seeing the success.
- Ken LaPee shared he believes Okaloosa County would have a small number of individuals who would qualify for a PAD program based on the limited data available for first-time misdemeanors. He expressed his desire to utilize the existing resources in the county to help individuals who would qualify for PAD.
- Troy Williams asked about resources for homeless who may qualify for the program and whether we have a homeless shelter readily available.
 - Larry McFarland shared Bridgeway Center operates One Hopeful Place. However, there is often a long waiting list for all housing providers.
 - Carolyn Shearmen shared that Lakeview Group offers a mobile response team that can assist with mental health and substance use. She added they also have resources to assist people experiencing homelessness.
- Sabu Williams stated his approval of moving forward with PAD in Okaloosa County.

Unite Us

- Emily reviewed previous discussion regarding Unite Us, an online service referral platform. She has met with a representative to discuss its use in PAD specifically.
- Emily provided answers to questions posed at the previous meeting. To refer individuals via Unite Us, you do not have to be a licensed provider by a specific professional standard, but the organization would have to be onboarded.
 - There is no cost for non-profit service providers to register. There is a cost for the managing entity and those submitting referrals to the service providers. There are 15 licenses for those organizations.
- Chief Bage asked if DOH-Okaloosa would be the managing entity. Emily explained they plan to manage the onboarding of the program and secured the initial year of funding. She also has funding for a part-time position to manage the program's launch through May 30, 2024. A continuity plan for future years would involve the DOH Central Office or potentially Okaloosa County.

- o He suggested the part-time employee could be stationed at the Sheriff's Office or another law enforcement agency for case management.

Law Enforcement Briefings

- Chief Bage suggested the PowerPoint and resources be adapted for all responders, to include others like EMS/Fire, Code Enforcement, etc. Lauren will make these edits. Emily will share the updates via email.

Action Items – Emily Pickens

- **Pre-Arrest Diversion Discussion**
 - o Emily and Chief Bage will invite the State Attorney's Office to the next meeting.
- **Law Enforcement Briefings**
 - o Emily will send the updated PowerPoint to key personnel for feedback.

Open Discussion – All

- Emily King stated Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Program has a SART meeting on October 10th located at the Okaloosa Sherriff's Office in Shalimar at 10:00 a.m.
- Emily Pickens shared the Community Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Awareness Training has been moved from October 30th to November 13th at 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. at the Crestview Community Center.

Closing – Petra Maddens

- Attendees agreed to delay the next meeting until 10:00 a.m. However, due to a scheduling conflict at the location, it will now be held from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. The meeting was moved to an hour and a half due to attendee feedback for more time.
- Petra thanked attendees for participating and asked them to complete the meeting evaluation form to provide feedback.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Crosspoint Church in Niceville and via Microsoft Teams.

Action Items	Owners	Deadline	Status
Email law enforcement updated PowerPoint on available resources	Emily	11/8/2023	In Progress
Invite other relevant partners to next meeting	ALL	Next meeting	Ongoing