

**HOPE Advisory Council**

**October 10, 2024**

9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Bienville Building: Room 118

628 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St, Baton Rouge, LA

**\*In-Person Only**

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

***Present:***

Dr. Vanessa de la Cruz

Lt. William Bosworth

Shelley Edgerton

Ronald Callegari

Crystal Lewis

Dr. Jason Picard

Etrena Gerard

***Absent:***

Michael Comeaux

Sen. Regina Barrow

Troy Prevot

Judge Thomas Duplantier

Dr. Allison Smith

- A quorum was reached, however due to a fire alarm emergency July minutes were not approved.

3. Introduction/Welcome Members

- a. Dr. Vanessa de la Cruz, OBH medical director first time sitting as a member.

4. Review and Approval of October 10, 2024 Agenda

Vote to approve agenda- a motion made by Shelley Edgerton and seconded by Crystal Lewis.  
The agenda was approved.

5. Review and Approval of July 2024 Minutes

Fire alarm emergency during HOPE Meeting, July minutes were not approved.

6. Presentations:

- a. Oxford House by Jeremy Weatherspoon

Oxford House works with those leaving rehab, healthcare professionals, legal professionals, veterans and parents of persons with substance use disorder.

The first Oxford House was started in 1975 in Silver Springs MD by a group of individuals in recovery who were living in a halfway house that was closing down. Worried that they would not have a safe place to go, these individuals decided to rent a house together

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and hold each other accountable to staying sober. Within six months they had enough money saved to open a second house, to meet the need for more beds. With the help of Federal and State programs this growth has continued and today there are Oxford Houses in almost every state, and in several countries.

Oxford Houses are rented family houses where groups of recovering individuals live together in an environment supportive to recovery from addiction. Each house is self-run and financially self-supported following a standardized system of democratic operation. Each group obtains a Charter from Oxford House Inc., which is the umbrella organization for the international network of individual Oxford Houses. Oxford House offers networking opportunities and provides resources for the following:

- Access to HiSet and Higher Education opportunities
- Links to Mental Health Treatment/Therapy
- Acceptance of residents on MAT/MAR and education on the use of Narcan
- Support in applying for SNAP/Medicaid benefits
- Participation in Job & Resource Fairs to offer additional employment opportunities to residents

Recovery housing can be a critical asset in supporting an individual on their journey of recovery. Research has demonstrated that recovery housing is associated with a variety of positive outcomes for residents. Some outcomes include decreased substance use, reduced likelihood of return to use, lower rates of incarceration, higher income, increased employment, and improved family relationships.

Capital Area Reentry Program (CARP) Presentation by Sonya Milliman and Gjavr Payne

Sonya Milliman presented on her lived experience, resources and successes of CARP.

CARP's Mission: To redefine reentry in Baton Rouge through a holistic approach to routine screening, compassionate engagement, and harm reductive services aimed to reduce health disparities among people who inject drugs (PWID) and LGBTQ+ individuals.

CARP's mission, goals, and vision are deeply entrenched in the practice of Trauma-Informed Care. The principles of Trauma-Informed Care include prioritizing safety, building trustworthiness and transparency, providing peer support, fostering collaboration, empowering individuals, and demonstrating humility. We uphold these principles by ensuring that our guests feel respected and supported at all times. This entails maintaining healthy interpersonal boundaries among staff members and handling conflicts appropriately.

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### 7. General Updates

#### a. Office of Behavioral Health

- Jamie Donaldson presented on Louisiana State Opioid Response Grant (LaSOR) 4.0.

The Louisiana State Opioid Response (LaSOR) Program enhances existing statewide prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for individuals with or at risk for opioid use disorder (OUD). The project goals of LaSOR are the following:

Goal 1: Reduce opioid and stimulant-related deaths and incidents by implementing high-quality, evidence-based treatment services for individuals with or at risk for OUD and other concurrent substance use disorders, including transitional-aged youth and young adults (ages 16–25).

Goal 2: Increase access to EB harm reduction services and mechanisms for priority populations.

Goal 3: Increase access to community recovery support services for individuals with OUD and/or SUM.

Goal 4: Decrease opioid and stimulant use and misuse by supporting EB prevention and education efforts for priority populations.

Goal 5: Decrease opioid and stimulant use and misuse within the Native American population by supporting engagement and education initiatives within tribal communities.

Continuing LaSOR Initiatives include the following:

- Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed Prevention
- Academic Detailing
- Mobile Outreach Teams
- Harm Reduction Distribution Hub
- Syringe Service Programs (SSPs) Care Coordination
- Medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) Treatment in Correctional Facilities
- Oxford House
- Regional Recovery Hubs

New LaSOR Initiatives include the following:

- Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed Prevention
  - Too Good for Drugs and Violence
- Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRP)

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- Statewide media campaigns
- Access to Buprenorphine
- Native American Initiatives

Acadian Human Services District has an evidence based program that promotes positive, pro-social attitudes and behavior while fostering healthy relationships, resistance to substance use and conflict, and resistance to negative peer pressure and influence.

LaSOR will fund the operation of three new Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRP) throughout the state.

Louisiana Pharmacists Association (LPA) will contract with community pharmacists throughout the state to provide Buprenorphine to LaSOR patients with no means to pay for their prescriptions.

For Native American Tribes, Community Advisory Boards (CABs) will be formed to encourage community engagement, involvement, and feedback. A comprehensive needs assessment will be conducted specifically addressing mental health and opioid use issues. A culturally-sensitive education campaign will be developed to address mental health and opioid use. Preventative education programs will be implemented for youth and elder programs will be implemented.

- Charlene Gradney presented on the OBH Peer Incentive Program.

Recognized Peer Support Specialists (RPSS) are individuals with personal lived experience with recovery from behavioral health conditions who have successfully navigated the behavioral health services system and maintained their personal recovery from mental illness and/or substance use for a minimum of 12 consecutive months. They are at least 18 years of age and high school graduate (or equivalent).

Recovery support services are non-clinical services that address psychosocial factors in an individual's environment and provide emotional and practical support to maintain recovery. Peer Services as a cost-effective means of providing behavioral health services.

The number of Behavioral Health Peers trained in Louisiana within the last 5 years has doubled. These numbers demonstrate the trending growth and need for this profession throughout the behavioral health continuum of services.

- b. Community Impact Group- Dr. Allison Smith was absent and has decided to stepdown as lead of the Community Impact Group. Anyone interested in leading Community Impact Group, send inquiries to Dr. de la Cruz.
- c. Healthcare Impact Group- New lead, Dr. Jose Calderon-Addo discussed initiatives from the Healthcare Impact Group.

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The HOPE Council Healthcare Impact group respectfully asks to socialize the three federal proposed legislations with HOPE Council members. Agencies and people outside the addiction field are not usually aware of these and the benefits they will create.

- TREATS Act (H.R. 5163 / S. 3193)
- Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act (MOTAA) (H.R.1359 / S. 644).
- Residential Recovery for Seniors Act (H.R. 9232 / S. 4860).

The Health group recommended for Louisiana representatives to support the three federal laws currently under discussion. These initiatives broaden access to SUD treatments and reduce health inequities.

- Pertaining to MOTAA, the group recommends consideration for creating a consulting/ advisory group to support the implementation of MOTAA and the 1115 waiver.
  - The group feels is imperative the expansion of the LA Bridge Program throughout the state. Specifically recommends looking at ways to sustainably fund peer navigators in the ED. Peer navigators are key staff of LA Bridge model baring the successful engagements of patients and makes referrals to providers in the community. However, there is no existing source to fund these peer navigators. One proposal is to use legislative earmarked seed money, and/or allow fee for service billing for peer navigator activities in the ED pertaining to LA Bridge, and/or using funds from the Opioid Abatement grant settlement.
  - Consideration for the creation of a SUD Consultation Line for non-addiction providers. Following the model of the existing Provider to Provider [Perinatal] Consultation line and the MCO's Behavioral health Consultation line, a Substance Use Consultation Line for ED's, crisis providers and primary care will expand SUD's treatment and workforce development.
  - It seems that Opioid Abatement settlement monies are not used despite their availability. We would like to learn more about their use and if necessary, socializes again the existence of such finds for LA Bridge and other qualifying initiatives.
- d. Public Safety Impact Group- Shelley Edgerton held a formal meeting. Worked with some of the regional resource coordinators with OBH and they discussed wanting to focus on training some of the parole officers on MAT and what those medications are. Discussed the need for peer support in the correctional system capacity.
- e. Other Updates

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8. HOPE 2023 Year End Report Update

The Report has been approved by the Louisiana Legislature.

Report is now live on [HOPE Council | La Dept. of Health](#).

9. Public Comments

Missy Graves with OBH spoke on the 1115 Re-entry Waiver:

The Louisiana Department of Health has submitted an application to CMS for an 1115 demonstration waiver to improve care transitions for Medicaid-eligible individuals who are incarcerated and to provide certain covered services during the 90-day pre-release period.

Justice-involved people are disproportionately low-income and often have complex and/or chronic conditions, including behavioral health needs (mental health conditions and/or substance use disorder (SUD)). Reentry services aim to improve care transitions and increase continuity of health coverage, reduce disruptions in care, improve health outcomes, and reduce recidivism rates. LDH is working with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the Medicaid to finalize the list of covered services and benefits.

10. Discussion and Next Steps

- a. Impact Workgroups: HOPE@LA.GOV
- b. Next Meeting: Thursday, January 9th 9:00 - 11:00 am

11. Adjourn- Motion to adjourn made by Dr. de la Cruz.

Future HOPE Council Meetings for 2025:

Thursday, January 9th

Thursday, April 10th

Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup>

Thursday, October 9th