

LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE ACT 88:

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HEROIN AND OPIOID PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

Date: January 26, 2021

Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom Line

Minutes:

1. Call to Order- Chair Dr. James Hussey called the meeting to order at 1:02pm.
2. Roll Call- A quorum was reached.
 - a. Present:
 - Chair Dr. James Hussey, Dept. of Health
 - Mona Michelli- Dept. of Children and Family Services
 - Michael Comeaux- Dep. of Education
 - Blake Leblanc- Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections
 - Captain Robert Hodges- State Police
 - Dr. Allison Smith- Board of Regents
 - Monica Taylor- Attorney General's Office
 - Nick Lorusso sitting in for Thomas Travis- Dept. of Insurance
 - b. Absent:
 - Linda Theriot- Dept. of Veteran Affairs
 - Sheral Kellar- Workforce Commission
 - Senator Regina Barrow- State Senate
 - Elsie Joanne Brown- House of Representatives
 - Vacant position- Judicial District Court
3. Review of Membership- Chair Dr. Hussey recognized Captain Robert Hodges with Louisiana State Police as a new council member, replacing Major Bob Brown. Chair Dr. Hussey also thanked Judge Edwards for his time and many contributions to the council as he begins his retirement.
4. Review and Approval of January 26, 2021 Agenda
A motion to approve the agenda was made by Ms. Monica Taylor; Mr. Michael Comeaux seconded the motion. The agenda was approved.
5. Approval of September 2020 HOPE Minutes
A motion to accept the minutes was made by Ms. Monica Taylor; Mr. Michael Comeaux seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.
6. Review of and Vote on Draft of the HOPE 2020 End of Year Report
Chair Dr. Hussey gave a thorough review of the Draft 2020 End of Year Report. Some highlights or discussion are as follows:

- Chair Dr. Hussey reported that this is the third year of data for the council, and we had hoped to trend the data, but because of the interruptions with COVID-19, it was disruptive to the data and not representative of a trend. Therefore, the council decided during the last meeting to acknowledge that and focus on recommendations in the context of future crises. There is an acknowledgement located in a box at the beginning of the report.
- As in prior years, the council relied heavily on OPH data. A lot of graded color mapping is included.
- Ms. Monica Taylor asked where the data from the opioid related deaths map came from. Mr. Jay Besse clarified it came from vital records which includes whatever death was placed on the certificate by the Coroner. Ms. Taylor was concerned as there has been national talk of Coroners misclassifying data such as listing the death as a heart attack when it was really an overdose. Chair Dr. Hussey suggested that it is complicated when multiple drugs are involved or multiple medical problems. There is a certain amount of medical clinical judgement involved, but this is the most accurate data we can get.
- Chair Dr. Hussey reviewed improvements and regressions regarding opioids in national and state level data. Despite COVID-19 and storm challenges, we can see that people are increasingly accessing inpatient and outpatient residential SUD services, which can be viewed as positive.
- According to our state opioid treatment authority, Ms. Traci Perry, we've seen a steady increase of about 100 new persons per month at the Opioid Treatment Programs. This is good news, as we did get Medicaid funding for reimbursement for those services provided, and we are seeing some modest growth in the program even amidst a pandemic.
- Most concerning among this year's trends is that opioid poisonings and all drug deaths continued to increase since the last report with notable spikes coincident with COVID-19.
- Dr. Allison Smith was concerned with the number of opioid activities listed in the report. She wanted to make sure Board of Regents numbers are also included. Chair Dr. Hussey clarified that this section is strictly covering the STR grant data.
- Mr. Jamey Boudreaux asked for contact information for Project ECHO. Dr. George Singletary spoke up and agreed to share his contact information within the report. Dr. Singletary also reported that two Tulane addiction medicine fellows have graduated at this point and three will finish in August of this year.
- Judge Jules Edwards suggested using alternative language rather than "custodial facilities" under the Person-Centered recommendations. He also submitted additional language on other items in the report.
- Dr. Jose Calderon requested language to enhance SBIRT in other settings like emergency rooms. Chair Dr. Hussey said we will add that language to the expansion of SBIRT section.
- Ms. Kisha Davis requested language around pregnant moms utilizing MAT, as there is little motivation to get off of drugs and continue treatment if when the baby is born, they could be reported and possibly have the baby taken from them. She said that is a

deterrent for these mothers. Ms. Mona Michelli clarified that the only thing that is considered a report of abuse or neglect or that DCFS will investigate is if the mother is taking an illegal substance or a legal substance in an unlawful manner. Chair Dr. Hussey suggested it may be a good fit to add this under special population-centered recommendations and to add a bullet to recommend that additional information and education be made available to inform mothers/providers of the details of the policy mentioned by Ms. Michelli. The council had no issue with this, and Ms. Michelli agreed to send the language. "Including but not limited to OBGYNs," was also added to the language Ms. Michelli was working to submit, as requested by Ms. Deborah Feller.

- The entire report will be available on the HOPE webpage www.la.gov/hope

A motion to approve the report with recommended edits was made by Dr. Allison Smith, and seconded by Ms. Mona Michelli.

7. HOPE Post- COVID Report Strategy- Many requested to continue to meet virtually.
8. Public Comment- No comments received.
9. Next Steps- The next meeting is scheduled on March 25 from 9am to 11am, likely via zoom.
10. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Monica Taylor, and Dr. Allison Smith seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:54pm.