

UC Opioid Prevention Strategic Action/Intervention Status Summary

Revised on: 10.03.19

1. **GROUP ONE** – Initiatives that are well underway and that do not require significant, additional development and support resources at this time.

⇒ Ellenville Project Rescue

Category: *Improving Treatment and Recovery Services*

Description: a grant funded program that provides Medication Assisted Treatment and Recovery Resources through the Emergency Department at Ellenville Regional Hospital, with peer support from Catholic Charities and warm hand-offs for continuing care to The Institute for Family Health and Step One.

Progress/Results: the initiative has been up and running for some time and Ellenville Regional's team is executing and collecting data on grant project deliverables and results.

(HealthAlliance/WMC's Kingston Hospital Emergency Department will also be starting up a similar program this October.)

⇒ Class Action Lawsuit to Hold Pharmaceutical Companies Accountable for Community Harm and Damage

Category: *Reducing Supply*

Description: Ulster County is party to several class action lawsuits, along with other municipalities, against multiple manufacturers (and select providers) of opioid based pain relievers to hold them financially responsible for damages.

Progress/Results: there are multiple actions associated with this intervention. Some are stand alone and some have been consolidated.

All are pending further legal action and/or judgements and settlement negotiations.

⇒ **UC Sheriff's ORACLE Team Prevention and Awareness Initiative**

Category: *Reducing Demand*

Description: this initiative is **Phase 1 of the UC Sheriff's 4- Phase Opioid Plan**, and consists of an outreach/prevention team that goes out to community events, schools and other places throughout the county to increase awareness of the signs of emergence of substance use problems, conducts Narcan/Naloxone trainings, and other activities. The program uses a special trailer that is set up as a typical teen bedroom where drugs may be hidden and helps parents understand how to spot concealed drugs and associated behaviors.

Progress/Results: the team does community outreach on a regular basis and is getting some very positive feedback. This initiative, and the Sheriff's plan, is part on a USDOJ grant application, which will possibly be awarded this October. If for some reason the grant is not awarded, we will have to develop a sustainable funding source.

⇒ **Community Coalitions/Awareness and Prevention Events**

Category: *Reducing Demand and Improving (Access to) Treatment and Recovery Services*

Description: Ulster County has some great grassroots community coalitions and organizations that sponsor awareness and prevention events throughout the year. These events include a combination of speakers, entertainment, food and beverages, service providers, and other information designed to promote prevention, reduce stigma, and connect individuals and families to available treatment and recovery services.

Progress/Results: these primarily grass roots led events have been very successful and well attended. We should continue to collectively promote and attend them, and provide resources whenever possible.

2. **GROUP TWO** - Initiatives either underway or to be launched in the near future, and that do need some additional level of support/resources to become fully operational and/or more effective

⇒ **Create and Implement a Comprehensive Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Program at the UC Jail that Integrates All Stages of a Comprehensive Program Ranging from Initial Intake and Evaluation to Post-Discharge into the Community with Data Driven Reporting and Follow-Up**

Category: *Improving Treatment and Recovery Services*

Description: local jails are a critical venue for reaching out to people with opioid use challenges. Research indicates that patients who receive Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and related services while incarcerated have a 148% lesser chance of overdosing and dying after being released. The best programs integrate MAT with physical wellness, behavioral health counseling, and other wrap around services such as occupational, housing and family support assistance. A key component is also a well-executed discharge planning process, including warm hand offs to peer advocates, and a solid follow-up and reporting process to ensure continuity of care and reduced possibility of relapse and recidivism.

Progress/Results: planning is actively underway to establish a comprehensive program at the UC Jail. The Sheriff's team is collaborating with the UCDOH-MH, NYSDOH, Prime Care (the resident medical provider) and other experts to create processes and procedures. Several visits have taken place to model facilities in other counties, where such plans have been successful implemented. All facilities have expressed their willingness to share information and lessons learned. Improvements in community awareness and support, and linkages to care need to be further identified and strengthened. **This initiative is Phase3 of the UC Sheriff's 4-Phase Opioid Plan.**

⇒ **Decrease the Rate of Opioid Fatalities in Ulster County by Significantly Increasing the Awareness of, and Access to, Naloxone to Reverse Overdoses and Connect People to Follow-Up Care**

Category: *Improving Treatment and Recovery*

Description: naloxone is by far one of the most effective means available to reduce opioid fatalities. Communities that have made it widely available have experienced fewer overdoses.

Progress/Results: naloxone in Ulster County is widely available among first responders and we have several available no cost training entities. More trainings need to be scheduled and promoted, as well as awareness campaigns to encourage more residents and organizations to get trained. We also need to better engage the private sector, business community to schedule trainings for their staff. Ulster County is also offering Narcan training and supplies to all county employees.

⇒ **Promote and Expand Access to, and Use of, Unused Medication Take Back Options (including the new, NYS Law requiring chain pharmacies to take back medications at no charge to customers)**

Category: *Reducing Supply*

Description: Over 80% of heroin users began their journey toward addiction by using, and abusing, prescription opioid pain relievers. Unfortunately, many of those medications came from our own medicine cabinets. It is absolutely essential that we continue to remind people to keep all medications secure and to dispose of them safely. To that end, Ulster County has set up unused medication take back boxes in 19 police agencies throughout the county. Those boxes are utilized; however, they are not necessarily the convenient and intuitive place for residents to dispose of their medications. The best place is at the pharmacy where they were purchased. Ulster County played a big role in advocating for the successful passage of NYS legislation that will require all chain pharmacies in New York to take back unused medication at no charge to customers.

Progress/Results: Regulations to administer the law are being developed now for an imminent roll out and we need to vigorously promote utilization of all take back options, on an ongoing basis.

⇒ **Work to Get More Healthcare Providers Certified and Willing to Offer Medication Assisted Recovery Services, Including Low-Threshold Access Without Stigma**

Category: *Improving Treatment and Recovery Services*

Description: according to law, healthcare providers must complete special waiver training in order to be able to administer and prescribe buprenorphine, which is the core medication behind medication assisted recovery. The action involves offering and promoting more training in Ulster County and encourages the provision of, and low threshold access to services, by reducing stigma among providers, patients, and the public.

Progress/Results: UCDOH has offered several healthcare provider trainings that were fairly well attended. More trainings need to be offered and promoted, for which grant funding is available. In addition, peer-to-peer learning collaboratives are being scheduled so that providers can exchange ideas, best practices and challenges.

⇒ **Create and Implement an Ongoing and Pervasive Messaging Campaign, in all Media, Focused on Youth Substance Use Prevention and Explore Public/Private Partnerships and Funding Opportunities to Support Messaging**

Category: *Reducing Demand*

Description: the evidence is clear that primary prevention messaging, when done right and done well, works to help keep our young people from experimenting with and using dangerous substances. The action calls for an ongoing, 365 days a year, prevention messaging campaign in all media that is designed to “de-glorify” substance use, educate on the risks, and to diminish the stigma associated with seeking help. This action also calls for engaging the private sector business community to help underwrite the costs of the ongoing campaigns, and for engaging students in creating the messaging.

Progress/Results: up until now the Ulster County Department of Health, utilizing limited resources, has been creating and funding limited duration campaigns. While these have been effective, greater resources need to be invested for sustainability and maximum effectiveness.

⇒ **Expand and provide Greater Access to Evidence-Based Primary Prevention Programs, and Prosocial Activities in Schools and Youth Centers (and other settings) in Communities Throughout UC**

Category: *Reducing Demand*

Description: Ulster Prevention Council and Family of Woodstock conduct evidence based, primary prevention programming in schools, and other settings throughout Ulster County. The UC Opioid Prevention Task Force worked to inventory schools and classrooms that were and were not participating, with the goal of understanding why some were not included and what could be done to remedy. The other component is promoting and advancing what are known as prosocial activities (arts, music, sports, community involvement, etc.) among youth and youth centers in the county. Research clearly indicates that prosocial activities are some of the most effective risk mitigating factors in deterring youth from substance use and abuse.

Progress/Results: Ulster Prevention Council has added schools and classes to their service delivery, however, more needs to be accomplished in this area, as well as working with our local municipalities, community centers, and other places where youth gather to expand these services.

⇒ **Connect all Police, Fire and First Responder Agencies to Peer Advocate Organizations and Other Response Teams, Being Developed for Referral of Overdose Victims (and their associates and families) to Appropriate Treatment and Recovery Services and Follow-Up to Prevent Relapse**

Category: *Improving Treatment and Recovery Services*

Description: different communities around NYS and elsewhere have developed variations of an effective model that brings together law enforcement agencies with peer responder, mental health, and public health

agencies and representatives, to connect individuals who have overdosed with appropriate treatment and recovery services. Although details of the programs differ, the basic idea is for police and first responders to either have a peer advocate or social worker accompany officers on call, or for the police or first responder agency to report the contact information, as soon as possible, for follow-up. In Ulster County, we have a few police agencies that work with Catholic Charities' peer advocates; however, it is not consistent throughout.

Phase 2 of the Ulster County Sheriff's Opioid Response Plan calls for the creation of a rapid response team consisting of a plain clothes officer, mental health professional, peer advocate, and rehabilitation planner to respond to as many opioid overdose calls as possible throughout the county, either through an immediate referral through 9-1-1 or via a special hotline set up in the Sheriff's Office. The team would not only follow-up with the individual who overdosed, but would also reach out to family members and associates as well.

Progress/Results: expansion of this initiative is in the active planning stage and there is a pending \$900K USDOJ grant that has been applied for to support it. We are also continuing to work with Catholic Charities to help them support police agency response.

⇒ **Assist in the Expansion of the Ulster Regional Drug Court to Develop and Implement an Opioid Court**

Category: *Improving Treatment and Recovery Services*

Description: Opioid Court is a model that allows judges, defense attorneys and prosecutors to agree to postpone prosecution for up to 90 days for those involved in relatively low level opioid-related charges, pending immediately transferring defendants to appropriate treatment and recovery services. Defendants are required to make regular contact with the court and if they successfully complete all of their treatment obligations, they return to court for reevaluation and next steps.

Progress/Results: this initiative is in the active development stage. UCDOH has provided financial assistance to cover a significant portion of the transportation costs associated with getting defendants into treatment. Opioid Court is administered through the City of Kingston court system and they are the lead in developing and executing.

⇒ **Enhance Awareness and Promotion of the Services of the Ulster County Family Advocate**

Category: *Improving Treatment and Recovery Services*

Description: the Ulster County Family Advocate is a county funded position staffed by an experienced professional who helps individuals and families cope with substance and opioid use crisis by helping them to connect to the appropriate treatment and recovery services. The Family Advocate also helps them with associated financial concerns like securing the insurance benefits that they may be entitled or eligible for. The Family Advocate also runs a grief support group for families who have lost loved ones to overdose.

Progress/Results: the Family Advocate has been in place for several years and has helped many individuals and families through their struggles. More resources need to be made available to promote, and make the public aware of, her services.

⇒ **Enhance and Increase Support For Community Based and Whole Family Wellness and Recovery Centers and Services**

Category: *Improving Treatment and Recovery Services*

Description: one of the major risk factors associated with opioid use disorder and relapse is the social isolation and stigma that accompanies it. Community recovery and wellness centers such as Samadhi in Kingston provide a safe and supportive place for individuals and families to gather to share their struggles and challenges, to participate in activities that complement the healing process, or just to relax and regroup in the company of others.

Progress/Results: Samadhi and others, including those not yet established and those that serve youth need further support and resources, including financial, volunteer time, promotion and other that allow them to be there for those who need them and divert attention away from dangerous substance use behaviors.

⇒ **Provide Support for Training Peer Recovery Advocates (Coaches) and Assistance to Get Them Placed in Agencies and Communities Across Ulster County**

Category: *Improving Treatment and Recovery Services*

Description: Certified Peer Recovery Advocates (CPRAs) are individuals who have lived experience with addiction and recovery and who work to help guide others on the path to recovery. This type of evidence based support is essential because successful recovery from addiction presents many challenges and setbacks and it's important for people to have experienced and well trained individuals to "walk the walk" beside them. CPRAs go through a rigorous classroom training period, followed by many hours in the field before becoming fully certified. Shortly, the NY State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) will require all licensed OASAS treatment programs to have a CPRA on staff.

Progress/Results: Samadhi Wellness and Recovery Center in Kingston offers CPRA training and UCDOH-MH is funding scholarships for 32 people per year, for the next 3 years. This will result in having many more trained advocates in our community that can help those struggling with addiction to successfully recover.

⇒ **Increase Identification of People Who Are at Risk of Developing Opioid Use Disorder Through Evidence Based Screenings and Enhanced Electronic Health Records - and Increasing the Number of Providers Trained to Administer and Analyze**

Category: *Reducing Demand*

Description: Identifying those at risk of developing Opioid Use Disorder in primary care and other medical settings through the use of evidence based interviews and screenings, and transitioning them to counseling and follow-up care, is a very effective means of preventing potential substance abuse. Enhanced Electronic Medical Records that both prompt healthcare providers to engage patients and prompt screenings, while also noting findings for subsequent follow-up are also important in the continuum of prevention and care.

Progress/Results: Both Ellenville Regional Hospital and The Institute for Family Health have grant funded initiatives underway that are working to increase the utilization of preventative screenings and referrals.

3. **GROUP THREE** - those still in the early idea stage, and that require more research, development, time, and resources to determine viability, effectiveness, and possible implementation

⇒ **Create a Software and/or Mobile Application to Track and Follow-Up With Individuals as They Move Through the Treatment and Recovery Process to Ensure That They Do Not Disappear and Fall into Relapse and Overdose With Potential Fatal Consequences**

Description: One of the weak links in the chain of treatment and recovery is how to track individuals over time to know if they are following through with their appointments and programs. This is particularly critical in the outpatient sphere. As we know, with rare exceptions, people don't die of overdoses while in treatment and recovery programs or in jail, it's what happens, or doesn't happen, next, once they go back out into the community. This intervention would involve developing an extremely user-friendly, reliable, and privacy compliant software or mobile application that would send out alerts for follow-up if an individual were to miss multiple appointments and drop off of everyone's radar screen.

Progress/Results: Does such an application already exist or can we possibly create one? A lot more thought, research, and discussion needs to happen first.

⇒ **UC Sheriff First Chance Program Phase 4 of 4**

Category: Reducing Demand and Improving Treatment and Recovery

Description: Phase 4 of the UC Sheriff's 4-Phase Opioid Plan involves helping individuals who are recovering from addiction, and their families, transform their lives through a focus on one of the key components of the "social determinants of health", in this case meaningful employment. In this model, law enforcement would partner with the private sector business community, the UC Office of Employment and Training, BOCES, SUNY Ulster and others.

Progress/Results: A pending USDOJ grant is designed to support this work and the already awarded Healing Communities (CHASE) grant might also be used to support this work. Other social determinants, such as increase access to affordable housing opportunities and affordable transportation could also be added to the mix.

⇒ **Recovery Friendly Business Initiative**

Category: Improving Treatment and Recovery

Description: This model is based on an initiative begun in Oneonta, NY. There, a young businesswoman started hiring persons in recovery for her restaurant. She was chided and criticized by other members of the business community who claimed that persons in recovery would never be reliable employees, would steal money for drugs, and scare away customers. In fact, just the opposite happened. The people she hired turned out to be model employees and since many other businesses in Oneonta have come on board. Peer advocates are deeply involved in this initiative, through providing support for both business owners and recovery employees.

Progress/Results: We have invited Friends of Recovery and others involved in this initiative in Oneonta to visit Ulster County and share their experiences and lessons learned, with the ultimate goal of implementing a similar program here.

⇒ **Establish a Crisis Stabilization Center and/or Mental Health Urgent Care Center**

Category: Improving Treatment and Recovery

Description: Crisis Stabilization Centers have been established in many communities throughout the nation, and locally in Dutchess County. The Stabilization Centers are places where first responders, and others, can bring people experiencing mental health or substance use challenges to a safe place for a 24-hour period, pending referral to further care and treatment. It is not a medical emergency room however; it does have peer advocates and other support services available.

A Mental Health Urgent Care Center works on the same basis as a walk-in medical Urgent Care Center, except that its focus is on immediate and temporary mental health and substance use care, pending referral to appropriate ongoing care. A new Mental Health Urgent Care Center has recently been established in Orange County through Access: Supports for Living.

Progress/Results: Both of these models are being investigated, reviewed and discussed for possible implementation here.

⇒ **Bail Reform Impact on Transitioning Those Arrested for Low Level Use and Possession to Treatment and Recovery Services – (new intervention added on 10.03.19)**

Description: One of the impacts of the new, NYS Bail Reform legislation that becomes effective on January 1, 2020 is that judges will lose the leverage of requiring referral to a treatment program, for those arrested for low level use and possession offenses, as an alternative to setting bail or temporary incarceration in the UC Jail, where treatment programs will be available. In most cases, 20-day appearance tickets will be issued and individuals will be back out on the streets where recurring overdoses, or worse, can happen. Discussions are taking place that would have police officers throughout UC carry hand out cards that would carry a compelling message urging individuals who have been arrested for low level drug offenses to call to communicate with a team (as yet to be determined) designated to assist them with connecting to appropriate treatment and recovery services and other community supports.

Progress/Results: Various implementation models and ideas are being shared and discussed among stakeholders

⇒ **Continue to Identify and Analyze Innovative and Promising Practices and Research**

Many new and innovative, promising practices are being put into place in communities all over the nation. Part of this Team's work will be to continually research these, communicate with those involved and, at times, to invite key representatives to speak to our group about their successes and challenges. Representatives of organizations with practices being developed in Ulster County will also be invited to review and discuss their progress.