



Arizona
Substance Abuse
Partnership

Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership

May 5, 2022

1:00 PM

State Capitol Executive Tower

1700 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85007

In-Person/Virtual Hybrid Meeting

A general meeting of the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) was convened on May 5, 2022. The public meeting was hosted both in-person and virtually, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (16)

Sheila Polk , Chairperson, Yavapai County Attorney’s Office
Sara Salek , Vice-Chairperson, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
Tony Vidale , Arizona Criminal Justice Commission [Proxy for Andrew LeFevre]
Kim Brooks , Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family [Proxy for Maria Cristina Fuentes]
Teresa Manygoats Arizona Department of Health Services [Proxy for Sheila Sjolander]
Raymonda Matheka , Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections [Proxy for Douglas Sargent]
Lawrence LaVeque , Cisco Systems
Al Laurita , High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas [Proxy to Dawn Mertz]
Lee Pioske , The Crossroads
Sara Perry , Arizona Department of Child Safety [Proxy for Michael Faust]
Fawn Becker , Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners [Proxy for Tobi Zavala]
Merilee Fowler , MATFORCE
Leah Landrum-Taylor , Arizona Department of Economic Security
Christina Russell , Arizona Department Of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry [Proxy for David Shinn]
Deborah Jones , Substance Abuse Epidemiology Work Group
Shanda Breed , Arizona Department of Adult Probation

Members Absent (8)

Wanda Wright , Arizona Department of Veterans Services
Zora Manjencich , Arizona Attorney General’s Office
Kathleen Grimes , Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition

Alberto Gutier , Governor's Office of Highway Safety
David Klein , United States Department of Veterans Affairs
Heston Silbert , Arizona Department of Public Safety
Vanessa Bustos , Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Kathy Hoffman , Arizona Department of Education

Call to Order

- **Sheila Polk, Chair**, called the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) Meeting to order at 1:02 PM with 16 members present. **Ms. Polk** reviewed virtual meeting platform procedures.

Welcome/ Introductions

- **Sheila Polk, Chair**, welcomed everyone to the May 2022 ASAP meeting and conducted a roll call of the ASAP members in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

- **Sheila Polk, Chair**, requested a final review of the February 3, 2022 meeting minutes at 1:07 PM. Corrections to the minutes were elevated.
- **Shanda Breed** motioned to accept the proposed revisions to the February 3, 2022 meeting minutes.
- **Al Laurita** seconded the motion. There were no dissenting votes and the motion passed.

Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona

Substance Abuse Coalition Expansion in Arizona

- **Sheila Polk, Chair**, invited **Merilee Fowler** to provide an update on Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona's new coalitions. **Ms. Fowler** introduced **Amy Neville**, **founder of the Southeast Valley Community Alliance**.
- **Amy Neville** shared that the coalition has been active since January of 2022 and secured funding in March of 2022. **Ms. Neville** shared a rough draft of the coalition's mission statement and that they are holding a logo design contest with local schools in the area.
- **Amy Neville** explained how life changed when she lost her 14-year-old son, Alexander, in June of 2020 to an overdose. **Ms. Neville** shared that although she and her husband were knowledgeable about the dangers of drugs, they did not have any awareness of fentanyl. **Ms. Neville** further stated that youth are being robbed of their childhood, as fentanyl awareness is not being more publicized, and children are dying. **Amy Neville**, who lived in California at the time of her son's death, began raising awareness about fentanyl. **Ms. Neville** worked with California law enforcement agencies, the DEA, and other lawmakers in changing protocol by holding drug dealers accountable for overdose deaths.

- **Amy Neville** has helped to develop public service announcements, speaks with scout troops, and has made attempts to engage social media outlets in supporting her work in raising awareness about the dangers of substance use, presenting to over 6,000 people in April 2022. **Ms. Neville** stated that she has received support from schools as well as law enforcement agencies in the east valley of Arizona.
- **Sheila Polk** asked if she can refer community members in the east valley to **Ms. Neville's** coalition for assistance. **Ms. Neville** shared that she would be happy to help and that they can reach her by email or phone, and if she is unable to assist them by location, she would refer them to a coalition in their area.
- **Merilee Fowler** then introduced **Jason Lobmeyer, founder of the United Prevention Coalition**, which serves the cities of Surprise and El Mirage.
- **Jason Lobmeyer** thanked Amy Neville for her passion and work around substance abuse prevention. **Mr. Lobmeyer** stated that the opportunity to begin a coalition in November 2021, came about through the work of others in the field. **Mr. Lobmeyer** stated that prior to his coalition work, he had established strong connections in his community as a youth pastor.
- **Jason Lobmeyer** emphasized that it is important to distinguish between adult and youth substance abuse and that the goal is to eliminate substance use in all youth. **Mr. Lobmeyer** shared that he has had great success in working with leadership at schools in his community to discuss implementing prevention programming in the school.
- **Jason Lobmeyer** briefly shared his daughter's struggles with mental health and the successes that she has made through the support of social workers at her school.
- **Sheila Polk** thanked the presenters for their work in establishing coalitions. **Ms. Polk** stated that she remembers a time before coalitions were being funded, and at one time, fundraisers were held to support coalitions financially. **Ms. Polk** stated that grassroots level coalitions are already set up for action and can mobilize quickly to assist the community.
- **Sara Salek** thanked the presenters for their work as community leaders in advocating for change in substance abuse and mental health issues.

2021 Arizona High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas

Overview of 2021 Drug Threats in Arizona

- **Sheila Polk, Chair** introduced **Al Laurita, Investigative Support Center Manager**, to provide an overview of the top five drug threats in Arizona in 2021.
- **Mr. Laurita** suggested members connect with him directly on seizure numbers, as he must be cognizant of sensitive law enforcement information being released publicly. **Al Laurita** reviewed the top 5 substances identified as drug threats in Arizona according to data collected for 2020 and 2021: #1 Fentanyl, #2 Methamphetamine, #3 Cocaine, #4

Heroin, #5 Marijuana/THC. **Mr. Laurita** also reviewed the 2021 drug threats on the Southwest borders of the U.S., comparing border state percentages by specific substances, according to the National Seizure System. **Mr. Laurita** projects that in 2022, the number of fentanyl pills seized will be higher than in previous years.

- **Al Laurita** expressed gratitude to Randy Moffitt and his work on the “OD Maps”, which has identified spikes in drug usage in Arizona. **Mr. Laurita** encouraged the group to view the maps.
- **Al Laurita** shared that some social media outlets facilitate the sale and solicitation of drugs.
- **Amy Neville** asked **Mr. Laurita** if he feels that there is a problem with cross-contamination of cocaine and methamphetamine during drug seizures. **Mr. Laurita** confirmed that there is a concern.
- **Shanda Breed** asked if there has been an issue with getting tribal law enforcement to participate in overdose mapping. **Al Laurita** gave recognition to several tribes that are doing well in participating but mentioned that there are others who do not.
- **Tony Vidale** asked why Arizona is such an attractive drug distribution route, and if Arizona is a trans-shipment point for getting fentanyl to other states. **Al Laurita** stated that fentanyl has replaced methamphetamines as the primary drug shipped through Arizona. **Mr. Laurita** explained that this is due to supply and demand, and is financially driven.

Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Health Equity

Proposition 207 Smart and Safe Arizona Act

- **Sheila Polk, Chair**, introduced the next agenda item: Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Health Equity’s Justice Reinvestment Program and welcomed **Siman Qaasim, Health Equity Administrator**.
- **Siman Qaasim** provided an overview of the Justice Reinvestment Programs. **Ms. Qaasim** explained how Proposition 207 funds are dispersed and how the Arizona Department of Health Services is supporting the use of the funds for non-profit organizations in providing services to members of the community with justice-related issues around marijuana. **Ms. Qaasim** specifically identified that the funds are used for substance use prevention and treatment, restorative justice, diversion, and workforce development.
- **Siman Qaasim** explained that the next steps of the Justice Reinvestment Program will be to look at social determinants of health through gathering data and, eventually, working with a statewide evaluator to ensure any upcoming grant funding will be impactful and dispersed to communities where the needs are the highest.

- **Ms. Qaasim** shared that she expects that a Request for Grant Application will be released in the fall of 2022, and encourages coalitions to apply for grant funding.

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

Grant Funded Programming to Prevent and Treat SUD

- **Sara Salek, Vice-Chair**, introduced **Hazel Alvarenga, Deputy Assistant Director, Division of Grants Administration**.
- **Hazel Alvarenga** provided an overview of current grants funded under the Substance Abuse Block Grant as well as the sub-recipients that receive block grant funds. **Ms. Alvarenga** explained that the agency oversees over \$500 million in grant funding, which provides primary prevention and treatment services. **Ms. Alvarenga** highlighted other programs and projects currently funded under the grant.
- **Hazel Alvarenga** continued by providing an overview of the State Opioid Response II Grant. **Ms. Alvarenga** shared that one of the goals of providing grant funding is to increase access to treatment. **Ms. Alvarenga** then provided an overview of Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System opioid use disorder service locators for those in the community seeking treatment providers.
- **Hazel Alvarenga** highlighted the OAR hotline, a free, 24-hour, confidential hotline providing opioid assistance and referrals. **Ms. Alvarenga** also highlighted community reentry programs.
- **Hazel Alvarenga** shared that opioid grants have funded naloxone distribution to law enforcement agencies and other first responders. **Ms. Alvarenga** explained that there has been an increase, year over year, of naloxone distribution.
- **Sheila Polk, Chair**, expressed concern for young adults who are unaware of resources. **Ms. Polk** asked if the OAR Hotline would be a good place for families to seek assistance with opioid use disorders. **Ms. Alvarenga** stated that anyone seeking help can receive a referral but consent is critical.
- **Merilee Fowler** asked if the federal government is working to change certain requirements in dispersing grant funds since intravenous drug use has decreased. **Ms. Alvarenga** explained that grant funding is provided for all abused substances.
- **Raymonda Matheka** asked if there is funding assistance available for families that have insurance but may have a high deductible. **Ms. Alvarenga** replied that Substance Use Disorder funds can help cover co-pays, and Mercy Care can make referrals for care.
- **Shanda Breed** asked if recovery is funded under the grants. **Ms. Alvarenga** replied that support for recovery and rental assistance is provided by behavioral health service providers.

- **Sheila Polk** stated that the presentation was very beneficial to the council, providing an opportunity to receive information and resources that can be shared throughout the community.

Substance Abuse Epidemiology Workgroup Updates

- **Sara Salek, Vice-Chair**, moved on to the next agenda item of the Epidemiology Workgroup updates. **Ms. Salek** welcomed **Dr. George Runger** to provide an update on the work of the group.
- **George Runger** provided an overview of the Epidemiology Workgroup analyses of the State Opioid Response; looking at stimulant drugs and opioid data from the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, with the help of his team at the Arizona State University Biomedical Informatics division.
- **George Runger** explained that he and his team at Arizona State University have also completed the review of substance use disorder comorbidities through the Charlson Comorbidity Index.
- **George Runger** explained that he and his team are looking at data on non-fatal overdoses in Arizona to understand treatment patterns.
- **Sara Salek** stated that there has been a lot of progress in looking at data trends, and thanked **George Runger** and his team at Arizona State University.

2022 Meeting Dates

- **Sara Salek, Vice-Chair**, advised participants of the next ASAP Meeting date on September 1, 2022.

Meeting Adjourned

- **Sheila Polk, Chair** adjourned the May 5, 2022 meeting of the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership at 2:56 pm.

Dated the tenth day of May 2022
Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership
Respectfully Submitted By: Alfreda Moore
Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family