



Arizona  
Substance Abuse  
Partnership

**Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership  
September 5, 2023  
1:00 PM  
Arizona State Capitol Executive Tower**

A general meeting of the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) convened on September 5, 2023, in a hybrid format, notice duly given.

<b>Members Present (11)</b>
<b>Sara Salek</b> , Vice Chair, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
<b>Andrew LeFevre</b> , Arizona Criminal Justice Commission
<b>Sheila Sjolander</b> , Arizona Department of Health Services
<b>Douglas Sargent</b> , Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections
<b>Lawrence LaVeque</b> , Cisco Systems
<b>Dawn Mertz</b> , High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas
<b>Dana Allmond</b> , Arizona Department of Veterans Services
<b>Merilee Fowler</b> , MATFORCE
<b>Kathleen Grimes</b> , Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition
<b>Shanda Breed</b> , Arizona Department of Adult Probation
<b>Leah Landrum-Taylor</b> , Arizona Department of Economic Security
<b>Staff (2)</b>
<b>Tonya Hamilton</b> , Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family
<b>Alfreda Moore</b> , Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family

**Call to Order**

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair, called the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) meeting to order at 1:02 PM with 11 members and two staff present.**

**Welcome/Introductions**

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, welcomed everyone to the September 5, 2023, ASAP meeting, conducted a roll call of the members in attendance, and introduced the new members appointed to the council.

**Approval of Minutes**

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, stated that ASAP did not reach quorum. Approval of the May 3 meeting minutes will move to the December 14, meeting.

**Youth Marijuana Use, Violence, and Other Trends**

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, introduced **Shelly Mowrey** of the Arizona High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA).
- **Shelly Mowrey** shared an overview of the trending correlation between youth violence and marijuana use. **Shelly Mowrey** explained that these trends are a growing concern as law enforcement agencies see an increased rates of availability in marijuana vaping cartridges as well as the concentrations levels in those vapes.
- **Shelly Mowrey** shared multiple case studies, including marijuana-related fatal shootings and assaults among youth.

- **Shelly Mowrey** explained that the Arizona Youth Survey (AYS) links risky behavior to marijuana use. According to the 2022 AYS, Arizona youth are two to four times more likely to engage in risky behavior if they use marijuana, and regular users do not do as well in academics compared to non-users. Additionally, students reported using marijuana on school grounds.
- **Shelly Mowrey** provided recommendations on educating and preventing both youth violence and marijuana use. She specified the need to study this trend further and urged for bans on marijuana advertisements to avoid normalizing marijuana use among youth.
- **Merilee Fowler** asked how organizations push for advertisement change when marijuana lobbying and advertisements are a large group to go against. **Shelly Mowrey** explained the need for creative solutions and strategies. She also mentioned a federal law banning the advertisement of Schedule 1 drugs.
- **Dana Allmond** asked for the root causes of why kids are using. **Shelly Mowrey** shared information on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and that the AYS is an excellent source for root causes of youth marijuana use. **Shelly Mowrey** shared that 13 is the average age of first use.
- **Leah Landrum Taylor** asked if the majority of youth using marijuana is by way of vaping. **Shelly Mowrey** shared that many young people are using marijuana vaping products, and many of the sellers are on social media who also sell pills and other substances when youth were only seeking marijuana vaping cartilages.
- **Andy LeFevre** shared that **Merilee Fowler** provides educational talk kits for parents and families. He stated that the number one reason that kids don't use substances is because of parents which is why he is such an advocate for parent education and involvement. **Andy LeFevre** also shared that in working with law enforcement, violence due to marijuana (sales) has increased.
- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, stated that the public perception may be that marijuana is less harmful, and asked **Shelly Mowrey** if consuming marijuana is done in conjunction with other substances. **Ms. Mowrey** stated that polysubstance use information is available in the AYS. **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, said it would be helpful to share the information about marijuana use alone with the public. She also mentioned the possibility of Arizona State University (ASU) researchers studying how legalization has affected youth marijuana use.
- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, thanked **Shelly Mowrey** for her presentation on Youth Marijuana Use, Violence, and Other Trends.

### Healing the Body to Save the Mind

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, welcomed **Rob Best**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, and **Amanda Hoskin**, Operations Manager, of The Barbell Saves Project.
- **Rob Best** provided an overview of The Barbell Saves Project's mission in supporting the physical and mental well-being of individuals in recovery from substance use and misuse with community-based exercise. The Barbell Saves Project focuses on building a supportive, honest, and encouraging environment for everyone who attends its classes.
- **Rob Best** continued by sharing that they have recently moved into the arena of youth substance use prevention with the help of the Arizona National Guard, Counter Drug Task Force (CDTF), Drug Demand Reduction and Outreach team. Drug Education For Youth (DEFY) provides a fitness-driven drug prevention education class for youth that is held twice a week for six weeks. To ensure programming aligns with the State of Arizona education standards, The Barbell Saves Project works with ASU who studies and evaluates its programming.
- **Amanda Hoskin** explained that fitness directly links to healthy lifestyles and the prevention of substance use disorders; exercise has personally improved her mental health and has positively impacted her sobriety. Healing the body to save the mind is lived and breathed at The Barbell Saves Project.

- **Shanda Breed** asked if prospective coaches are trained and certified before becoming a coach. **Rob Best** responded that the organization pays for these to ensure all coaches are certified; some have combinations of peer support, coach, and trauma-informed certifications.
- **Shanda Breed** shared she is excited about The Barbell Saves Project, reaffirming how physical health correlates with substance use prevention.
- **Dana Allmond** asked where the revenue comes from and if they cater to individuals with disabilities. **Rob Best** explained revenue is generated through grant funding and donations. He added exercises/programming can be modified for individuals with disabilities.
- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, thanked **Rob Best** and **Amanda Hoskin** for their presentation and efforts in the community.

### Community Empowering Youth

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, introduced **Jamal Givens**, Chief Executive Officer of Liberty Partnership Kino Neighborhoods Coalition (LPKNC).
- **Jamal Givens** shared LPKNC serves the south side of Tucson with a goal of promoting mental health amongst youth through positive adolescent development focusing explicitly on substance use prevention.
- **Jamal Givens** stated through LPKNC's evidence-based programming, five youth groups work to maximize the voice of young people.
- **Jamal Givens** further explained that the coalition has a school referral program with follow-up if students get caught using vapes, marijuana, and other substances during school hours. The program allows the team to extend education to the parents and students.
- **Jamal Givens** shared a story about a student caught vaping in the bathroom during school. The student said he tried it because he was bored and scared to get involved in school clubs and programs. The student joined the youth group and has continued attending for the last eight months.
- **Tonya Hamilton** thanked **Jamal Givens** for his presentation and asked when youth groups meet. **Mr. Givens** replied they meet after school and on weekends.
- **Dana Allmond** shared that as the VA Director, her focus is on youth initiatives and asked **Jamal Givens** for the potential to partner in order to reach youth better. **Mr. Givens** responded a partnership as such would be appreciated.
- **Shandra Breed** asked if the coalition has connections with juvenile youth. **Mr. Givens** responded they are currently working with youth going through probation.
- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, thanked **Jamal Givens** for his presentation and youth empowerment in his community.

### Workgroup Reports

#### Substance Abuse Epidemiology Workgroup (Epi) Workgroup

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, welcomed **Dr. George Runger** to provide an update on the Substance Abuse Epidemiology (Epi) Workgroup.
- **Dr. George Runger** provided an overview of the workgroup's analysis in collaboration with his team at the Department of Biomedical Informatics (BMI) at ASU. **Dr. Runger** shared data sets related to overdose and hospital emergency department visits among polysubstance users.
- **Dr. George Runger** shared data on current Emergency Department (ED) overdose visits vs. initial ED visits (time between overdoses) stating his team is currently analyzing repeated ED visits for overdoses and the types of overdoses. **Dr. Runger** shared an analysis of one patient with 1,300 visits over the last four years. He added data shows increased rates in neonatal overdose cases. **Dr. Runger** showed a gap that needs attention (18,000 individuals represented for Autism and Attention Deficit Disorder, and 28,000 with potential homelessness visiting ED for overdoses).

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, thanked **Dr. George Runger** and his team at ASU, and added she looks forward to continuing the analysis with the workgroup.

#### **Prevention Workgroup**

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, welcomed **Merilee Fowler** to provide an update on the Prevention Workgroup.
- **Merilee Fowler** provided an overview of the group's focus of prevention through coalition development. In the first year of the workgroup's inception and in collaboration with the Drug Demand Reduction and Outreach team, six new coalitions have been established in prevention desert areas: Glendale, Peoria, El Mirage/Surprise, Queen Creek, Douglas, and Peach Springs.
- **Merilee Fowler** stated three of the six coalitions received Drug-Free Community (DFC) grant funding for fiscal year 2024. Through the newly established coalitions and additional grant funding, approximately 1,220,291 Arizonans will receive services.
- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, thanked **Merilee Fowler** and the workgroup's efforts.

#### **Council Member Updates**

- **Tonya Hamilton** announced that the Governor's Youth Commission (GYC) is recruiting 10-12<sup>th</sup> grade representatives in Apache and Gila counties to serve in the 2023-2024 school year. The application closes on September 15, 2023, at 5:00 PM and is available on the GOYFF website. **Ms. Hamilton** shared the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF) will host a free grant writing workshop September 20-21, 2023; 500 individuals from communities across the state have been attended previous trainings.
- **Dawn Mertz** reminded members of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Arizona Drug Summit in Tempe on September 6, 2023.

#### **2023 Meeting Dates**

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, reminded members of the next ASAP meeting date of **December 14, 2023, at 1 PM**. The meeting will be offered in a hybrid format and members are welcome to attend in person or virtually.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

- **Sara Salek, Vice Chair**, adjourned the meeting at **2:53 PM**.

Dated the eighth day of September 2023  
Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership  
Respectfully Submitted By: Alfreda Moore  
Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF)