

**FOLLOW-UP REPORT
COUNTY LEADERSHIP FORUM ON OPIOID ABUSE
SEPTEMBER 29, 2017**

In collaboration with the NCACC (North Carolina Association of County Commissioners), Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, Rockingham County Commissioners, and Rockingham County Manager, a County Leadership Forum on Opioid Abuse was held on September 29, 2017, 12:00 noon – 4:00 p.m., Eden Ballroom, Eden, North Carolina. Approximately 120 forum participants were comprised of elite individuals including State, County (Rockingham, Caswell, Stokes), and Municipal elected officials and executive staff; Board of Education members; Court officials; Law Enforcement; Faith-Based representation; State Highway Patrol; NAACP (National Association Advancement of Colored People); Rockingham County Schools; Rockingham Community College; Health Care Officials; Rehabilitation Organizations; Emergency Services, and Representation from the Medical Field.

- Forum was facilitated by Mark Tucker, retired from the Forsyth County Cooperative Extension Office, assisted by Will Strader, Director of Rockingham County Cooperative Extension.
- Rockingham County Commissioner Chairman Mark F. Richardson welcomed the group.
- Opening remarks were made by Lance L. Metzler, Rockingham County Manager.
- Fred McClure, Past President of NCACC/Davidson County Commissioner spoke as to “Why Are We Here”?
- Chief of Police, Thomas Bashore, Town of Nashville, North Carolina; and Amanda Flory, Transitional Care Social Worker from Nashville, North Carolina, gave a power point presentation about a program, HOPE Initiative, started in February 2016 by the Nashville Police Department. This program allows individuals with opiate addictions to come to the Nashville Police Department and start their road to recovery with no questions asked, no interrogation, no charges and no judgment.
- Felissa Ferrell, Director, Rockingham County Department of Health and Human Services; and Rodney Stewart, Rockingham County EMS Operations Supervisor, gave a power point presentation “Impact on Families in our County”.
- Dr. Tedra Anderson-Brown with Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, provided a power point presentation “Understanding Opioid Misuse and Addiction”.
- A. Reece Pyrtle, Jr., Eden Police Chief/Rockingham County Commissioner; Dr. Nerissa Price, Regional Medical Director with Cardinal Innovations Healthcare; and Felissa Ferrell, Director, Rockingham County Department of Health and Human Services, provided information on available initiatives in Rockingham County:
 - Drug Drop-Off Boxes
 - Treatment Options
 - Opioid Task Force (Outcomes/Prevention)

Following the presentations, discussion from participants took place to generate group consensus about tools, concepts or actions that could help to make a difference in the opioid epidemic in Rockingham County. The following ideas were developed:

IDEA#1: Develop a statewide website/data base to store and publicize best practices and to encourage the sharing of prevention activities.

- Assets to build upon:
 - the treatment providers and facilities we already have available;
 - the Rockingham County Opioid Task Force that has been appointed;
 - a committed community.

- Key Partners to help champion this idea: the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the Executive Branch (including LME/MCOs and the Governor's Task Force), the NC School Boards Association, and the NC Attorney General
- Hidden Issues or Obstacles:
 - funding (but it doesn't have to be expensive);
 - a strategy to improve transportation to treatment/coordination of transit routes;
 - a clearinghouse for ideas - search best management practices (educate, identify, treatment, follow-up)
- Person/Agency Responsible:
 - The Executive Branch and all Cabinet agencies should collaborate
 - LME/MCO (Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization)
 - Governor's Task Force
 - Attorney General
 - The local public school system
- Resources needed:
 - Prevention is key:
 - To discourage illegal drug use we should implement a plan to educate the public on the opioid epidemic;
 - Our school system should develop a Youth Education & Outreach Program
 - NCACC, NC School Boards Assn, all Cabinet agencies.
- Next Steps: Build on existing activities, including results of these meetings; the county reports can become the basis for the sharing of ideas

IDEA #2: Have NARCAN kits available in middle schools and high schools

- Have students build their own opioid training programs and deliver to middle schools
- Develop a " Lock-Up Your Meds Program" in the schools
- Funding to help uninsured get Suboxone treatment

IDEA #3: Use a holistic approach to help people learn about addiction causes and resources available. Create a recovery community in the county, where recovery resources are available.

- Assets to build upon: the people in this room.
- Key partners include the Faith-based resources that are already available, such as "Celebraterecovery.com"; those in need can be referred to Rockingham County Chapter
- Hidden issue or obstacle: stigma.
- Resources Needed:
 - We need a program similar to the HOPE Initiative
 - Publicize this "successful" law enforcement effort;
 - Have Sheriff's Department take the lead, and consolidate the program across municipalities for more effective treatment response;
 - EMS can assist the Sheriff's Department with transportation.
- Next Steps:
 - Check with local physicians' offices to identify needs and numbers of patients seen. Need an intervention plan
 - Ask them to monitor prescribed drugs and prescriptions
 - Contact Recovery Communities of North Carolina (<http://rcnc.org>) to see what resources they could lend to help us create a recovery community in our county.
 - Use these resources to deconstruct what leads to addiction by interviewing recovering addicts.

IDEA #4: Bring services to western Rockingham County

- Assets to build upon: There is already a growing interest and the need to know. This creates a good environment.
- Hidden issues or obstacles:
 - Lack of knowledge about the issue;
 - Families are the foundation and basis for support.
- Resources Needed:
 - People who have a passion to work on it.
 - Integrative care – the systematic coordination of general and behavioral healthcare.
 - Law Enforcement/Mental Health skill development of a holistic mind/body/spirit approach.
- Next Steps: Grasp the attention of all stakeholders (EMS, Law Enforcement, Cities/Towns, Faith Community)

IDEA #5: Implement and organize through the Board of County Commissioners, who represents the entire County

- Assets to build upon:
 - county and municipal government websites;
 - we already have transportation systems;
 - we have existing community-based centers in all parts of the county (i.e. Triad Goodwill Community Resource Center)
- Key Partners to help champion idea:
 - County Commissioners, County Department of Health & Human Services, Mayors, Board of Education and School Superintendent
- Hidden issues or obstacles
 - Be certain it is community based
- Person/Agency Responsible:
 - Commissioners, Mayors, City/Town Councils, Schools
- Resources Needed:
 - Need a Transitional Care Social Worker
 - Homeless shelter needed
 - Need more Drop-box locations
 - Create county crisis line for those addicted from substance abuse
 - County and municipalities need to provide funds; we're already contributing through costs to families.
- Replicate Health Professionals, i.e. Cardinal Innovations Healthcare
- Next Steps:
 - County Commissioners, municipal elected officials, Board of Education explore idea
 - Set timelines and make commitments;
 - Share opioid statistics with all our communities and relevant organizations;
 - Provide Narcan to EMS personnel

IDEA #6: Develop an App for patients who are prescribed opioids:

- The app would describe the risks of abuse for the given drug, list resources for assistance including locations, and provide helpful links to relevant websites; the app could also include a donation link.
- Pharmacists can help patients load the app.

IDEA #7: Transportation to help with inpatient treatment in other counties, as well as for keeping with Outpatient Appointments, including Peer support rides through volunteers.

- Assets to build upon:
 - RCATS for Mental Health
 - SCAT Bus
- Key partners to help:
 - Department of Social Services
 - Department of Health and Human Services
- Hidden issues or obstacles:
 - Need workforce to make it work;
 - Environmental concerns about best way to transport
- Resources Needed: vehicles and funding for fuel

IDEA #8: Engagement and Helping People Who Have Addiction – Rapid Response Program for people in crisis to get immediate help

- Assets to build upon:
 - We have an Integrated Mobile Health program, and a community behavioral health specialist.
 - Build on this model and create linkages
- Key partners to help: County leadership, municipal leaders, and Cardinal Innovations Healthcare.
- Person/Agency responsible: Take idea to our Task Force, and look to Cardinal Innovations Healthcare and local Law Enforcement to take the lead.
- Next Steps: Bring idea to leadership and our Task Force to build on other programs in the community.

IDEA #9: Create a new facility for detox and inpatient treatment for the counties of Rockingham, Caswell, Stokes, and all their municipalities

- Assets to build upon:
 - County has land.
 - We've talked with the hospitals. Get idea and run with it
 - We have staff; existing partnerships and the faith-based community are ready to act.
- Key partners to help: Cardinal Innovations, the hospitals, all of us are partners together.
- Hidden issues or obstacles:
 - Licensure
 - Have been held back for a certain location, but need to move on.
- Person/Agency Responsible: the counties and municipalities involved.
- Resources Needed:
 - MCO (Managed Care Organization – Cardinal Innovations) buy-in;
 - Cost savings can be redirected.
- Next Steps: Commissioners in each county should continue to have these conversations with the municipalities and the faith-based community.

IDEA #10: Make it acceptable for adults and children to ask for help and find them a safe place to do this. Engage a Public Relations firm to create a public awareness campaign to inform people that there are resources out there and where they can go for help.

- Assets to build upon:
 - We have a strong faith-based community in all three of our counties; we should use them.
- Key partners to help:
 - Our citizens, Boards of Commissioners, and municipalities are all key partners and we want them all involved.
- Hidden issues or obstacles:
 - Funding
 - Stigma
 - People don't know where to turn for help
- Person/Agency responsible:
 - Local Health Department
- Resources needed:
 - A long-term treatment center
 - Website
 - An information campaign on radio, TV, social media, municipal and county websites
- Next steps:
 - Gather citizen input from the cities and counties;
 - Have an information booth at all the Fall Festivals in the area.

IDEA #11: A detox center and placement of a substance abuse specialist in the hospital emergency room.

- Assets to build upon:
 - agencies that we did not know about who are working in this area
 - More affordable in-house recovery especially long-term (12 – 24 months)
- Key partners to help:
 - The medical community
 - Mental health providers
 - Faith-based community
- Hidden Issues or Obstacles:
 - Lifestyle choices/experiences get set at an early age and are difficult to change or alter in a short period of time;
 - Transportation for people seeking recovery support;
 - People need to know where help is available
- Person/Agency responsible:
 - Health and mental health communities, working with faith-based community.
- Resources needed:
 - Need vocational training as part of treatment
 - One-to-one counseling
- Next steps:
 - Build community awareness and involvement

IDEA #12: Enhance our Opioid Task Force with broad community representation and develop an information campaign (See Idea #10 above). Add a representative from each municipality, law enforcement including municipal police, a social worker, the county attorney, school board members and a representative of the veterans' community.

- Assets to build upon:
 - Rockingham County opioid task force
- Key partners to help:
 - The following agencies should be included as members on the Rockingham County Task Force: Municipalities, law enforcement including municipal police officers, DSS social worker, county attorney, the local school board, and the Veterans' Affairs office.
- Hidden issues or obstacles:
 - Dedicated support
 - Loss of interest and momentum
- Resourced needed:
 - Need dedicated support through a hired staff person
 - Rockingham County Manager and Municipal Mayors meet quarterly for leadership to stay better informed
 - Funding
 - Explore possible support from NC "Rainy Day Fund"
 - Municipalities
 - Local fundraising
- Next steps:
 - Develop milestones, deliverables, timelines;
 - Share information with municipalities

IDEA #13: Expand peer support in the community for those in need, whether released from the hospital emergency room or the jail; help those in recovery develop mentor relationships. Develop a "hotline" for reporting of physicians who over-prescribe.

- Assets to build upon:
 - Monthly community partners meetings would provide opportunity for continued discussions
 - Mayors' meetings
- Requirement to graduate no less than three months after care plan successfully completed

IDEA #14: Hospital emergency rooms can only address those whose lives are immediately threatened; facilitating movement from the emergency room to a mental health/substance abuse treatment program is needed.

- Hospital leadership needed

IDEA #15: Education in the school system and faith-based community; encourage people to get involved; those who are affected and willing to share their life experience stories should be included.

- Assets to build on:
 - Cardinal Innovations Healthcare
 - Mental Health First Aid

- Key partners to help:
 - The county, school board, faith-based community, local health department, and Cardinal Innovations
- Hidden issues or obstacles:
 - There is a lack of understanding about the issue.
- Resources needed:
 - Public awareness campaigns
 - Facebook presence
 - Video presentations
- Next steps:
 - Early action is the key
 - Start working now

A copy of the abovementioned ideas shall be distributed to all participants of this forum.

Report Prepared By:

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