

MINUTES

Purpose: Engage Okaloosa County community members in a health improvement process through an open, two-way dialogue to reduce the number of adults engaged in substance use.

Attendees: Petra Maddens, Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa); Lauren Hobbs, DOH-Okaloosa; Emily Tash-Pickens, DOH-Okaloosa; Christopher Carter; Fort Walton Beach Police Department; Petra Maddens, DOH-Okaloosa; Veronica Ebuon, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Emily King, Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Program; Cheryl Pedone, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR); Lauren Anzaldo, Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System; Stephanie Wedel, Freedom Life Compass; Ken LaPee, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office (OCSO); Joe Wilson, God's Glory Fort Walton Beach; Carl Donahue, Community Member; Ben Horn, Community Member; Amanda Colwell, DOH-Okaloosa; David Glinka, Freedom Life Compass; Briley Kennedy, United Way Emerald Coast; Christine Syfrett, DOH-Okaloosa; Michael Jacobs, Shalimar Police Department; Steve McCosker, Crestview Police Department; Robert Bage, Fort Walton Beach Police Department; Danielle Crowley, DOH-Okaloosa; Emily Morgan, DOH-Okaloosa; Bryan McCallum, Crestview Police Department; Sabu Williams, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Larry McFarland, Bridgeway Center Inc.

Welcome & Introductions – Petra Maddens

- Petra opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. She reviewed the meeting's purpose and agenda.
- Petra shared Community Engagement Survey results from the previous meeting.
- Minutes from the July 12, 2023, meeting were reviewed and approved.

Action Plan Updates – Emily Pickens

Pre-Arrest Diversion Discussion

- Emily Pickens opened discussion about the development of a Pre-Arrest Diversion (PAD) program in Okaloosa County.
- Chief Robert Bage stated he met with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) and State Attorney's Office previously to discuss PAD. They also discussed the [PAD Escambia County](#) plans to implement within the next few months.
- Emily shared [Florida Statute 901.41 \(3\)](#). This legislation supports the implementation of PAD, which affords adults who meet specified criteria with the opportunity to avoid an arrest for qualifying misdemeanors.
 - Ken LaPee added that although the statute supports the availability of PAD, it does not require individual counties or entities to participate.
 - Ken stated prior to moving forward, OCSO would like more information on projections of program success, impact, feasibility, and resources needed.

- Emily stated Leon County was the first county in Florida to implement PAD. Since then, many other counties have utilized their program as a model.
- David Glinka asked if metrics are available to show the success of Leon County's PAD. These metrics have been [linked here](#) for reference, including recidivism data.
 - David shared information about the [HOPE Florida program](#). They use "Hope Navigators" to help individuals by identifying goals and barriers, making referrals to local and community-based partners, and providing one-on-one support. He proposed that something like this could be beneficial to PAD locally.
 - Attendees agreed that case managers often produce best outcomes.
 - Emily stated Leon County's PAD employed a case management system through partnership with a behavioral health provider.
- Stephanie Wedel stated education on available resources for local police departments could play a significant role in PAD.
 - Ken agreed that having a list of available resources could help officers determine appropriate action after an encounter. Other attendees from law enforcement agreed this information would be beneficial.
 - Emily shared an opioid resources rack card was developed by the group. An additional card is being developed to include a sticker with a QR code, which can be placed on clipboards. She stated the listing can be expanded to include additional information beneficial to first responders.
- Ken stated law enforcement officers already have the opportunity to divert persons in certain scenarios based on their discretion and it may be more beneficial to improve existing resources than develop a new program.
- Sabu Williams stated it would be beneficial to implement PAD because individuals with arrest records may have difficulties with employment or housing opportunities. He added [Hillsborough County](#) had success with their PAD program.
 - Ken stated arrest records do not impact opportunities, but convictions do.
- Bryan McCallum stated officers can use discretion up to a certain point. Often, they must issue a notice to appear or make an arrest to respect the victim of the crime. He stated that once the arrest is made, the court provides resources to the individual.
- Emily redirected discussion by asking what practical actions the group can take by the conclusion of the meeting. Law enforcement attendees agreed a short resource briefing presentation would be helpful for officers and increase their knowledge.

Reintegration Services Discussion and Action Planning

- Reintegration services will be discussed at the next meeting due to time constraints.

Action Items – Emily Pickens

Pre-Arrest Diversion Discussion

- Emily will gather more information on the Escambia County PAD program.

- Emily will also find additional information and examples of the negative impacts of arrests and arrest records on opportunities for employment, housing, etc.
- Emily and Lauren will create a draft presentation for local law enforcement agencies.

Reintegration Services Discussion and Action Planning

- No action items were discussed due to time constraints.

Open Discussion – All

- Emily King shared the Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Program will have an open house for their new Shalimar location on August 31st from 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. at 6 11th Ave Unit H5 Shalimar, FL. Emily Pickens will share the flyer via email.
- Emily also shared information about “Safe Sips”. This is a new bystander intervention program. Safe Sips helps bars, restaurants, breweries, and other alcohol-serving spaces create safe and welcoming cultures for patrons, and safe and respectful workplaces for staff. This training allows staff to learn how to recognize when they see unwanted sexual aggression and options for taking action to stand up for someone else.
- Lauren Anzaldo shared the Suicide Awareness Summit in Bay County is Friday, Sept 29. The summit will include resource tables, a panel discussion with suicide attempt survivors, and more. Emily will share additional details via email.
- David Glinka provided information for HOPE Florida at 850-300-HOPE. He shared resource documents are available on [their website](#) including emergency and pregnancy resources, social services, and more.

Closing – Petra Maddens

- Emily motioned to move the next meeting from Wednesday, September 13th to Tuesday September 12th at the same location. Attendees agreed.
- Petra thanked attendees for participating and asked them to complete the meeting evaluation form to provide feedback.

Next Meeting – Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 9:00 AM at Crosspoint Church in Niceville and via Microsoft Teams.

Action Items	Owners	Deadline	Status
Gather information Escambia County PAD program	Emily Pickens	9/12/2023	In Progress
Create draft resources presentation for law enforcement briefings	Emily Pickens & Lauren Hobbs	9/12/2023	Not Started
Invite other relevant partners to next meeting	ALL	Next meeting	Ongoing