

## MINUTES

**Purpose:** Engage Okaloosa County community members in a health improvement process through an open, two-way dialogue to reduce the impact of harmful events such as pedestrian injuries, older adult falls, and substance use and to reduce the housing burden.

**Attendees:** Emily Pickens, Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa); Lauren Hobbs, DOH-Okaloosa; Beth Smith, DOH-Okaloosa; Greg Cain, Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services; Robert Bage, Fort Walton Beach Police Department; JB Whitten, City of Crestview; Tim Gibson, City of Fort Walton Beach; Jason Fulghum, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office (OCSO); Mikiko Tucker, City of Fort Walton Beach; Gail Sansbury, Fort Walton Beach Housing Authority; Amanda Colwell, DOH-Okaloosa; Chris Hawkins, CDAC Behavioral Healthcare; Denise Manassa, CDAC Behavioral Healthcare; Lida Fratangelo, North Okaloosa Medical Center; Jenna McElyea, Bridgeway Center Inc.; Mercedes Feris, Latin Flair Events; Arielle May, Catholic Charities.

### Opening – Elizabeth “Beth” Smith

- Beth opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
- Minutes from the November 16, 2023, meeting were reviewed and approved.
- Beth shared Community Engagement Survey results from the previous meeting. Attendees reported their opinions were heard and the meeting met their needs.

### Action Plan Updates – Robert Bage and JB Whitten

#### Community Paramedicine Discussion – Older Adult Falls

- Chief Bage opened discussion and invited Greg Cain to share paramedicine updates. Greg shared paramedicine fall prevention efforts and stated EMS is still working to schedule Broward County EMS to attend the next meeting.
  - Chief Bage provided an overview of current fall prevention efforts and the fall risk assessment utilized in Broward County.
- Chief Bage briefly summarized the [STEADI initiative](#). It is a multidisciplinary approach with three elements: screen patients for fall risk, assess modifiable risk factors, and intervene to reduce risk by using effective clinical and community strategies.
- Members feel it is imperative to improve fire department representation in the groups fall prevention efforts. Greg Cain will invite fire chiefs in Okaloosa County to future meetings that specifically involve the fire departments.
- Attendees discussed Fall Prevention Month is November. They would like to start planning early to not become inundated with tasks due to Fall Prevention Month and Pedestrian Safety Month in October occurring back-to-back.

#### Community Paramedicine Discussion – Opioid Overdoses

- Mayor Whitten summarized the Opioid Summit he recently attended online.
- Chief Bage provided overview of opioid efforts aligned with Healthy Behaviors. He summarized Drug Addiction Response Teams using the [Naloxone Plus Pathway](#). He shared that within 24-72 hours of an overdose, a response team, including law enforcement, fire department or EMS, and a licensed counselor visit the overdose

survivor to present available recovery programs and complete intake paperwork if the survivor agrees to enroll in a program.

- The pathway is adaptable to meet the needs of the community. Chief Bage provided an example where 80% of the time, the response team is responding to overdoses and 20% of the time, they are doing community outreach and education.
  - Greg stated that the Naloxone Plus Pathway would align with other EMS initiatives and would like to be involved in conversations moving forward.
- Chief Bage also shared details about “Your Life Was Saved” kits. These kits include a resource guide and Narcan. They are given to overdose survivors by EMS and provide the overdose survivor with options for treatment and support.
  - Emily will send the kit information from Pinellas County to Greg. He will share the kit information up his chain of command and get approval to distribute.
- Members discussed barriers of connecting overdose survivors to treatment such as Bridgeway detox immediately following an incident.
  - Greg stated there are medical and legal obligations, including the Marchman Act, that require EMS to transport to the emergency room after an incident.
- Greg stated EMS can pull data on overdose rates in specific areas of the county. Emily asked about the number of overdoses that occur at residential locations. Greg estimated 50% or more are residential, and the other 50% are at transient locations.
- Mayor Whitten shared he learned minority populations have a higher overdose rate due to lack of access to Naloxone. The Crestview Drug Task Force and Rotary Club plan to host an opioid awareness event for education and distribution of Naloxone to minority populations in Crestview.
  - Another opportunity to educate and distribute Naloxone is at the International Festival held on May 4<sup>th</sup> in Crestview.

### **Okaloosa Walton Housing Summit**

- Chief Bage opened the discussion on the Okaloosa Walton Housing Summit by stating that the county can not grow or further develop without more housing availability. Key issues to keep in mind for housing are density and the distance.
  - He added that rather than addressing affordable housing alone, the efforts need to focus on all income levels and housing costs to alleviate the demand on less expensive housing.
- Beth Smith explained why the two counties are working together for the Housing Summit. Funding came from the state with the request to host the summit together, addressing and being tailored to meet the needs of both counties.
  - Emily stated the summit will be a one-day event on May 13<sup>th</sup> in Niceville. The steering committee is looking for speakers.
- Members discussed current progress on housing efforts.
  - Gail shared that Fort Walton Beach Housing Authority is in the process of starting their first phase, creating 100 senior units in 2025.
  - Mayor Whitten shared Crestview purchased abandoned homes throughout the city and has contracted out to create 20-22 affordable units. They are also working with Eglin Air Force Base to build 94 town houses with military preference.
  - Attendees agreed transportation and infrastructure in Okaloosa County are large issues that directly impact the local housing market.

- Emily will request data from the County's public transportation survey.

**Action Items – Robert Bage and JB Whitten**

- Greg Cain will invite fire chiefs to meetings that specifically involve the fire departments.
- Emily will share more details of the Housing Summit, as available.
- Emily will obtain data from the transportation survey to share before the next meeting.

**Closing – Emily Pickens**

- Chief Bage shared that [Annual Mardi Gras Parade and Downtown Throwdown](#) will occur on Sunday, January 28, 2024, at the corner of Ferry Road SE and First Street SE.
- Greg shared Okaloosa County EMS implemented a [new portable blood delivery program](#) beginning December 1, 2023. This program allows EMTs and paramedics to deliver blood supplies at emergency scenes which increases the survivability of patients suffering from traumatic shock or conditions like postpartum hemorrhaging.
- Emily shared the OCHIP Celebration is February 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Island Resort. It will start at 5:00 p.m. Emily will send out an RSVP.
  - Chief Bage announced the group's award winners: Excellence in Injury Prevention – Jason Fulghum, Excellence in Opioid Prevention – Mayor JB Whitten, and Healthy Communities Member of Year – Greg Cain.
- Emily thanked attendees for participating and asked them to complete the meeting evaluation form to provide feedback.

*Next Meeting – March 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 a.m. at DOH-Okaloosa*

<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Status</b>
Secure Broward County EMS to speak at the next meeting about paramedicine	Greg Cain	3/21/2024	In Progress
Recruit representatives from local hospitals and older adult programs to next meeting	Emily Pickens	3/21/2024	In Progress
Invite fire chiefs in Okaloosa County	Greg Cain	3/21/2024	Not Started
Share details of Housing Summit	Emily Pickens	3/21/2024	In Progress
Find and share data from transportation survey	Emily Pickens	3/21/2024	Not Started