

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: Elizabeth Smith, Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa); Amanda Colwell, DOH-Okaloosa, Petra Maddens, DOH-Okaloosa, Emily Pickens, DOH-Okaloosa; Danie Crowley, DOH-Okaloosa, Christine Syfrett, DOH-Okaloosa; Lauren Anzaldo, Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System; Stephanie Wedel, Freedom Life Compass; Vanessa d'Aquin, Crossroads Center; Robert Bage, Fort Walton Beach Police Department; Greg Cain, Okaloosa County EMS (OCEMS); Andrew Kindle, OCEMS; Barbara Franklin, OCEMS; Darrel Welborn, OCEMS; Shawnette Hummer, CDI Head Start; Ken LaPee, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office; Troy Williams, City of Destin; Clint Naples, Niceville Police Department; Amy Myers, Shelter House; Victoria Knott, Bridgeway Center, Inc.; Sheila Fitzgerald, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners; Tim Szuch, Bridgeway Center, Inc.; Jenna McElyea, Bridgeway Center, Inc.; Samara Bailey, Be Generous, Inc.; Stephanie Culbreath, Jackson County Sheriff's Office; Melissa Sidoti, NWF Health Network.

Welcome & Introductions – Petra Maddens

- Petra opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
- She shared Community Engagement Survey responses from the previous meeting. Attendees reported the topics discussed were relevant and impactful.
- Minutes from the previous September 5, 2024, meeting were reviewed and approved.

Action Plan Updates – Stephanie Wedel & Deb Willis

POST Updates

- Tim Szuch shared POST has regularly scheduled outreach events across the county based on overdose heatmap data. They will continue pop-ups on days without visits.
- Sheila Fitzgerald agreements for officer reimbursement will be sent next week via email.
- Attendees requested POST data. Emily shared she will have a quarterly report prepared at the next meeting illustrating July through September POST visits.

POST Community Event Debrief

- Stephanie provided an overview of the POST Community Event in September.
- Emily reminded attendees the next POST Community Event is scheduled for Saturday, January 13th in Crestview. Attendees agreed the event needs to be well publicized.

POST Phase II Discussion: Peers

- Emily opened discussion for Phase II. Greg Cain shared he, Emily, and Chief Bage met with agencies across Florida and North Carolina to learn about their peer programs. They stated most programs include paid peer positions with smaller outreach teams.
- Chief Bage emphasized the importance of operations partners feeling comfortable adding a peer, including law enforcement, EMS, and Bridgeway Center, Inc.
 - Ken LaPee said the Community Resource Deputies would support adding peers.
 - Chief Bage raised concern regarding peer safety during outreach visits and the importance of building rapport with existing team members prior to inclusion.

- Stephanie explained the process for becoming a Certified Peer Recovery Peer Specialist in Florida. Applicants are required to have at least two years of sobriety, complete coursework, and obtain volunteer hours through community recovery efforts.
 - Attendees discussed certification processes, requirements, and supervision.
- Members engaged in discussion regarding points of programmatic impact that can be explored to add a peer, including during POST outreach visits, at scheduled events, and during follow-up contacts. Stephanie advocated for peer inclusion for outreach visits.
 - Ken LaPee suggested peers remain in the car during outreach visits and engage when necessary. Chief Bage suggested they be on standby via phone.
 - Stephanie expressed interest in utilizing peers to conduct outreach attempts for POST clients who the team did not successfully interact with. Others agreed peers should be used for follow-up, but via phone instead.
- Chief Bage proposed a four-part approach for discussion in November:
 - Adding peers to scheduled outreach and pop-up events.
 - Utilizing peers for follow up with successful client contacts.
 - Utilizing peers for follow up with unsuccessful client contacts.
 - Adding peers to outreach cold calls “on standby”.

Action Items – Stephanie Wedel & Deb Willis

- Emily will send an email overview of the four-part approach to incorporate peers and the certification requirements. Members should discuss within their respective agencies.
- Stephanie suggested the next meeting be a potluck since it would run through lunchtime. Attendees agreed. Emily will coordinate a shared spreadsheet for dishes.

Partner Updates – Emily Pickens

- Stephanie shared the Niceville Bazaar will be held Saturday, October 19th from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Mullet Festival Fairgrounds.
- Chief Bage shared they are partnering with HCA Fort Walton Beach-Destin Hospital for a Drug Take Back Event on Saturday, October 26th from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Closing – Emily Pickens

- Emily thanked attendees for participating and asked them to complete the community engagement survey to provide feedback.

Next Meeting – Thursday, November 19th, 2024, at 11:00 AM at Crosspoint Church in Niceville

Action Items	Owners	Deadline	Status
Email meeting overview with four-point plan and peer recovery specialist certification criteria.	Emily Pickens	October 5 th	Complete
Review meeting notes and discuss with agency leadership prior to next meeting.	ALL	November 19 th	In Progress
Share spreadsheet for potluck	Emily Pickens	November 12 th	Not Started