

## **Minutes for the SPAB Meeting on June 24, 2020**

### Attendance:

Seyram Selase – Chair

Beverly Johnson Director of the Office of Prevention ADMH

Necoal Driver

Charon Douglas

Gerald Douglas

Vandlyn Pierre

Ebony Crews

Brandon Folks

Catina James

Mike Vest

Derek Osborn

Satavia Mann

Danita Stapleton

Erin Burleson

Michele Moore

Lauren Blanding

Shai Markris

Lt. Cedric Leonard

Phillip Howard

Gloria Howard

Bruce Kimble

Due to precautions related to the Covid-19 concerns, the SPAB meeting was held as a “ZOOM” on line meeting.

The Meeting was called to order by chair Selase at 10:05 AM. Chair Selase called for the approval of the agenda and minutes of the SPAB meeting on February 12, 2020. Chair Selase related that he had one adjustment to the agenda, in that he had scheduled the SPAB elections for this meeting, however, Chair Selase went on to state that he has been advised that these elections should be postponed

until such time as the SPAB could meet in person. Chair Selase called for a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The Motion was made by Secretary Kimble, and seconded. The motion was carried.

Chair Selase called for the approval of the minutes of the February 12<sup>th</sup> SPAB meeting. The motion to approve was made by Vandlyn Pierre and seconded by Gerald Douglass. The motion was carried unanimously.

Chair Selase then called on Ms. Beverly Johnson, Director of the Office of Prevention Services for the Alabama Department of Mental Health. Ms. Johnson related that she welcomed everyone to the “virtual” meeting of the SPAB.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Prevention Providers have been provided with instructions in relation to the Covid-19 situation, as it relates to discretionary grants, including PFS-SPF/Rx, State Opioid Response (SOR), the Overdose 2A, (A new grant), as well as a new grant promoting the integrating of primary mental and behavioral health care. Ms. Johnson related that the Office of Prevention is currently exploring additional funding opportunities, as it relates to Suicide Prevention. Ms. Johnson related that the Office of Prevention has applied for supplemental funding for the State Opioid Response (SOR) grant. Ms. Johnson reported that the Office of Prevention has applied for the second round of the funding for the PFS grant award.

Ms. Johnson went on to explain that the Block Grant is currently in “statute,” which according to Ms. Johnson means that the funding would not have the flexibility as discretionary grants. Ms. Johnson related that her office has been notified that there will be some guidance as it relates to these changes. Ms. Johnson related that her office has received some funding opportunities, as it related to Adverse Childhood Experiences, and would be providing training. Ms. Johnson reported that this would be a coordinated effort with the “Children’s Trust Fund of Alabama.”

Ms. Johnson related that the Office of Prevention has submitted two grant applications relating to Suicide Prevention. The first, according to Ms. Johnson was relevant to Covid-19 response grant, and the second grant application that was submitted was a Zero Suicide” response grant with The University of Alabama. Ms. Johnson reported that both of these grants would allow the State

Department of Mental Health Office of Prevention to expand training opportunities statewide, thus increasing competencies in this area.

Ms. Johnson related some of the Office of Prevention's efforts in working with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to address the public health concerns. Ms. Johnson related that the Office of Prevention is staying in contact with the provider network in addressing these concerns.

Ms. Johnson reported that the National Prevention Network Conference 2020 has gone virtual, and is scheduled for August 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Johnson reported that the State of Alabama has been given the opportunity to host the National Prevention Conference in 2021. Ms. Johnson reported that the host city will be Birmingham.

Ms. Johnson related that the services that the Office of Prevention contractually provides, has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 situation. Ms. Johnson reported that "face to face" meetings with providers has been impacted. Ms. Johnson reported that in an effort to support the providers in this situation, billing rates have increased "across the board." Ms. Johnson reported that this rate increase will be in place until the "state of emergency" has been lifted.

Ms. Johnson reported that there is an RFP for evaluation services, relating to the Block Grant. Ms. Johnson reported that there was a survey (Stop Act) related to underage drinking. Ms. Johnson related that this survey is an effort to provide information related to all fifty states, and the District of Columbia, in relation to what services are provided in the effort to deal with the problem of underage drinking. Ms. Johnson related that this survey is in coordination with the Governor's Officer, and ALEA (Alabama Law Enforcement Agency).

Ms. Johnson related some outreach efforts that are continuing despite the Covid-19 crisis. Ms. Johnson related that there are two observances during this time, National Drug and Alcohol Facts week, and National Prevention Week. Ms. Johnson reported that Satavia Mann has led the efforts on both of these outreach observances. Ms. Johnson called on Ms. Mann to comment on these efforts. Ms. Mann thanked the SPAB for the efforts to "get the word out" regarding the observances.

Ms. Johnson reported a partnership with CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America). Ms. Johnson reported a partnership with Leidos, a corporation from

the Huntsville area, as well as Wellstone Behavioral Health. Ms. Johnson reported that prescription Drug Takeback had to be cancelled, due to the Covid-19 crisis, so the medication disposal efforts had been put in place.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Office of Prevention have been involved in some efforts to highlight providers that have campaigns that deal with underage drinking, such as “Stop Act” and “Talk They Hear You.” Ms. Johnson reported that her office had a “feedback session” on June 16<sup>th</sup> relating to the “Talk, They Hear You” campaigns. Ms. Johnson directed the SPAB to the SAMSHA website for further information.

Ms. Johnson related that a new grant aimed at the integration of primary and behavioral health care, a partnership with AltaPointe Health Systems and lead by the Office of Prevention. Ms. Johnson reported that there would be two additional staff members for this effort. Ms. Johnson related that there were three goals related to this effort

1. Coordinating the integration of primary and behavioral healthcare.
2. Improve the overall wellness and health status of adults with a serious mental illness and children with a serious mental disturbance.
3. Promoting and offering integrated primary health care services to individuals with mental and substance use disorders for screening, diagnosis and treatment of individuals with mental and substance use disorders.

Ms. Johnson called on Lauren Blanding of the Office of Prevention Services to report. Ms. Blanding reported that her group is currently working on a state wide media campaign entitled “HOPE” (Hold On Pain Ends). Ms. Blanding reported that this should be ready for release by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Blanding reported that she is working with the Agency for Substance Abuse, Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center Council on Substance Abuse, as well as South Central Alabama Mental Health Center. Ms. Blanding called on Chair Selase to comment in relation to his agency’s (Agency for Substance Abuse) involvement in these efforts. Chair Selase related that his agency has been involved in data collection from the District Attorney’s Office and the Coroner’s Office in collection of the data of overdose deaths. Chair Selase reported that this data collection has been instrumental in “stream lining” the methods in which this data in recorded and reported. Chair Selase went on to report that his group is

surveying local pharmacies in relation to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP).

Ms. Johnson reported the Opioid Training Institute (OTI) has “revamped” the OTI.org website and has some educational offerings. Ms. Blanding stated that the OTI website has been working with different vendors in efforts to “get the information out.”

Ms. Johnson reported that, since the last meeting of the SPAB, there had been a Suicide Prevention Conference, held at The University of Alabama on February 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Johnson went on to report that the Suicide Prevention Advisory Board Meeting was held on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Johnson reported that the Suicide Prevention Network of Alabama Meeting was held on May 19<sup>th</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Johnson reported she and Ms. Blanding participated in the Certification Program on Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk Training on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Ms. Johnson related that her office is currently reviewing applications for the Suicide Prevention Coordinator position.

Ms. Johnson reported that her office has a partnership with the Veterans’ Administration involving the Governor’s Office and SAMSHA in the area of Suicide Prevention. Ms. Johnson reported that she and Dr. Tammy McCurry participated in this meeting on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Johnson reported that she and Ms. Blanding participated with the Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services, looking at Suicide Prevention as a state priority. Ms. Johnson reported that these meetings have been on March 13<sup>th</sup>, March 19<sup>th</sup>, June 5<sup>th</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup> examining the infrastructure of multiple agencies. Ms. Blanding reported that a second Suicide Prevention Conference February 16<sup>th</sup> 2021. However, due to the Covid-19 crisis, this date could be pushed back until October 2021.

Ms. Johnson reported that her office has been offering Workforce Development Training on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Johnson called on Charon Douglass and Erin Burluson to comment on these efforts. Ms. Douglass reported that efforts have been made to acclimate to virtual trainings, during the Covid-19 crisis. Ms. Douglass credited Ms. Blanding in helping with these efforts.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget has been submitted which includes SOR awards\* pending notification.

Ms. Johnson stated that Satavia Mann and Dr. Danita Stapleton participated in the Alabama State Advisory Board Meeting on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Ms. Mann related that this Board is actively attempting to increase the clinical sites for the interns. The telephone number for more information is (334)233-5431. Ms. Johnson stated that this would bring the meeting to the SPF/Rx and Community College Initiative. Ms. Johnson called on Brandon Folks and Dr. Necoal Driver in relation to these initiatives. Dr. Driver reported that, due to the Covid-19 crisis, some alternative strategies had to be implemented. Dr. Driver stated that the efforts have continued in relation to SPF/Rx working with local pharmacies, and food banks to “get the word out” as it related to these efforts.

Ms. Johnson called on Mr. Brandon Folks to speak to the Partnership For Success (PFS). Mr. Folks reported that AltaPointe and East Alabama Mental Health Center are currently providing prevention Services despite the current Covid-19 crisis. Mr. Folks reported that these providers have been “thinking outside of the box” in relation to providing prevention services. Mr. Folks called on Shai Markris and Vandlyn Pierre to report on some of the efforts that have been progressing over the five years period of this project. Some of the efforts in Sumter County and Marengo County were discussed. A program in Washington County, called the “Farmer’s Market” program is getting some positive response. Also, in Washington County, at the public library a Summer Reading Program is scheduled to begin on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Selase was called on in relation to the SPF/Rx. Chair Selase reported that his agency had the “Opioid Roundtable” and it had been a “huge” success with over 200 in attendance.

Ebony Crews was called on to discuss the Community College programs. Ms. Crews reported that a survey will be issues to the students to develop data gathering.

Ms. Crews reported that, in relation to the Community College Programs, a “Health Cast” has been initiated. Ms. Crews reported that this is in leu of a Health fair.

As part of the SOR initiative, a drive through “Take Back” effort has been launched for Dale County and Houston Counties. Also, in Houston Counties the “Girls Inc” has continued to be a popular program.

Ms. Blanding called on Michele Moore to discuss the “Take Back Day” in Morgan County. Ms. Moore reported that on June 13<sup>th</sup> there was a “Take Back” event, in which the program collected approximately 370 pounds of unused medications. Ms. Moore continued to report that her agency has scheduled the “Opioid Summit” for July 14<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Moore stated that this event would be scheduled to be an “on-line” event, with a small group in attendance. Also, efforts in Mobile County have continued with “drive-thru take back” event have continued with social distance.

Ms. Gloria Howard reported that the SOR “Take Back” event scheduled for July 10<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Johnson called on Ms. Catina James, who stated that she was encouraged by the innovations that providers have made in order to deal with the current Covid-19 crisis, while continuing to provide services.

Ms. Charon Douglass reported that in the area of tech assistance, she is also encouraged in relation to the innovations that the providers have established in dealing with the Covid-19 crisis.

Ms. Michele Moore related that the schools are continuing to have opening issues, generating some issues for “in school” events.

At this point, Chair Selase called for Old Business. Chair Selase discussed some of the changes involving provider billing rates. Ms. Johnson related that, as the Covid-19 crisis continues, there is a great deal of uncertainty, and this increases the need for innovative practices in the area of prevention. Ms. Johnson went on to relate that as the need for innovative practices continue, she will be requesting that billing increases to remain in place.

Charon Douglas inquired, as to the abilities of providers to get signatures of participants, particularly in regard to juvenile participants, given the Covid-19 crisis limitations. Ms. Johnson related that there would be some “flexibility,” however, with the block grant, certain demographic parameters are required. Chair Selase addressed the SPAB elections. Chair Selase suggested that the elections be “tabled” until some “normalcy” could be re-established in relation

to meetings. There were no objections. Chair Selase called on Ms. Johnson to address the “Focus Group Feedback.”

Ms. Johnson reported that her office had providers participate in a focus group with the contracted evaluator, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE). Issues of length and “maneuverability” of the on-line versions of evaluations and templates. Ms. Johnson went on to report that another issue that was addressed by the focus group was related to environmental strategies, relevant to population level changes.

Respectfully Submitted – Bruce Kimble Secretary of the SPAB