

Governor's Task Force on Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse

Data and Monitoring Workgroup

Data-Sets Subcommittee

Minutes APPROVED

April 14, 2015

Members/Staff Present:

Subcommittee Chair: Baron Blakley, Research Analyst, Department of Criminal Justice Services

Workgroup Co-Chair: Katya Herndon, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Forensic Science

Staff: Ralph Orr, Director, Virginia Prescription Monitoring Program

Rosie Hobron, MPH, Statewide Forensic Epidemiologist, VDH-OCME

Major Rick Jenkins, Deputy Director, BCI, Virginia State Police

Amanda Wahnich, MPH, Enhanced Surveillance Analyst, VDH

Deborah Waite, Ops Manager, Virginia Health Information

Members/Staff Absent:

Anne Zehner, MPH, Epidemiologist, VDH

Meeting Agenda:

Welcome and Introductions

Review Minutes from previous meeting

Explore and identify specific data points by agency

Develop Recommendations for Workgroup to consider

Dataset Subcommittee Report to present to Workgroup

Discuss Need for Additional Meetings

Welcome & Introductions:

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

Review of Minutes:

Mr. Blakley asked members if there were any suggested changes to or comments about the draft minutes from the previous meeting, which had been distributed. Being none, the minutes were approved as presented.

Discussion:

Develop Recommendations for Workgroup to Consider:

As discussed in the meeting on March 31, the Data-Sets Subcommittee proposed the creation of a "Data" group comprised of data analysts from relevant agencies who would meet on an ongoing basis. This recommendation is how the Subcommittee envisioned an action item proposed by the Data and Monitoring Workgroup, and approved by the Task Force on December 16, 2014, be implemented (i.e., "Direct applicable agencies to share data on prescription drug and heroin abuse, overdoses, drug seizures, arrest information, etc to analyze information to mitigate harm from prescription drug and heroin abuse"). Mr. Blakley and Major Jenkins recommended that this ongoing "Data" group take a broad view of existing data to inform and evaluate policies/initiatives as well as identify trends in terms of how health issues intersect with criminal justice issues. The Subcommittee agreed that it is

important to look at the data more generally, rather limiting the group's scope to heroin and prescription drugs. This broader view is important so the "Data" group can continue its work and be responsive to other issues that arise down the road.

Discussion confirmed 3 types of data needs:

1. Current (real-time) data (as represented by the Fusion Center) that is designed for action by law enforcement.
2. Data points from various entities represented in graph/chart form to be presented on Resource Website.
3. Data analysis of the data points held by the various data holders.

The "Data" group would be primarily focused on #2 and #3 above.

Explore and Identify Specific Data Points by Agency:

The Subcommittee discussed standardizing the geographical representation of data, including the potential use of Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) codes or other already identified regions. Some geographic representations already used by members of the Subcommittee include: State Police Divisions, Health Planning Regions or Districts, and Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Regions. Representation of data may have to be addressed in agreements for use of data between agencies.

In addition to the agencies/entities currently represented on the Subcommittee, Mr. Blakley suggested the following other data sources: Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Courts or Sentencing Commission. Another source discussed was data that may be available from the Department of Medical Assistance Services.

Mr. Blakley suggested that the general parameters of the data sharing would be:

- Aggregated data (e.g., sum totals of activities, averages, rates)
- If individual level data were to be used, the data would all be de-identified
- Locality-level data when possible, broader regions when necessary
- Data would be broken out by month when possible, by fiscal or calendar year when necessary

Mr. Blakley suggested that when, where, and in what manner the "Data" group would meet should be determined by the group itself, as limitations on data availability will be a practical consideration. Broadly, it was suggested that members of the group would share data monthly, meet quarterly, and produce a yearly report to be provided to the Secretaries of Health and Human Resources and Public Safety and Homeland Security or some other entity as recommended by the Task Force and implemented by the Governor. Some agencies might participate only by sharing data, while others would also attend the quarterly meetings. The report might be prepared by a single agency (such as the Criminal Justice Research Center at the Department of Criminal Justice Services), but then reviewed and approved by members from other agencies.

Consideration should be given to the possible need for leadership/oversight of the group and the development of agreements for sharing and use of data between agencies, and the possible impact on available resources.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.