

**Greater Atlantic Partnership (GAP) Meeting Minutes**  
**March 12, 2024, 11-1**  
**Stockton University SRI & ETTC**

Attendance/Sectors & Agencies Represented:

Youth:

Parents:

Law Enforcement: Carl Peterson (Egg Harbor Township Police Dept.)

Govt Agency: Lenore Timbers (Atlantic County Department of Public Health), Erica Budd  
(Atl. County Dept. Of Public Health), John Armato (GCADA)

School:

Youth Service Org: John Roy (Cape Atlantic INK), Kathryn Saxton-Granato (CIACC)

Healthcare: Stephanie Weaver (Southern Jersey Family Medical Center), Kevin King  
(ARS), Jesse Dariano (AtlantiCare), Timmia Dreher (Acenda Health), Scott Gras  
(John Brooks Recovery Center)

Religious/Fraternal Org.: Jo Anne Farrel (Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden)

Business: Sean Kolins (Seabrook), Sean Riggan (Bluestone Services)

Media:

Civic/Volunteer: Jamie Costello (Hope Exists Foundation)

Other Org: Natalia Leusner (Cape Assist), Kim Burns (Tobacco Free for a Healthy NJ),  
Gretchen Halfpenny (OFRT), Mahidul Bhuiyan (NJPN), Carrie Gross (Prevention Plus), Evan  
Sabato (Tobacco Free for a Healthy NJ)

Staff: Kathy Harvey (Atlantic Prevention Resources Treatment), Michele Costello (Atlantic  
Prevention Resources Tobacco), Bob Zlotnick (Atlantic Prevention Resources), Anna Peterson  
(JTAC/APR), Jennifer Pielhau (JTAC/APR), Nina Sciore (JTAC/APR)

Guest/Other:

**Grant Update:**

The grant is in the process of being written. It is targeted for Egg Harbor Township, Egg Harbor City, Galloway, and Pleasantville. Data is being collected for the grant. If anybody is interested in being a part of data collection please reach out to Nina or Anna. There will be a zoom meeting on Thursday.

**Cape Atlantic Bridge Coalition (CAB):**

Jen reported that the marijuana workgroup is working on a “lock it up” campaign that is encouraging people to lock up their cannabis. Part of the intervention was to create rack cards that contain a QR code that will send them to the website which will have more information. The website is still being worked on. Once the page is created, the QR code will be updated on the card and the card will be distributed. The workgroup is also working on marijuana videos that are in the process of being edited. There are four short videos covering the topics of how marijuana affects a developing brain, coping strategies for stress, how to talk to your children about marijuana, and signs and symptoms of using marijuana. Once the materials are complete, they will be shared with educators.

The marijuana school policy training was shared at the last meeting and has since been rescheduled. The new date is May 14th. It has been shared with educators and is now open to anyone. The training is meant for schools specifically to design protocols regarding marijuana.

**Opioid Athlete:** Jen reported that she is working with Sgt. Jen Cugini with the prosecutor's office to present to high school and college athletes regarding opioid use. In January, they did a presentation at Holy Spirit. We are waiting for a date from Stockton athletics to hold a presentation there. Jen reported that there is also a conference coming up for coaches, athletic directors, and athletic trainers. There is currently a code for free registration. It is a state-wide training.

**Stand Up and Rebel (SUAR):**

Evan reported that they held a sticker shock event on February 5th at Joe Canal's. Anna, Evan, and Melanie, cover Buena, Egg Harbor Township, and Absegami SUAR groups. The groups meet twice a month at the school. At the end of January, they brought 4 SUAR youth to the CADCA conference to speak with elected officials.

**CADCA National Conference:**

Jen reported that the CADCA conference is an annual conference in D.C. The coalition sponsored 4 youth and 4 chaperones this year. This year, the youth were able to speak to representatives. NJPN has a meeting at the conference and encourages youth to advocate.

**Opioid Overdose Recommendation Committee:**

The opioid task force is now the opioid overdose recommendation committee. It was combined with the Overdose Fatality Review Team to work on recommendations from the OFRT to turn them into actions.

Lenore reported that there were 124 narcan trainings, 416 doses of narcan distributed, and each training participant received two doses of narcan after their training. Narcan was also distributed to Atlantic County Fire Academy recruits, Hammonton Municipal Alliance, Stockton University Health Peer Eds, Stockton University tabling events, Landmark Church, Outreach events in Atlantic City, and at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church.

Anna reported that there is a spring outreach project for the Naloxone365 program to get more pharmacies to opt into the program.

Jamie reported that Hope Exists is still providing the same services. They still have their veteran suicide prevention outreach team and their AC project that provides narcan, narcan training, and connects people to treatment. They have a new grant that is more specific to survivors of an overdose to get them treatment and case management for 6 months to a year.

Gretchen reported that the OFRT had a meeting yesterday and continues to meet. They are focusing on distributing Narcan and outreach to pain management specialists.

Jesse reported that the OORP program at AtlantiCare has expanded and the team is now able to respond to an overdose for any substance.

Scott reported that the recovery center is going well. They have a lot of participants and groups throughout the day. They have two new desktop computers for their participants to use for resume building and job searches. The state also provided them with narcan. The recovery center just picked up the AC lead program and there is a diversion program available. The center also starts the municipal court grant next Wednesday. The grant is similar to the AC Leads grant, except through the municipal court.

Stephanie reported that Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers is planning a hot meal distribution in Pleasantville on April 26th from 12p-4p. There are tabling opportunities available. The event is targeted towards people who may be homeless or those in need of a warm meal.

Scott added that there will be a blessing bag event at All Roads. It is open to the public, but you are asked to bring an item. On March 25th at 6pm, they will be meeting to assemble the bags.

**Interventions/Updates:**

Anna reported that the Stigma Free Networking Breakfast is coming up. Save the Dates were sent out to everyone. The breakfast will be on May 29th from 8:30a to 10a. This will hopefully become an annual event to keep the topic relevant. Registration will go out when the official invite is sent out. There will also be a small cost.

Jen stated that the PRIDE survey was conducted recently. The survey assesses middle school and high school attitudes and behaviors regarding substance use. We had 4 schools participate. The results were just accessed last week and will be shared.

On April 27th, it is DEA drug take back day. JTAC will be working to ensure that police stations are aware of the materials and information that we can provide for this day.

JTAC works with Stockton Peer Educators and their counseling department. They were able to get more peer eds and JTAC will be working with them to continue their Jeopardy programs in high schools. Jen discussed doing an escape room type of event for the students which will include drug and alcohol facts. The peer eds will be working on planning that program.

This past holiday season JTAC did a 4 week campaign on the radio that lasted two weeks before Christmas and two weeks after the new year. The radio had over 32,000 impressions and a 94% completion rate. The sponsored social media posts had 14,000 impressions and about 400 clicks on the link to the JTAC website. Between December and January, the JTAC website had 448 clicks.

The Stranger Project is shared at local libraries and contains stories on substance use. The board was recently pulled from Galloway library a few months ago to replace the board because it was too big. Anna is working on getting the project back up and running.

Anna reported that each year JTAC collects the total pounds of medication that each prescription drop box has collected. In 2023, the total was 3,055 pounds of medication. This number also includes the weight of the medication containers.

The school nurse outreach was created this year after we had a few school nurses reach out to us for Detera and locking medicine cabinets to give to students' families. Information was sent out to all the school nurses on what we can provide them with.

Some future/ongoing outreaches include municipal policy and education, veterinarian outreach, funeral/hospice/realtor outreach.

The PSA contest has begun. The deadline is April 5th. Pleasantville and Margate have responded that they will be participating. A press release was published on the Downbeach website to try and get more participants. The topic this year was on "natural highs" or ways to stay drug-free. Once the contest closes, JTAC staff will go through and choose the top 10 to send out to JTAC

coalition members to vote on using a Google form. The three works with the most votes will be the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. The first place winner will have their artwork turned into a billboard.

### **Legislation Updates:**

Bob reported that the smoking bill for smoking in casinos is still pending.

### **Tobacco Updates:**

Kim reported that the Working Well Tobacco Free grant is regional and covers the 7 Southern counties. The focus is on childcare facilities right now and making sure that they have some type of tobacco policy and resources for parents or employees.

They will be starting their breathe easy al fresco campaign to work on making restaurants with outdoor dining smoke free. They will also be doing a webinar on April 16th called “Tiny Hands, Healthy Lungs: What is Thirdhand Smoke?”

Smoke Free Housing is an ongoing initiative and most of the contacts come from complaints through the website. The tobacco staff will go out to the location and meet with residents or management to address concerns about secondhand smoke and they typically don't have any policy in place for smoking.

They will be having an in-person “Don't Get Vaped In” training. This training has adult-to adult or adult-to-student and a peer-to-peer curriculum. The first in-person training will be at the AtlantiCare Life Center. There are still 20 spots available if anybody is interested.

The NJCUITS grant is the college and university grant. The team is still working with Stockton to attend events and provide information. Stockton is setting up their task force and will begin the process to become a smoke-free campus.

There is an in-person “Eliminate Tobacco Use” summit at Georgian Court University and a national virtual summit at a later date.

The point of sale tobacco assessments have been completed in Northfield and Mays Landing.

They typically go to stores that have received complaints, such as selling flavored products or selling to underage youth.

Kim met with the ACUA to discuss the concern of schools collecting vapes from students and what they do with them. It is a safety issue due to chemicals and flammability. They will be working on bringing awareness to schools on how to properly dispose of them.

The Atlantic Quit Center is seeing clients in person and virtually. They still offer over the counter replacements, such as patches, gum and lozenges. There are ongoing groups at Crossroads Recovery. Next week, they will be holding groups at CODI.

There is still a youth group which is virtual and state-wide.

Evan reported that there is a state-wide youth summit at Adventure Crossing in Jackson, New Jersey. There are 300 youths coming from all over the state. There will be workshops and games available.

**New Business:**

Jen explained the Member and Program highlight initiative. There are new faces and this will be a good way to introduce new members to the programs that are available. The first member highlight will be Kathy Saxton-Granato, who is the CIACC Coordinator. The first email of each month will feature a new member and their program.

Kathi introduced herself and explained that the CIACC is the Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council that is funded through the Department of Children and Families. It is an advisory group around children's mental health, behavioral health, substance use and developmental disability services. The group advises the state when there are gaps in services or treatment.

Jen added that there will be a Year 10 survey to get feedback from members regarding the JTAC coalition.

Last year, the In The Know conference was held at Stockton University. If anybody is interested in joining a conference planning committee please reach out to Nina.

**Upcoming Events/Announcements/Information:**

Sean Riggan added that his organization holds training for law enforcement, but they have some openings for March 20th and 21st, so if anybody is interested, they can reach out to Sean.

There will be a lung cancer screening for free if anybody is a former smoker and is over the age of 50. It is a preventative event and they will be doing X-rays at Shore Cancer Center.

**Strategic Prevention Framework: GAP Vision and Mission Statement****Vision Statement for GAP:**

Option A: The vision for the Greater Atlantic Partnership is to create safe and healthy environments from partnerships with the community to bring about changes that protect our youth and residents.

Option B: The vision for the Greater Atlantic Partnership is to collaborate with community stakeholders to eliminate the devastating impact of substance use and misuse.

Attendees were asked to write their choice down on a post-it note.

**Mission Statement for GAP:**

Option C: The Greater Atlantic Partnership collaborates with all community sectors to develop local solutions to prevent or delay substance use among youth and create safe, drug-free communities.

Option D: The Greater Atlantic Partnership mobilizes change in our community by developing comprehensive effective strategies to prevent or delay substance use among youth.

Attendees were asked to write their choice down on a post-it note.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday May 14, 2024; Stockton SRI & ETTC building**