

Maine Recovery Council

October 10, 2023

Chair Pat Kimball opened what she described as a busy meeting with two announcements. Rep. Lydia Craft has been selected Social Worker of the Year; there was enthusiastic applause. Secondly, it is World Mental Health Day.

The minutes of September 14, 2023 were accepted (Ouellette/Crafts, unanimous). The Executive Committee had met and hired Dr. Kim Johnson.

Dr. Johnson began her presentation. She had three goals for today; she wanted to identify and focus on a goal, share the initial data scan, and discuss priorities. She said she had been making some assumptions and wanted to be clearer as to what the group was trying to achieve. She proposed an exercise aimed at identifying goals. "Increase/decrease something by an amount of percentage by Dec. 31, 2025. Having a goal would help her, she explained, move her work forward. A number of statements addressing decreasing the number of overdose deaths were read with differing percentages. One statement aimed at increasing the number of prescribers, one mentioned wrap-around services, one spoke to increasing preventive resources options, one mentioned a framework for making funding decisions, and one focused on increasing the number of treatment beds so there were no more waiting lists. This exercise elicited a discussion about how the group was interpreting the concept of goals. There were a number of differing opinions voiced.

Dr. Johnson proceeded to present data regarding total fatal overdoses by geographic cluster, population centers, and by age group. State EMS data was included in her presentation. Key drug categories were listed. Members cautioned against focusing only on overdose deaths.

Moving to the priorities - the list grew quickly. Medical beds, a crisis center outside Cumberland County, substance abuse's impact on child abuse cases, employees who can't work, mobile services, wait lists, open beds that are not just medically supervised withdrawal beds, supporting families, out-patient access, eliminating waiting lists, harm reduction services, and the long-term evidence-based program in every community. With the suggestion to dedicate the next meeting to discussing the priorities on the table, it was decided instead to add another half hour to the next meeting which would already feature the survey, public hearing, more data from Dr. Johnson and the budget presentation.

In other business the Council approved expenditures of \$4500 for translation services for the survey and \$1500 for a Qualtrics subscription (Brackett/Crafts, unanimous). The survey will be open beginning this week until November 2 (date of the public forum). The forum will be held Nov. 2 from 9 am to 1 pm, and staying if people are present, at UMA's Jewett Hall. It was agreed that speakers would be limited to 3 minutes and written submissions to five pages.

Pat described the process of hiring an operations manager. The Executive Committee was tasked with interviewing, hiring and determining a wage for the successful applicant (Crafts/Brackett, unanimous). Eric Small is on leave through December, Pat appointed Gordon Smith to the Executive Committee

(Crafts/Vinsel, 12-0-1). Gordon said he would not be involved in the operations manager's hiring as he had not be initially part of the discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:09 pm. The December meeting will feature nominations for officers for the new year (30 da prior) as received by the Governance Committee.