



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes

### CITY-COUNTY HEROIN, OPIOID, AND COCAINE TASK FORCE

*BEVAN BAKER, CHAIR*

*Michael Lappen, Vice-Chair*

*Karen Loebel, James Mathy, Ald. Michael Murphy, Ald. Khalif*

*Rainey, Mayor CoryAnn St. Marie-Carls, Brian Peterson,*

*Christine Westrich, E. Brooke Lerner, Marisol Cervera, and*

*Michael Macias*

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Saturday, October 28, 2017

10:00 AM

Humboldt Park Pavilion

3000 S. Howell Ave.

Milwaukee, WI 53207

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### Special Community Meeting

#### 1. Call to Order.

*Meeting called to order at 10:14 a.m.*

**Present** 7 - Murphy, Baker, Loebel, Marie-Carls, Westrich, Lerner and Cervera

**Absent** 2 - Rainey and Mathy

**Excused** 3 - Lappen, Peterson and Macias

#### 2. Introduction of members present.

*Commissioner Baker gave introductory remarks. Public input will be taken into consideration to formulate recommendations to both the City and County on how to address the opioid, heroin, and cocaine crisis in the community. President Trump had earlier this week declared a national public health emergency relating to the crisis.*

*Members gave brief introductions.*

#### 3. Public comments.

*Commissioner Baker called forward individuals who had sign-in to make public comments.*

*Individuals appearing to make public comments:*

*John Weitekamp, Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin, New Berlin resident*

*Gail Kolenbach, St. Francis resident*

*Ron Grundy, Oak Creek resident*

*Jennie Reno, Menomonee Falls resident*

*Rebecca Vest, Milwaukee resident*

*Cari Kegley, Greenfield resident  
Greg Kafton, Clean Slate, Glendale resident  
Stephanie Benske, Milwaukee resident  
Alison Gunia, Milwaukee resident  
Angela DeFord, South Milwaukee resident  
Ana Veloz, Ravenswood Clinic, Milwaukee resident  
Lauren Lube, Franklin resident  
Madilyn Larsh, Milwaukee resident*

*Mr. Weitekamp testified. He is a pharmacist in West Allis. He lost a son recently due to a heroin overdose. He is working on and getting advocacy for naloxone and narcan to be covered by all health insurance companies within the State. CVS Healthcare does not cover narcan nasal sprays. He wrote a letter to CVS Healthcare. The administration of naloxone injections is difficult as opposed to administering nasal sprays.*

*Ald. Murphy concurred that getting naloxone and narcan, including nasal sprays, to be covered by all health insurance plans within the State should be a recommendation.*

*Commissioner Baker said that although the State insurance commissioner cannot change federal regulation, he can join others in making a recommendation to Medicaid and Medicare in terms of policy.*

*Ms. Kolvenbach testified. She has a 29-year old son struggling with relapse and recovery for the last 7 years. Significant others should be able to make decisions for addicts, who may be unable to make decisions due to being impaired.*

*Mr. Grundy testified. He lost his son a year ago to an automobile accident that was attributable to his son's many years of abusing drugs. His son experimented first with marijuana that led to heroin, opioids, and prescription drug use. He did all that he could do to deter his son from using drugs. His son had gone to different doctors to get prescriptions. Awareness and education must start early in elementary schools before young children start to experiment with alcohol and drugs. More young people are being killed due to drug use than other causes. More effort is needed to give young people something positive to do, such as jobs, to deter them from harming themselves with drugs.*

*Ms. Reno testified. She is registered nurse. The problem starts with the heart of a person as a human being. Of importance is to address a person's root issues. A person may use drugs to escape reality due to unresolved root problems. Root problems may include father abandonment, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. Relationships with police officers and the police department need to be improved. Early education to children (students) is necessary via various means, including deterrent methods. Children (students) should be exposed to actual or depictions of incarceration as a measure of deterrent. Inmates should be able to speak to children (students) to educate them about wrong choices, negative consequences, and undesirable experiences of incarceration. Students should make pledges to not use drugs, take courses, and earn prizes or awards upon completing pledges. There should be simple cartoon prevention books for children.*

*Ms. Reno shared and referenced several books and video materials during her testimony as being helpful educational and deterrent materials.*

Ms. Vest testified. She is a registered nurse. The level of medical services or resources for an addict is not as holistic as the level of services provided for patients with a bodily function impairment. There is not the same level of home visitations, for example, or other type of wrap around care for an addict as opposed to someone with heart failure or stroke. With Medicaid and poverty, people are disproportionately affected by and prescribed opioid medications. Addicts, oftentimes, are just given information and resources to contact for assistance and are left to rely on themselves to seek assistance. Oftentimes, those that do seek assistance have to wait to get treatment due to lacking health insurance or an outpatient facility lacking enough capacity to provide treatment. The stigma of addiction needs to change.

Ms. Kegley testified. The drug problem has not been adequately depicted through the media. The focus should be on prevention, education, schools, children, and programs. There should be uniform education programs for all types of schools that effectively impact and scare students and children away from using drugs. Student should be taken on tours and possibly be shown individuals who are in withdrawal. The D.A.R.E. program has not been effective.

Mayor St. Marie-Carls commented. There is difficulty to have schools and parents consent to students being shown harsh videos as a measure of deterrent. There is an available FBI video online called "Chasing the Dragon" that depicts drunken driving crashes but has not made it into schools due to being considered too offensive.

Mr. Kafton testified. He has seen patients on opioids through Clean Slate. People are not intentionally taking fentanyl. Fentanyl is being mixed together with heroin and other drug unknowingly to the drug user. Clean Slate offers substance abuse treatment, takes most insurances but only half of Medicare providers, is operating in Glendale, and will open up in other areas.

Ms. Benske testified. She is a registered nurse. There are opioids and painkiller medications present in emergency rooms and hospice rooms that become accessible to patients or visiting family members who may be susceptible to or want to steal them. Those medications should be locked in these types of rooms or properly disposed of. The public needs to be educated by being scared and graphically shown the realities of the problem. There is a perception of getting in trouble criminally for seeking treatment for an addiction or overdose, and many patients may refuse to seek treatment or be known.

Commissioner Baker said that more tools are needed for providers, practitioners, nurses, and others who are on the front lines caring for those impacted.

Ald. Murphy shared information about the prescription medicine mail-back plastic envelope program with CVS Pharmacy available for citizens to utilize, especially inside homes and hospices.

Ms. Gunia testified. She is a social worker. Part of a solution is to educate physicians in addition to the general public about the dangers of pain relief medication, such as opioids, and alternative pain treatment options. Addiction to pain relief medication oftentimes originates from physician prescriptions. A physician's ability to identify individuals with an addiction needs to be expanded. There needs to be additional treatment options in the community and an increase in the pool of physicians who are knowledgeable. She has worked with many individuals who are ready to start recovery but cannot get access into a methadone treatment center or get

*a prescription for naloxone.*

*Ms. DeFord testified. She has a mother who had overdosed in 2014 due to an addiction to opioids. Her mother's addiction stemmed from being prescribed opioids due to injury from a car accident. There was no team of professionals to address her mother's addiction. There is an education gap within the D.A.R.E. program, which only educates on cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol.*

*Ms. Veloz testified. She owns and works at a treatment clinic. The support for addicts is lacking. There needs to be adequate support, structure, and stability for addicts in recovery in the same manner as that given to individuals recovering from other types of medical illness or impairment. She has an incarcerated adult son who is addicted to heroin. One reason her son used heroin was due to not having anything to do. There needs to be better collaboration amongst treatment facilities rather than everyone operating in silos. She has seen children as clients withdrawing from drug use. There should be a method of citizens being able to report anonymously drug activity or trafficking within their communities.*

*Ms. Lube testified. She works for the City of Franklin and am coordinating a coalition with 25 community members in the area of prevention. The task force should look to bring collaboration amongst the different coalitions within the area.*

*Ald. Murphy commented. All testimony given today will be considered for possible inclusion in task force recommendations. MKEprevention.org has great information on data and resources regarding the opioid crisis. There may be an amendment to the City budget to help set aside \$50,000 for a media education campaign. 2444 people within the City have been saved by narcan administered by paramedics alone. There is not as much recidivism in the City when compared nationally. For the City many people are in the entryway on the drug issue.*

*Ms. Larsh testified. She is a high school student. In her high school there is only a semester of class for students on drug prevention, which has not been effective and adequate in her opinion. Current classroom courses should be improved to inform students about treatment options and contain graphic depiction of abusers as a form of deterrent despite being offensive to some. Education is one of the most important tools to use to prevent drug addiction and should be enforced in high schools.*

#### **4. Adjournment.**

*Meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.*

*Chris Lee, Staff Assistant  
Council Records Section  
City Clerk's Office*

**Materials related to the activities of the task force can be found within the following file:**

[161554](#) Communication relating to the activities of the City-County Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force.

**Sponsors:** THE CHAIR

