**Surry County**

**Opioid Response Advisory Council Meeting**

**Historic Courthouse, 114 West Atkins Street, Dobson, NC**

**January 29, 2020**

**Members/Representatives in Attendance:**

Eddie Harris - County Commissioner  
Ricky Bowman- District Attorney  
Myra Cox – Superintendent Elkin City Schools  
Bill Southern-Chief District Court Judge, Judicial District 17B  
Jeffery Eads-Director Partners Behavioral Health   
Sandy Snow- Assistant County Manager   
Crystal Black -Emergency Department Director, Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital   
Sandy George-Mount Airy City Schools

Scott Hudson-Captain Sheriff’s Office   
Travis Reeves- Superintendent Surry County Schools   
Eddie Jordan-Paramedic, Emergency Medical Services  
Mark Willis-Opioid Response Director  
Todd Tucker-Surry County Economic Development Partnership

Dennis Barnette-Faith Community Representative

Kristy Preston-Director Department Social Services

Samantha Ange-Director Health and Nutrition Center

Denise Krochta – Opioid Response, Community Outreach Coordinator

Paul Hammes – CEO, Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital

Representative Kyle Hall – North Carolina House of Representatives

Jason Edsall – EMS Medical Director / Chief Medical Officer, Northern Regional Hospital

Beth Brooks – Community Outreach, Partners Behavioral Health

Sonya Cheek – Peer Support Specialist

Emily McPeak – Director, Daymark Recovery Services

Amanda Moncus – Qualified Professional, Surry County Intervention Team

1. **MINUTES**: Mr. Willis called the meeting to order at 11:30 am. Minutes from the ORAC meeting of March 14, 2019 were adopted by the Council. Mr. Todd Tucker moved to approve the minutes and Pastor Barnette seconded the movement.

**2)** **STATISTICS**: Statistics regarding the year 2019 as well as this far this January were reported. EMS Paramedic Eddie Jordan noted that there was less illicit drug use in the 4th quarter of 2019. There were less reported overdoses and overdose deaths in 2019. This was not attributed as much to less drug use and overdoses but possibly due more to the distribution and use of Narcan. Possibly the number of reported overdoses is decreasing, vice the actual number of overdoses. Not only do all first responders now carry Narcan, but it is more readily available to the general public.

**3)** **PREVENTION / INTERVENTION** / **EDUCATION**: Sonya Cheek was introduced to the Board as the newest Opioid Response Advisory Council member recommended by Mr. Willis and approved by the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Cheek is certified in North Carolina as a Peer Support Specialist. Emily McPeak, Director Daymark Recovery Services, and Amanda Moncus, Supervisor Surry County Intervention Team, were introduced by Mr. Willis as representatives of Surry County’s newly activated Post Overdose Response / Intervention Team. The Intervention Team will be working out on the streets and in the hospitals with the objective of connecting substance users to treatment, healthcare navigation and post-treatment follow-up. Mr. Willis provided a short description the mission of the Intervention Team and their goals. Sonya Cheek, the newest council member, offered her experience regarding recovery in Surry County, the lack of options for treatment and transitional housing, and some possible solutions were provided.

**4)** **DISCUSSION:** Mr. Willis presented a chart of “Operation Vital Links”, which depicts, in graphic form, the progress to date of the Surry County Opioid Response Effort (SCORE). The Operation Vital Links chart shows all the programs to date under the headings of “Prevention”, “Interdiction”, “Treatment”, and “Recovery”. The operation is so labeled as all these programs are vitally linked and interdependent. (The Operation Vital Links chart is attached to these minutes.)

Captain Hudson, Sheriff’s Office, reported on overcrowding in the jail and that at least 85% of the population had some relationship to SUD. That began a discussion regarding the possibility of treatment in the jails, building a bigger jail, how many people are in the jail who do not reside in Surry County and why they come here, and the allocation of government funding on the issues regarding illegal drug use in the County.

Mr. Willis added that although things still look bleak in general with regards to drug use and crime in the County, the age group under 18 is a bright spot in the population and attributed much of that to the schools. Dr. Reeves, Superintendent Surry County Schools detailed the recent grant the Surry County School System was awarded, the School Climate Transformation Grant, as well as all the new and future plans they will be introducing due to this $3.7 million / 5-year grant. This grant will provide children options for the future in addition to building purpose and self-esteem. These programs will include education on drugs and prevention.

District Attorney Bowman suggested that the faith-based community might do more with helping the community with the issue of drugs and drug use in our county through the provision of temporary or transitional housing for people in treatment and recovery. This suggestion raised the discussion about the effort Mr. Willis and the Opioid Response Team put into a 6-month series of meetings with the faith-based community. Their objective was to create a volunteer transportation network to move people to treatment who had no other means of transportation. The effort was not successful, and it was suggested that maybe the Opioid Response Team took the wrong approach. Todd Tucker, Economic Development Partnership, remarked that the faith-based community does many things for the community at large. This includes feeding and clothing many people, and this might be too much to add to their list. It was also suggested that instead of starting with all the churches and pastors, we get one, or a small group of them, involved in an effort that succeeds. From this success, we can build outward and recruit other churches to assist.

Mr. Willis gave a short update on the status of initiating a Recovery Court in Surry County and that it was not approved by the Superior Court and Chief District Court Judges. Mr. Willis provided background on a group of church representatives advocating for a Recovery Court who met with the District Attorney, the Superior and Chief District Court Judges and the Sheriff to discuss the initiation of a Recovery. This effort by the churches in the Elkin also met with resistance.

Mr. Willis asked the input from the council as to “Where do you want to go from here?”

He suggests perhaps a representative from each organization on the advisory board can come together as a group more often for updates and brainstorming to keep this issue from being put on the back burner.

**5) ADJOURNMENT**: With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 pm.