

# Erie County Opiate Epidemic Task Force Meeting Minutes



Location: Erie County Fire Training Academy

Date: Monday, February 13, 2017

Time: 10:00 AM–11:30 AM

Attendees: Barbara Burns, Frank Scarpinato, John Gaeddert, Dawn Sagerman, Jessica Hutchings, Avi Israel, Alex Lauer, Nathan Attard, Kristie Schiefer, John Craik, Christopher Jadoch, Lynne Dixon

## Agenda items

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Since we last met/ coming up:
  - a) Past events:
    - i) The recent Opiate Symposium at Hilbert (Friday, Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>) was a success; roughly 300 attendees, mostly law enforcement.
  - b) Future Events:
    - i) Save the Michaels of the World has a number of upcoming events:
      - (1) Four Recovery Education Talks spaced across February, March, and April
      - (2) “Buffalo Strong: Together We Stand Against Addiction” on Monday, March 13 from 7:00 PM-- 8:30 PM.
      - (3) Save the Michaels is also working on some sort of facility with beds, to assist with people who are waiting for treatment beds
    - ii) Kids Escaping Drugs is in the process of building a facility to help with stabilization (detox) and re-integration (re-acclimatization after treatment). The new program will be accessible to people aged 14-23; existing services will still be available to people aged 12-20.
    - iii) “Stand Down” (by Veterans One-Stop, aimed at homeless vets or vets seeking services) taking place Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10AM - 3 PM at Coca-Cola Field. ECDOH will probably want to participate.
    - iv) The Student Veterans Association is having a meeting at Buff State this week.
- 3) School Survey: Not ready yet.
- 4) Drug Courts: Not ready yet.
- 5) Veterans: Alex Lauer, the Director of Engagement and Development at Veterans One-Stop, addressed the group.
  - a) Veterans One-Stop has three locations (Buffalo, Lockport, and Batavia).
  - b) The government/VA’s definition of “veteran” differs from the civilian definition; not everyone who served is eligible for services. (Factors include, but are not limited to, discharge status, length of service, and deployed vs. non-deployed.)
  - c) Changing the language used—for example, asking “Have you ever served in the military?” instead of “Are you a veteran?” may help service providers get the information we need.
  - d) Military is now pushing for a “strength-based approach” (instead of “post-traumatic stress disorder,” call it “post-traumatic stress”) in an effort to lessen the stigma

- e) There is a three-star general who has been speaking publicly about his ongoing efforts to manage his own narcotics addiction (not based out of WNY, but he has been here several times)
  - f) “Bridgers of WNY”: a local group that has been serving as a bridge between staying in residential facility and returning to society
- 6) Target Audience/Messages
- a) Barb Burns will have a conference call with Mike Ranney to discuss the best way to discuss matters with Tim Logsdon.
  - b) There is a Facebook group, “WNY Still Standing”—there are a lot of families that have been directly impacted by the opiate epidemic. The page can be a good way for them to share strength, but emotions frequently run high, and there’s always a risk of misinformation being circulated.
  - c) General issue: (community members ask for programs, but don’t fully utilize the programs available) ⇔ (programs are created, but eventually discontinued for lack of usage)
- 7) Next Meeting—March 20, Erie County Fire Training Academy