



SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION TASK GROUP MARCH 10, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was held via Zoom videoconference. Dan Martin called the meeting to order at 1:32pm.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Substance Use Prevention Task Group Members in attendance were: Dan Martin / Village of New Lenox, Sheree Stillwell / Facilitate Family Support Groups, Jan Dombrowski / HERO, Connie Dewall / Will County Health Department – Office of Substance Use Initiatives, Marie Kress / The Mental Wellness Center of Manhattan, Alexciana Castaneda / Will County Sheriff's Department, Ausra Tauginaite / Joliet Junior College, Neesha Stringfellow / HLM Recovery & Heartlife Ministries & Will-Grundy R.O.S.C, Cristyna Ramirez / Existential Counselors Society, Jackie Prebe / Families Anonymous / Lincolnway Family Support Group / Braidwood Coalition, Dana Fedenia / Indivior, Vickie Dance / Illinois Poison Center, Patrice Martin / Lightways Hospice and Serious Illness Care, Mark Hernandez / Symetria Recovery, Kirsten Leininger / University of St. Francis, Dominica Dybas / DEA Chicago Field Division, Natalie Alfano / Thousand Branches Wellness, Gloria Bloodsaw / Gateway Foundation, Michelle DeMato / Will County Health Department, Ariel Ruttenberg / New Lenox Police Department, Amy Maher / New Lenox Community Park District, Michelle Knierim / Uniquely U Behavioral Health, Jen Vujosevic / Lincoln Way Community High School District #210, James Budrick / Will County Health Department, Mary Ellen McCoy / Catholic Charities and Heather Drew / Solid Ground Sober Living.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes from the January 13, 2025 Task Group Meeting, which had been disseminated via email to Task Group members, were discussed. Jan Dombrowski made a motion to approve the minutes, and it was seconded by Kirsten Leininger. After no further discussion, the motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

DEA Presentation – February 6, 2025 / 7:00pm to 8:30pm at the New Lenox Village Hall

From 6:30pm to 7:00pm a small resource fair was held, which included informational tables from DEA Chicago Field Division (Diversion), DEA Chicago Field Division (Enforcement), HERO, Will County Substance Use Initiatives, Illinois Supply Company and Sam's Club.

From 7:00pm to 8:00pm Greg Czackowski from the DEA Chicago Field Division spoke about substance use disorders and shared what the DEA is doing to stop the opioid epidemic. Greg also shared his background and personal story, which everyone in attendance found remarkable.

From 8:00pm to 8:30pm Officer Candace Guidry, New Lenox Police Department, conducted a narcotics sniffing demonstration with her K-9 partner "Harlie." Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the demonstration.

At 8:30pm everyone had one more opportunity to visit the resource tables. Thanks to the

organizations for leaving them up and to Sam's Club for providing refreshments and snacks.

95 citizens registered to attend this event via Eventbrite. Approximately 65 were in attendance.

Dan thanked everyone that planned, participated and / or attended this event. Dan noted that those in attendance were very appreciative for the information, which seems to be the case for all the New Lenox Safe Community Coalition events.

Jan Dombrowski noted that someone that took one of our Stop the Bleed classes save the life of a shooting victim in Joliet. We also have examples of people using the Narcan training and Narcan Nasal Spray Kit to save lives.

Narcan Training – Monday, February 24, 2025 from 7:00pm to 8:30pm, via Zoom

Dr. Kathleen Burke conducted Narcan training via Zoom. 211 citizens registered via Eventbrite to attend and 118 were in attendance. On Thursday, February 27, 2025 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm Narcan Nasal Spray Kits were distributed at the New Lenox Village Hall. This was a drive-up delivery method in the upper-level parking lot of the village hall. For those that could not make it, Narcan Nasal Spray Kits are being picked up at the New Lenox Village Hall.

NEW BUSINESS

“Teen Substance Use: What’s New and What’s Hidden in Plain Sight” – March 31, 2025

This presentation will be held on Monday, March 31, 2025 from 7:00pm to 8:00pm via Zoom Videoconference. Topics will include an overview on HERO and John Roberts (co-founder), legislative update, substance use in Will County, Narcan, an overview (and “show-and-tell”) of the HERO Hidden in Plain Sight Trailer, and a discussion regarding the intersection between substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health. In addition, Tim Ignowski will share his experience with SUD, his road to recovery and where he’s at now (providing peer support for HERO).

There are currently approximately 60 citizens registered via Eventbrite (PLEASE ASSIST WITH MARKETING).

2025 “Your Light Still Shines”

This event is our task group’s “signature” annual event. Dan provided an overview of what we’ve done in the past, including:

- Hidden in Plain Sight Trailers - HERO and Will County Sheriff’s Department
- Unwanted Medication Takeback – Will County Sheriff’s Department
- Memorial Tables – Jan Dombrowski
- Informational Tables – Up to 50 spaces available
- Main Presentation – Keynote Speaker, Panel of Speakers or Combination
 - Lived Experience Speaker(s) and Substance Use Disorder Experts

In addition, Dan advised that speaker topics need to be determined and / or a theme for the event.

This event is typically held on / around Overdose Awareness Day (or in Overdose Awareness Week or Overdose Awareness Week).

A discussion was held regarding HOW we can get more teens to participate in the event. Neesha Stringfellow suggested having a youthful person participate.

Alexciana Castaneda suggested that we consider including youth on the planning committee as this could make them feel more connected and more invested in the event.

Connie Dewall advised that they had a panel with Plainfield parents in the past which was not very successful, despite offering the kids extra credit for attending events like these. Connie said that it's not for lack of trying, it's just very challenging.

Kirsten Leininger works with young college students that could be a potential bridge to adolescents. Several of them have no problem sharing, so they could help us reach younger audiences.

Dominica Dybas shared a story about a recent presentation in Wisconsin. Dominica noted that not one single parent stayed for the drug awareness presentation. Dominica congratulated this group for the work that we do and the efforts that we make to reach parents and students.

Following this discussion, the group indicated that they would like to follow the same format for this event as we've done in the past.

The following indicated that they would like to be on the Planning Team:

- Jan Dombrowski
- Connie Dewall
- Kirsten Leininger
- Jackie Prebe
- Dominica Dybas
- Neesha Stringfellow

Kratom

At our last meeting, following a great deal of discussion, it was decided that we would approach Kratom from an educational, rather than regulatory, standpoint. A discussion was held on how this group would like to carry this out. Suggestions included having Tim Ignowski speak about Kratom during his "*Teen Substance Use: What's New and What's Hidden in Plain Sight*" presentation and / or having a speaker address this at "*Your Light Still Shines.*" The Planning Team will make the final decision on this.

GOOD OF THE ORDER/ ORGANIZATION UPDATES

Neesha Stringfellow / HLM Recovery, the ROSC will be partnering with other groups noting that HERO is one of them. Neesha also suggested partnering with church youth groups as a means to reach younger audiences. Dan noted that he will pass along an email to Jan Dombrowski / HERO from a church in Matteson, IL that would like to have Narcan Training.

Gloria Bloodsaw / Gateway Foundation, Joliet location services are now back up and running. There will be a grand re-opening to let everyone know about the services. It should be on May 9th from 12pm to 2pm.

Marie Kress / The Mental Wellness Center of Manhattan, gave a thank-you to Rosecrance for hosting Therapeutic Recreation & Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Workshop on Friday March 14, 2025 at the NIU Conference Center in Naperville, IL.

Dan Martin / Village of New Lenox, when asked by Jan, advised that he hope to announce his successor at the March 26th in-person meeting at Gatto's. Dan shared a bit of history on the Coalition and noted that he wishes it continued success moving forward.

NEXT COALITION MEETING

The next New Lenox Safe Community Coalition meeting will take place on **Wednesday, March 26, 2025 / 10:30am, at Gatto's Italian Restaurant in New Lenox. A FREE luncheon will immediately follow the meeting. THIS WILL BE DAN MARTIN'S LAST MEETING AND HE WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE IF EVERYONE WOULD ATTEND.**

NEXT TASK GROUP MEETING

The next meeting of the Substance Use Prevention Task Group will be on **Monday, May 12, 2025 / 1:30pm, via Zoom Videoconference.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:26pm.

Substance Use Prevention Task Group

“To reduce injuries and deaths associated with substance use, through the establishment of collaborative partnerships and the implementation of educational programs, strategies and initiatives.”