

**Annual Report to the Maine Legislature
from the Substance Use Disorders Services Commission**

**Submitted to
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
Joint Commission and Appropriations and Financial Affairs
Approved Dec 9, 2020**

Bruce Campbell, Acting Chair, SUSC

Introduction of the Substance Use Disorders Services Commission

Public Law Chapter 432, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Substance Use Disorders Services Commission and approved by the Governor on June 20, 2019. This statute states that the purpose of the Commission is to serve as advocate, review and evaluate, and inform the public. The Commission shall serve as an advocate and resource for the State on substance use disorder prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery. The Commission shall promote and assess activities designed to meet and remediate challenges of substance use disorders in the State. With the support of the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health (Department) the Commission shall review and evaluate on a continuing basis state and federal policies and programs relating to substance use disorders. In cooperation with the Department, the Commission shall keep the public informed by collecting and disseminating information, by conducting or commissioning studies and publishing the results of these studies, by issuing publications and reports and by providing public forums, including conferences and workshops. The Commission, based on its activities pursuant to this subsection, shall make recommendations relating to substance use disorders to the Department and the Governor.

It further states the Commission shall report annually to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over appropriations and financial affairs. This will be done on or before the last business day of each year. The report must include developments and needs related to substance use disorders prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery in the State.

This document serves as the annual report to the Joint Standing Committee of the Health and Human Services and Joint Standing Committee Appropriations and Financial Affairs of the Maine State Legislature. A current roster of committee members and summary of meetings is included as an addendum to this report.

Administrative Leadership

The commission has been fortunate to benefit from the leadership of Governor Mills and her appointees, DHHS Commissioner Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D., and the Director of Behavioral Health, Jessica Pollard, Phd. Beginning with her executive order on Jan 24, 2018 as part of her 10-point plan

to address the opioid epidemic in Maine, she appointed Gordon Smith as the Director of Opioid Response. This led to the development of Maine Opioid Response Strategic Action Plan. With the goal “to reduce the negative health and economic impacts of substance use disorder and opioid use disorder on individuals, families, and communities in Maine,” the plan articulated 5 focus areas, 9 priorities, 20 strategies targeted at this single goal.

From the Commission’s perspective, this level of administrative leadership is a revolutionary change that puts priority on the human and economic impact of substance use in Maine with the Governor’s Recovery Cabinet providing essential cross sector planning and collaboration. And for the very first time, there is significant appreciation for substance use recovery as a process to be supported at all levels.

The Coronavirus Pandemic

As with all other aspects of our daily lives, the coronavirus epidemic has caused a shift in our priorities. Despite the considerable accomplishments over the past two years in responding to substance use and opioid use, COVID-19 has taken a terrible toll on the individuals and families already vulnerable to substance use disorders. The impact of isolation and disruption can be seen in the rising use of alcohol and upward trajectory of opioid overdose deaths.

The commission understands that the substance use and opioid epidemic never went away, it simply moved from the front page. The notable increased use of alcohol to deal with the chronic stress associated with the pandemic will have a debris field of its own. And sadly, Maine’s opioid overdose deaths in 2020 are projected to exceed well over 500, the highest number of deaths recorded yet.

And all of the good work that has been done over the past two years, and there has been a lot of it, will be subject to the significant restriction in resources as the economic impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt at all levels.

Accomplishments and Initiatives Supported by the Commission

Annual Opioid Summits

On July 15, 2019, Governor Janet Mills convened a summit at the Augusta Civic Center entitled “Turning the Tide: Maine’s Path Forward in Addressing the Opioid Crisis.” More than a thousand people attended. The summit was meant to energize people about fighting addiction. It featured keynote speakers from across the U.S. with and breakout sessions for further presentations and discussion. The idea behind the summit was that the strategies shared in the room would turn into actions in Maine communities. Among those strategies was the hosting of events to end addiction stigma. The Governor’s team indicated they were looking beyond that, though, and towards expanding naloxone access, maximizing Medicaid benefits for recovery and engaging community members to combat substance use.

The following year, in the midst of the pandemic, Governor Janet Mills convened the second annual Opioid Response Summit virtually on July 23, 2020 with over 700 in attendance. It highlighted community and compassion as they relate to Maine’s opioid epidemic with the impact of the pandemic resulting in isolation and increased opioid overdose deaths. It also highlighted the increased use of methamphetamine, cocaine, and fentanyl, a highly lethal opioid directly attributed to the rise in overdose deaths. At the same time, Mills applauded the response efforts that rose to the occasion over the last few months when in-person meetings were no longer an option, including MAT programs that provided take home doses to avoid daily trips to the clinic. At the end of the virtual summit, the date for the third Summit was announced, scheduled for July 15th, 2021.

In light of this demonstration of administrative leadership, the Commission also wants to acknowledge the incredible work that has been done by the Department and the spirited collaboration the Department has demonstrated working with the legislature, other Departments and community providers. These include:

Maximizing Federal and State Cross Sector Resources to Expand Access to Prevention, Intervention, Treatment and Recovery Resources

- Implementing Medicaid expansion that expands access to treatment resources.
- Maximizing federal grants and state funds such as the State Opioid Response (SOR, STEM-SOR), the Fund for a Healthy Maine, Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA), the Strategic Prevention Framework and block grants.
- Expanding collaborative efforts across state government departments to maximize program efficiency.
- Developing cross system data capacity for tracking opioid overdose tracking and response.
- Developing a treatment locator system.

These resources have been deployed in strategic partnerships focused on the intervention, prevention, treatment and recovery from substance use disorders that have previously been adopted as the pillars of organization for this Commission. Some definitions of these pillars shift slightly in responding to specific substance use problems. For example, in the opioid response system, intervention is typically regarded as “harm reduction.” Alcohol use may include interventions such as drinking driver programs, while public policy interventions are often used to address tobacco use.

Prevention

The prevention programs formerly administered by the Office of Substance Use (now Office of Behavioral Health), were transferred to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) during the previous administration. The CDC Substance Use Prevention makes regular reports to the Commission and further collaborates with the Department on substance use prevention efforts. Highlights of some of these prevention efforts include:

- Developing vaping media campaigns for youth, parents and adults to increase knowledge and awareness about the dangers of vaping.

- Creating a Marijuana Prevention Toolkit to assist in community wide education efforts.
- Relaunching the “Good to Know” marijuana prevention campaign to educate about the law, underage use and high-risk misuse.
- Supporting the implementation of Second Step, a social emotional learning program, for students pre-k to 8th grade. (65 schools).
- At OBH, hiring a Coordinator for helping new parents to protect their infants from the effects of substance use.
- Supporting Suicide Prevention, Restorative Practices, and Community Outreach Programs.
- Most recently, Maine CDC is in the initial stages of developing a three-year Statewide Substance Use Prevention Plan (to be completed by May 2021).

Intervention/Harm Reduction

- Expansion of safe syringe distribution in underserved areas.
- Wide distribution of NARCAN statewide; this has resulted in over 1,600 reversals by emergency personnel. Distribution of NARCAN to end users or supporters also resulted in many additional, but unquantified, overdose reversals.
- Most recently, initial implementation of the post-opioid overdose response program, Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety (OPTIONS).

Treatment

- Expanding access to medication assisted treatment (MAT), in addition to outpatient and intensive outpatient services.
- Rapid induction of MAT in the Emergency Departments (20 out of 33 EDs statewide).
- Low Barrier MAT targeting individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Introducing a pilot program to coordinate treatment access in rural areas (Washington County).
- Expanding access to MAT treatment in jails and prisons.

Recovery Support

- Establishing a network of 13 recovery community centers, coordinated through a central hub, with additional recovery center support developing in underserved areas. The Department is working to support additional recovery community centers in Millinocket, Lewiston, Rumford, and Lincoln and expanded the recovery coaching program statewide and certification development.
- Establishing recovery coaches in the Emergency Departments.
- Supported the Maine Association of Recovery Residences program, increasing the number of Maine certified homes to national standards from 28 to 50 within the past year.
- Collaborating with Maine State Housing Authority to support a network of recovery residences to include the recovery housing grant from the federal Housing and Urban Development.
- Through a 6.2M grant to the Department of Labor, the workforce system is investing in career training and support activities to support the reemployment of individuals impacted by the crisis, and creating temporary employment opportunities for individuals in communities impacted by the crisis.

- Through the Department of Labor, the workforce system is providing training and skills development for the workforce in professions of substance use treatment, mental health, and pain management.
- Supporting the Maine Recovery Fund which provides supportive services to people who are in recovery from substance use disorder, re-entering the workforce and society in general, such as employment starter kits and transportation.

COVID Response

The Commission acknowledges the incredible efforts across the State to prevent the spread of coronavirus transmission and COVID infection. It would further like to highlight some of the Department's response to the pandemic, including:

- Coordinating with the StrengthenMe campaign which is Maine's behavioral health and resiliency response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, a collaboration of community organizations and aligned agencies offering free stress management, wellness and resiliency resources to anyone experiencing stress reactions to the Pandemic.
- Supporting many prevention programs transitioned to virtual platforms to continue offering classes, training and education, such as, student intervention reintegration program.
- Supporting the expansion of telehealth as an acceptable and widely used venue for delivery of treatment services.
- Relaxing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) protocols and regulations to provide continuity of care during COVID restrictions.
- Supporting the pivot of a variety of treatment and recovery support services, including recovery community centers, to virtual platforms in order to provide services during the shutdown and gradual re-opening of programs.

Recommendations Supported by the Substance Use Disorders Services Commission

- The Commission joins the Department in its public health campaigns to reduce stigma, as well as calls for action resulting in behavior change, not just attitudes, related to reducing stigma and discrimination for persons with substance use disorders.
- Continue to maximize the use of federal resources to mitigate the impact of resource restrictions at the State level.
- Continue to expand collaborative efforts across state government departments to maximize program efficiency.
- Continue implementing Medicaid expansion and expanding access to all FDA-approved medications for treatment of substance use disorders, including alcohol and nicotine use dependence.
- Remove any remaining barriers to naloxone distribution.
- Support and continue to develop cross system data capacity for tracking opioid overdose tracking and response.

- Support and implement the recommended Fatal Overdose Review Panel that was introduced last session.
- Support and continue to develop and implement a treatment locator system.
- Address unmet residential treatment needs, specifically additional detox centers and residential treatment programs.
- Once approved, implement MaineCare's 1115 Waiver to expand residential SUD treatment capacity.
- Develop policies and procedures that reduce biased hiring practices for persons in recovery.
- Support and expand recovery support services to establish recovery community centers in every county in the State of Maine.
- Finalize and publish the findings for the current report being developed on the Economic Impact of Substance Use in Maine, the last of which was published in 2010.

Substance Use Disorders Services Commission Roster

Leg Ref		Name	Status	Representing
Sec	A	Deb Doiron	AdCare Maine	Admin support
3.A	1	Sen Kim Rosen ®	LT - pending alternative appointment; see comment	Willing but suggests alternative due to schedule conflict
3.A	2	Sen	LT - pending appointment	
3.A	3	Rep Anne Perry (D) Calais	State Representative (D) Calais	Health and Human Services
3.A	4	Rep Richard Pickett (R) Dixfield	Legislature - Criminal Justice	Criminal Justice
3.B	5	Ron Springel, MD	Retired physician; Program Director Maine Association of Recovery Residences	Physician or health care provider - nominated
3.C	6	Vacant	Recruiting	Public secondary school administrator
3.D	7	Joseph Bennett	Retired elementary school teacher after teaching 34 years	Public elementary school - nominated
3.E	8	Leslie Clark, LCSW	Executive Director, Portland Recovery Community Center, administers the statewide Recovery Hub system	Statewide recovery coalition - nominated
3.F	9	Vacant	Recruiting	Criminal justice system
3.G	10	John Yasenjak, LCPC	Husson University instructor	Post-secondary education

Leg Ref	Name	Status	Representing
3.H 11	William Lowenstein (ret)	President, Sexual Assault Crisis Center (former Ex Dir AdCare Maine, New England Institute of Addiction Studies)	Practitioner in substance use intervention
3.H 12	Jamie Comstock	Director of Public Health Prevention, City of Bangor	Practitioner in substance use prevention
3.H 13	Tim Cheney	CEO, ENSO Recovery Services, Managong Partner, Choopers Foundation	Practitioner in substance use treatment
3.H 14	Bruce Campbell (ret)	Founder, former Director, Bangor Area Recovery Network (Acting Chair)	Practitioner in substance use recovery
3.I 15	Dean Staffieri	President, MSEA/SEIU	Private sector employment with EAP experience - nominated
3.J 16	Malory Otteson Shaughnessy	Executive Director, Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services	Public representative - co-occurring disorders - nominated
3.J 17	Joanna Russell	Executive Director, Northeast Workforce Investment Board	Public representative – employment - nominated
3.J 18	Courtney Allen	Policy Director - Maine Recovery Advocacy Project (ME-RAP)	Public representative - Substance use disorder recovery - nominated

Annual Report for Meetings in 2020
Zoom Meetings: Meeting ID: 899 0169 4058 Passcode: 790164

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Attendance Members</u>	<u>Nominated</u>	<u>Guests</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Meeting Reimb</u>	<u>Travel</u>
Jan 8, 2020	Burton M. Cross Bldg 111 Sewall St., Augusta	4		7	3 hrs	\$144.32	
Feb 12, 2020	Burton M. Cross Bldg 111 Sewall St., Augusta	4	4	8	3 hrs	\$172.48	
Mar 11, 2020	Burton M. Cross Bldg 111 Sewall St., Augusta	6	3	8	3 hrs	\$308.88	
Apr 8, 2020	Via Zoom	6	4	6	3 hrs	\$ 0.00	
May 13, 2020	Via Zoom	5	5	6	3 hrs	\$ 0.00	
Jun 10, 2020	Via Zoom	6	4	9	3 hrs	\$ 0.00	
Jul 8, 2020	Via Zoom	5	5	5	3 hrs	\$ 0.00	
Sep 9, 2020	Via Zoom	6	4	5	3 hrs	\$ 0.00	
Oct 14, 2020	Via Zoom	7	4	8	3 hrs	\$ 0.00	
Nov 12, 2020	Via Zoom	4	4	6	3 hrs	\$ 0.00	
Dec 9, 2020	Via Zoom	5	4	7	2.25 hrs	\$ 0.00	