



Quarterly Meeting

Bismarck Burleigh Public Health

Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, November 4th, 2025

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Attendees: Madison Peterson (BBPH), Susan Kahler (BBPH), Kris Morrisette (Ministry on the Margins), Michelle Erickson (Abused Adult Resource Center), Kjersti Hintz (BBPH), Cathy Palczewski (Heartview), Mike Ness (ORS), Theresa Schmidt (BBPH), Mark Ehrmantruat (United Methodist Church), Elizabeth Kapella (BBPH Nurse-Family Partnership of Missouri Valley), Melanie Hanson (Centre Inc. Mandan), Charlotte Williams (CDC Foundation ORS/ND DHHS Behavioral Health Division), Kodi Pinks (Director Non-Infectious Disease Surveillance & Data Management), Doreen Eichele (Dacotah Foundation), Jena Gullo (United Way), Kyle Kirchmeier (Morton Co. Sheriffs Dept.), Dick Dever (ND State Senate), Lynden Ring (West Central HSC), Marnie Walth, Wendy Hafner-Bakken (BHS School Coordinator), Jaylia Prussing (U Mary),

Total Attendance: 21

Welcome/Introductions:

Susan Kahler, SAP Coordinator, Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health (BBPH)

Susan Kahler welcomed participants and coordinated introductions.

Triage Center Update

Kjersti Hintz, Case Management, Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health (BBPH)

Kjersti Hintz provided an update on the Community Triage Center project, detailing ongoing partnerships with HMA Health Management Associates, the involvement of city leaders and a steering committee, and upcoming presentations by Paul from HMA to both the city commission and community stakeholders. Kjersti explained that Renee Moch is the project facilitator for the Community Triage Center, and the team is working closely with HMA Health Management Associates, specifically Paul Fleissner and Jessica Perillo, for planning and development. A core team of city leaders meets biweekly to provide direction, while a steering committee, composed of regional entities, meets on alternating weeks to align the project with community needs related to behavioral health, addiction, and housing crises. Kjersti announced that Paul from HMA will present findings and recommendations to the city commission on Thursday, November 13th at 5:15 PM in the Tom Baker room, followed by a presentation to community stakeholders on Friday, November 14th at 8:30 AM, which will be held online via Teams and in person. For anyone needing or wanting an invitation to the stakeholder meeting, please contact Madison Peterson – mpeterson@bismarcknd.gov.

November Homeless Awareness

Michelle Erickson, Abuse Adult Resource Center

Michelle Erickson is from the Abused Adult Resource Center and serves on the Homeless Coalition and Public Awareness Committee. The Homeless Coalition has outlined several events that are planned for Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (November 16th-22nd), including United Way's walk, community conversations, youth homelessness spotlight, and the Freezin for a Reason fundraiser with volunteer opportunities. Michelle described a series of events for Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, including United Way's 'Walk a Mile in

Their Shoes' on Tuesday November 18th. The walk is from the shelter to the Dream Center and back with lunch provided at 11:30. The same night a community conversation on homelessness hosted by the Human Relations Committee will take place at the Tom Baker room at 5:30pm and the public is welcome to attend. On Wednesday the 19th, the 'No Longer Hidden' event spotlighting youth homelessness, brought together by Bismarck Public Schools, will take place at Century High School at 7:00pm. On Thursday the 20th there will be the 'Freezin for a Reason' fundraiser, which involves collecting donations and distributing them at the Dream Center. It will go from 7am to 7pm on 12th and Expressway. There are volunteer opportunities available for the Freezin for a Reason. You can sign up to volunteer through the Google Sign-in link. Social media will be used to further promote awareness and event details.

Google Link to Sign Up to Volunteer: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15rR6Mxdn9-kdUiRtapvfgWNIGKARgRvJaUM36PGFhys/edit?usp=sharing>

Subcommittee Updates:

Prevention & Education Subcommittee

DFC Grant- Madison Peterson, SAP Specialist

Madison Peterson reported on the Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant activities, including attending conferences to present on substance use prevention and Hidden Plain Sight and raise awareness on Kratom. Also, a new Blind Spot Backpack initiative. Madison described attending the NDCEL and ND Shape conferences, where many educators such as school athletic directors and teachers, principals, school administration, and more from around North Dakota attend. The Substance Abuse Prevention (SAP) team presented their Hidden In Plain Sight and set up a mock bedroom display to educate the school staff about items that may indicate risky behavior in teens. The SAP team also did a presentation which included interactive polling and discussions about substance use policies and procedures that schools use to prevent or provide consequences to youth using substance underage. The presentation also included a panel featuring a SRO, PYB, School Principal, and School Nurse from Horizon Middle School. Madison highlighted the need to educate communities about kratom. Kratom is an opioid-like substance that is unregulated and easily accessible to youth in North Dakota. The SAP team found many school staff were unfamiliar with it so the SAP team wanted to bring awareness to the substance. Kratom education was included in the mock bedroom and presentation. Lastly, Madison introduced the Blind Spot Backpack initiative, a new interactive display similar to Hidden Plain Sight but focused on items found in a teenager's backpack. The program aims to train staff and parents to recognize signs of risky behavior and offers tips for prevention and communication. If you are interested in getting staff trained or know of any parent groups that benefit from this knowledge, contact Madison Peterson – mpeterson@bismarcknd.gov

Student Committee Updates – Wendy Hafner-Bakken

Madison Peterson and Wendy Hafner-Bakken discussed the student committee's recent prevention activities, including sticker shock campaigns, bathroom signage projects, and the Red Ribbon Week 'Plant the Promise' initiative, with a report indicating a decrease in vaping incidents and ongoing adaptation to new nicotine products. Madison reported that the student committee distributed about 800 positive messaging stickers at Bismarck High School (BHS) and St. Mary high school, targeting major school events to promote communication and prevent underage substance use. Madison and Wendy described the installation of protective glass containers in school bathrooms that will be filled with educational materials about vaping,

marijuana, and alcohol. Wendy noted plans to update signage as sports seasons change. There are currently 4 containers for signage placed in the BHS bathrooms, with the hope of expanding. Wendy shared that recent data shows a decrease in vaping incidents, possibly due to the new implemented phone laws which may reduce student access. Another reason noted was the possible shift to the use of nicotine pouches. Susan and Wendy discussed the observed shift from vaping to nicotine pouches among students, emphasizing the need to continually adapt prevention messaging to address emerging products. Lastly, Madison detailed the Red Ribbon Week project where students planted red tulip bulbs at their schools as a commitment to a drug-free life, with the flowers serving as a springtime reminder of their pledge. The tulips are currently planted in the front of BHS and in flower pots at St. Mary High School.

SOR Grant- Sue Kahler, SAP Coordinator (BBPH)

Susan Kahler shared updates State Opioid Response (SOR) grant at Bismarck Burleigh Public Health, including Narcan trainings for university students and the community, distribution of opioid education kits through pharmacies, and successful medication take-back events in partnership with local organizations. Susan reported conducting six Narcan training sessions since August, primarily targeting University of Mary students aged 20 to 40, identified as a high-risk group for overdoses. Additional community training is planned for December. Susan has been placing purple Oneboxes throughout the community and so far have placed 33 boxes, the last two places receiving them being New Freedom Center and Adult Abused Resource Center. Susan described collaboration with 15 local pharmacies to provide opioid education kits, which include Narcan and disposal RX, to patients prescribed pain medication, aiming to promote safe medication use and disposal. Lastly, Susan highlighted a recent take-back event held with the Bismarck Police Department and Age Well Center, where 62 lbs of unused medication, valued at \$97,200 in opioids, were collected. This doubled the amount from the previous event in May, and another event is planned for the spring.

Intoxication/Withdrawal Management

Treatment & Recovery Subcommittee

Cathy Palczewski, Heartview – Opioid Grant Project Manager

Cathy from Heartview shared updates on their street outreach efforts, reporting 308 street contacts and 81 ministry contacts over a month, with seven individuals successfully bridged into treatment, and announced the appointment of a new CEO, Wendy Danicort. Cathy reported that from September 18th to October 18th, Heartview made 308 street contacts and 81 contacts during ministry open hours, noting an increase in people on the streets, including some from out of state. Cathy stated that seven individuals were successfully bridged into treatment as a result of outreach efforts during the reporting period. Cathy announced that Wendy Danicort has been appointed as Heartview's new CEO, with transitional activities underway.

New Members/Organizations

Additional Comments:

Kodi Pinks, Director Non-Infectious Disease Surveillance & Data Management

Kodi A Pinks presented current drug overdose statistics for North Dakota, including trends in opioid, amphetamine, kratom, and xylazine-related deaths, and announced the upcoming launch of a public overdose dashboard with detailed data and heat maps. Kodi A Pinks reported 76 drug

overdose deaths in North Dakota so far this year, with the majority occurring in males aged 30 to 39, followed by 40 to 49 and 20 to 29 age groups. In 2024, there were 106 statewide deaths, including non-residents. Kodi A Pinks shared that since 2019, there have been 39 kratom-related overdose deaths, with two occurring this year, and four deaths involving xylazine. Fentanyl was present in 45 of the 76 deaths this year. Kodi A Pinks announced the near completion of a public drug overdose dashboard, which will provide quarterly updates, frequency rates, and heat maps by county, as well as non-fatal overdose data from syndromic surveillance systems.

Mike Ness, ORS, and Charlotte Williams, CDC Foundation ORS/ND DHHS Behavioral Health Division

Mike Ness and Charlotte Williams discussed recent CDC inquiries about carfentanil in the community, anticipated bulletins, and collaborative efforts with Fargo Cass Public Health and Minnesota's Department of Health to draft an overdose spike alert community response guide, including the use of mapping systems. Mike Ness shared that the CDC requested information on carfentanil presence in the community, noting an increase in both powder and pill forms, and indicated that a bulletin may be issued soon. Charlotte Williams described collaboration with Fargo Cass Public Health and Minnesota's Department of Health to develop a community response guide for opioid overdose spikes, focusing on the border region and utilizing mapping systems for data tracking.

Jena Gullo, United Way

Jena Gullo from United Way reminded the group that there is no daytime winter emergency shelter available between 7:00 AM and 8:00 PM, and confirmed that no city, state, or coalition agencies have any current plans to address this gap. Jena stated that since March 3rd, there has been no daytime winter emergency shelter, and despite discussions at previous coalition meetings, no agencies have announced plans to fill this gap. The library, mall, and Heaven's Helpers remain the only available options for those seeking shelter during daytime hours.

Assignments/Next Meeting

February 10th 2026, Tuesday at 10am-11:30am

Meeting Adjourned at 10:40

Meeting minutes taken by: Madison Peterson, SAP Specialist

The Mission Statement:

"To lead and guide a continuum of care model to reduce substance abuse & behavioral health issues in our communities."

The Vision Statement:

"A safe, healthy, vibrant community, free of substance abuse, addiction and behavioral health issues."

