

# **County Leadership Forum on Opioid Abuse & Addiction Warren County, NC - August 21, 2017 Summary**

Board of Commissioner's Chairman Victor Hunt opened the event with a welcome and then introduced the moderator Health Director Margaret Brake.

Mrs. Brake shared that the purpose of the forum is to:

1. Heighten awareness and understanding among county leaders and the public about opioids and other substance use addictions
2. Discuss the causes, effects of addiction and its impact on our county
3. Learn about successful prevention and treatment programs
4. Identify coordinated education, prevention and treatment strategies to address opioid abuse and addiction in Warren County

After the introductions of Dr. Keith McKoy and Dr. Tedra Anderson-Brown, Medical Directors from Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, Dr. Anderson-Brown gave a presentation entitled Opioids: Understanding Addiction and Recovery. Her presentation highlighted the magnitude of the problem, provided an overview of addiction, and shared best practices for treatment.

Following Dr. Anderson-Brown's presentation, a panel with representatives from the Department of Social Services, Sheriff's Office, District Court Judge, Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Vance Recovery Services discussed the impact that addiction has on families; current education, prevention and treatment services; and strategies for addressing the problem.

During panel Discussion:

Social Services Director spotlighted two examples of family trauma where the children were affected by opioid use of the parent.

1<sup>st</sup> example: Child(ren) were sent into foster care

2<sup>nd</sup> example: Parent introduced drug use to the children.

Forum participants discussed the work that is needed in the following areas to address opioid and substance use addictions:

1. PREVENTION – Implement evidence-based programs for youth

2. EDUCATION/TRAINING – Educate youth, families, community leaders about substance use disorders (SUD) issues and existing resources; Use public education campaigns and toolkits to address SUD issues such as Lock Up Your Meds Campaign; Educate providers on appropriate prescribing practices
3. CONTINUUM OF SERVICES/RESOURCES – Continuum of care should include prevention, treatment and recovery services including peer support; County agencies need to know what resources are available (i.e. directory) and where to refer consumers for services
4. PARTNERSHIPS – Collaboration needs to occur among many sectors of the community to include county leaders, law enforcement, judicial system, prevention and treatment providers, Public Health, EMS, Social Services, school system, local coalitions, etc.

Participants also suggested getting local committees that already address substance use concerns involved:

- Healthy Carolinians Substance Abuse Subcommittee
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)
- Committees that exist through the school system

Personal stories were shared regarding family member's substance use disorders and the struggles to overcome addiction.

Forum participants decided that more meetings are needed to begin formulating a response to focus on opioid abuse and addiction. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled within the next three months to bring everyone back together and to begin working on action steps for tackling these issues in Warren County.

State Representative Terry Garrison voiced his commitment to the issue.