

County Leadership Forum on Opioid Abuse Davidson County

Idea Summary

On May 5, 2017, the first County Leadership Forum on Opioid Abuse was held in Davidson County. Established by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, this forum brought together elected officials, community health leaders, and other stakeholders to discuss the on-going opioid epidemic in the county. There were four principal goals of this forum:

1. To elevate the awareness of all local elected officials so they have a common understanding of the opioid epidemic in their county;
2. To discuss its causes, its effects on citizens, and its implications for the county’s future;
3. To educate local elected leaders about successful prevention and treatment programs and to provide resources available in the county;
4. To generate coordinated education, prevention and treatment strategies to reduce the occurrence of opioid addiction, overdose and death.

To address the fourth goal—developing a coherent and holistic strategy to address the opioid epidemic—participants in the forum discussed these issues at their tables and produced a number of ideas. In general, the ideas could be divided into three main categories: prevention, treatment, and supply. Some commonly mentioned ideas are summarized in the table below:

| Strategy | Ideas |
|-------------------|---|
| Prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better educate the youth on dangers of prescription drug abuse. • Engage with faith-based and other community groups to provide information to at-risk residents. • Increase community capacity and availability of resources for addressing the opioid crisis. |
| Treatment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to treatment facilities. • Prescribe Narcan when opioid dosage reaches certain threshold. • Increase availability of Suboxone. • Implement a follow-up program after an overdose. |
| Supply | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase physician and service provider accountability in opioid prescriptions. • Encourage stricter regulations for opioid providers. • Educate groups and individuals about prescription drug disposal. |

The following pages detail the ideas each table came up with. In addition to ideas, participants were asked to consider the resources, partners, and obstacles associated with their proposals.

Table 2

Idea #1

Prescribe Narcan when the opioid dosage reaches a certain threshold.

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Pharmacists and medical providers

What can you influence or offer?

- Advocate policy makers

Idea #2

Mandatory participation in CSRS and adherence to it.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Mandate prescribing providers utilize CSRS

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Doctors
- Pharmacists
- Veterinarians
- Mid-level providers
- Dentists

What can you influence or offer?

- Advocate policy makers

Idea #3

Agencies providing benefits do mandatory drug screening.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Funding for testing

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- DSS

Idea #4

Educate the general population as well as specific, at-risk target populations and family members

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Trained people to provide education

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Schools
- Worksites
- Community groups

Table 3

Increase physician and service provider accountability in prescribing practices.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Identify physicians that prescribe high numbers of these drugs or abused prescriptions
- Educational signs in office about physician responsibility

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Medical providers: hospitals, pharmacies, medical schools, advanced practitioners
- Incentives to influence medical students to learn more about pharmaceutical companies and addiction
- NC Medical Board and state legislature

What are the hidden issues or obstacles to implementing this idea?

- Resistance from physicians, service providers, pharmacies, pharmaceutical companies
- Funding (or lack thereof)
- Lack of software to effectively track prescriptions

What resources are needed to implement this idea?

- Funding
- Networking and software

Who is the lead (person or agency) and what is the timeline for the next steps?

- DCSPAN
- Commissioners
- Hospitals and physician practices

Table 4

Idea #1

Provide a long-term care facility.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Health Department referral system
- Speed up the process for those most in need
- Accountability for services offered or denied (methadone, suboxone clinics) and why

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Cardinal / Mental Health
- County Commissioners
- Education at home and school

What can you influence or offer?

- Individual department support

What are the hidden issues or obstacles to implementing this idea?

- Funding
- Placement (facilities and people in need)

What resources are needed to implement this idea?

- Partnership between health, law enforcement, mental health, and faith communities

What are existing programs or assets you can build upon?

- DCSPAN
- Cardinal
- Daymark Services

What next steps can you take to help move this idea forward?

- Follow through with ideas

Who is the lead (person or agency) and what is the timeline for the next steps?

- Health and Human Services

Idea #2

Early school programs to show students and teacher the dangers of any kind of drug use, prescription or otherwise, for grades 1-8

Idea #3

*Increase the availability of Suboxone and resources for Naloxone.
Implement a follow-up program after an overdose.*

Table 5

Idea #1

Local providers who actually provide access. We need accountability for every person who is turned away or denied the service they need.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- A database listing every person referred to mental health services; whether they were served and specific reasons if they were not.
 - Include the name of the person who made the decision.

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Cardinal Innovations
- All providers
- All referrers

What can you influence or offer?

- Court: demand a person appear in court and explain why the people we order receive treatment cannot be treated.

Idea #2

Get information on treatment alternatives to the people who need it. Especially where they are—no pleasure seeker is going to make the inconvenient effort to go get the information.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Target the “hangouts”: internet cafes, vape shops
- TV shows

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Advertisers
- Business

What resources are needed to implement this idea?

- Money

Idea #3

Replace methadone with a treatment alternative that completely blocks the effects of illicit drug use.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Greater push for Suboxone and less Methadone

Idea #4

Reevaluate whether legal opioids are ever necessary. If 95% of the world only consumes 20% of opioids, what evidence is there that this kind of better living through chemicals is valid?

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- More of a national issue.

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- FDA
- Doctors
- Licensing boards

What can you influence or offer?

- Law enforcement

What are the hidden issues or obstacles to implementing this idea?

- Money

Who is the lead (person or agency) and what is the timeline for the next steps?

- FDA

Table 6

Idea #1:

Place a greater emphasis on explaining to youth how addictive and destructive opiates are, and engage in faith-based partnerships.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- DARE program

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- School system
- Sheriff and law enforcement
- Public service announcements in media to saturate the community

What can you influence or offer?

- Make it cool to be clean
- Show youth how it destroys families and lives

Idea #2:

Focus Groups on: Treatment, Prevention, and Supply

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Regular stakeholder meetings to seek collaborative actions

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Variety of stakeholders
- We need to define and refine focus

What can you influence or offer?

- County leaders demand movement and improvement
- Celebrate successes when they happen

What are the hidden issues or obstacles to implementing this idea?

- HIPAA

What resources are needed to implement this idea?

- Legislation to support actions

What are existing programs or assets you can build upon?

- Local prescription “drop boxes”
- DCSPAN

Idea #3:

Methadone treatment clinic – Start out at higher dosage and reduce from that point. Do not maintain or increase the dosage.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Provide clinic in the county rather than require addicts to travel to Concord.

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Cardinal Innovations
- Agencies working with addicts

What can you influence or offer?

- Gain confidence in having *effective* treatment.

What are the hidden issues or obstacles to implementing this idea?

- Need more local input in demanding and driving successful results.

What are existing programs or assets you can build upon?

- Transportation provided to those who need it.

Idea #4:

Provide a job fair for felons.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Our community resources partners to be knowledgeable and effective in connecting people to appropriate services

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- All agencies

Table 7

Engaging the faith-based community to educate leaders about addiction, to give them a database of resources for the families of addicts and the abused, and to provide help and (continuing) support after the fact with follow-ups.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Database of resources

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Religious leaders, community groups, and schools

What can you influence or offer?

- Advocacy, support, utilizing connections, educating others

What are the hidden issues or obstacles to implementing this idea?

- Money
- Volunteers
- Size of the problem
- Everyone being on the same page
- Political will

What resources are needed to implement this idea?

- Money and people

What are existing programs or assets you can build upon?

- DC Span,
- Clerks Commission
- Cardinal Services
- Davidson County Health Department

What next steps can you take to help move this idea forward?

- Contacting and meeting with leaders and groups to bring the needs together

Who is the lead (person or agency) and what is the timeline for the next steps?

- We need a neutral group (like a crisis control group) to bring organizations to the table without division of beliefs.

Table 8

Idea #1:

*Education and prevention regarding safe medication storage disposal. Specifically in geriatric population.
Work with: funeral homes, employers, senior centers, and hospice.*

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Education at: funeral homes, hospice, churches, senior centers.
- More drop boxes
- Training material
- Speaker forum

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Providers
- Pastors
- Employers

What can you influence or offer?

- HH – provide training, speaker
- Health department provide drop boxes

What are the hidden issues or obstacles to implementing this idea?

- Resistance to have speakers/change procedures
- Cost

Who is the lead (person or agency) and what is the timeline for the next steps?

- AB – Path of Hope

Idea #2:

Revamp county policies regarding CIT training for officers, school policies, officers carrying naloxone.

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Chiefs of Police
- Sheriff's Office
- School leadership
- Policy makers

What can you influence or offer?

- HH & AB participate in CIT training.

What are the hidden issues or obstacles to implementing this idea?

- Cost

Idea # 3:

Build community capacity and connection to resources.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Peer support;
- Drop-in center with syringe exchange;
- FBC Lexington

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Cardinal Innovations
- Grant writers

What can you influence or offer?

- FBC Lexington

Table 9

Idea #1:

More and stricter regulations for medical/treatment providers.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Have the ability to seek criminal charges, fines, and sanctions
- Have the ability to involuntarily commit those who are in active addiction but denial.
- Mandatory registry and enforce recurring offenses.

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Medical providers
- Law enforcement
- Social Services
- Legislators

What can you influence or offer?

- Support (votes)
- Enforcement

Idea #2:

More providers.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- More detox facilities
- More providers for uninsured inpatient treatment
- More integrated providers
- Early intervention
- Less red tape involved in becoming credentialed.

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- MCO
- State funding
- DHHS
- Other insurers

Idea # 3:

Prevention, prevention, prevention! Educate: parents, schools, community, faith organizations.

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- Get service providers where kids and families are so they can hear the message early and often.
- Educate medical providers not to over-prescribe.
- Standing collaborative meetings to determine what is needed.

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- County officials: school, law enforcements, service providers, MCO

Table 10

Increased awareness and education; safe places and Drug Courts; Legislation to reduce dosage

What specific tools do you want to implement in our county?

- More local prescription “drop boxes”
- Local Drug Court
- Public awareness to limit supply and reduce stigma

Who are the key partners you need to help champion this idea?

- Judges and the court system
- School systems
- State Legislatures

What can you influence or offer?

- Backing of NCACC
- Local elected officials

What are the hidden issues or obstacles to implementing this idea?

- Money
- Political support

What resources are needed to implement this idea?

- Money
- Political support

What are existing programs or assets you can build upon?

- Local prescription “drop boxes” (increase the number of them).

What next steps can you take to help move this idea forward?

- Discussions with stakeholders within the court system and at the state level.

Who is the lead (person or agency) and what is the timeline for the next steps?

- Commissioner McClure (NCACC President)
- Timeline: as soon as possible.