

State Advisory Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Communication Subcommittee Meeting Notes

January 6, 2012

Communication Subcommittee Members: Ladell Flowers, John Czuba and Kelly McKerrow

Division Staff: Bianca Farr

Charge: On December 7, 2011, Ladell Flowers, SAC Chair, appointed John Czuba and Kelly McKerrow to the Communication Subcommittee to identify measures to improve communication between the State Advisory Council and local stakeholders (public, providers, legislators, advocates, etc.). The Committee will develop a work plan and report back to the full Council at the February 1, 2012 meeting.

Notes:

The meeting was held via teleconference from 9 a.m. to 9:48 a.m. on Friday, January 6, 2012. The following items were discussed and *generally* agreed upon:

1. Communication is fundamental to the foundation, success and continued effectiveness of the State Advisory Council. Without proper communication it is impossible for the Council to adequately fulfill its mandate to serve as an advisor to the Director (Missouri Revised Statutes Chapter 631, Section 631.020.8). The Communication Subcommittee recognizes the need to improve the process whereby information is disseminated statewide on the prevention, evaluation, care, treatment and rehabilitation of persons affected by substance use, and seeks to close the communication gap.
2. Local media outlets (in some regions) are unaware of initiatives within the Department of Mental Health and the Division of Drug and Alcohol Abuse.
3. It is important that we learn more about the existing communication outlets used by the Department of Mental Health.
 - a. Department Website: The Department posts a variety of information on substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery support services;
 - b. Digital Media: Departmental efforts to use digital media (blogs) to communicate have experienced limited success. The State Advisory Council should investigate the reasons for the Department's success or failure of digital media before making recommendations related to its utilization;

- c. Regional Meetings: Existing departmental meetings may serve as a venue for informational exchange (i.e., Quarterly SATOP or District Administrator's Meetings);

ACTION: Discuss existing methods of internal/external communication (such as press releases) and identify ways to facilitate improvement.

ACTION: Educate the State Advisory Council of current communication outlets.

4. Within the Department and community there is limited understanding of the State Advisory Council's role as advisors to the Director. It is important to provide awareness of the Council's mission to the public and staff at all levels of the organization (Regional Executive Officers, District Administrators, etc.). Division staff and State Advisory Council Members should have a reciprocal relationship in which information and resources are shared in order to improve the provision of service to individuals and families served by the Department. They must also be knowledgeable of the Division/Department representatives in their region (attend regional meetings, etc.).

ACTION: Define the Regional Executive Officers (REO) function/relationship to the State Advisory Councils. Explore the possibility of inviting REOs to bimonthly State Advisory Council meetings to relay information about regional initiatives and concerns. Inquire about the possibility of State Advisory Council members participating in departmental meetings in their respective regions.

5. Within the State Advisory Council there is limited understanding of the structure of the Department. It is important for State Advisory Council members to be familiar with the Department's Organizational Chart and Strategic Plan.

ACTION: Review the hierarchical organizational chart to gain a better understanding of the structure, relationship and roles of existing staff (Regional Executive Officers, District Administrators, etc).

6. When sensible, synchronize efforts of the State Advisory Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the State Advisory Council for Comprehensive Psychiatric Services.

ACTION: The State Advisory Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and the State Advisory Council for Comprehensive Psychiatric Services will work collaboratively, when needed.