

## Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

### February 7, 2024, Meeting Summary

Key decisions and actions are in **bold**.

SCYPT Members in Attendance: George Becerra, Lt. Wallace-Spaulding, Paul Thomas, Chris Revere, Diane Mucci, Barbara Breland, Tom Arnold, Sloan Presidio, Chris Leonard, Jenna White, Kristine Choi, Michael Axler, Shirley Marcus Allen, Llyod Tucker, Tara Hewan, Diane Volcansek, Jessica Judsen, Rodney Lusk, Ricardy Anderson, Leslie Atkins, Kelly Henderson, Karla Bruce, Michael Becketts, Judith Dittman, Geovanny Ponce, Daryl Washington, James Krause, Marcia St. John-Cunning, Matt Thompson, Rick Leichtweis

The SCYPT meeting began with a moment of reflection for the passing of Michelle Leete, the Fairfax County NAACP branch president, and a member of the SCYPT. SCYPT honored her lifelong advocacy for civil rights and her efforts to improve the lives of children and youth through her service on SCYPT.

Marla reviewed the agenda and highlighted that the first agenda item, a presentation about the opioid response in Fairfax County, is not a new initiative for SCYPT, but provides the body with updated information and to consider how to help further the work of the Task Force and intersections with SCYPT initiatives.

#### Presentation: Fairfax County's Opioid (Fentanyl) Response

Ellen Volo, Fairfax County Opioid and Substance Use Task Force Coordinator and Stefan Mascoll, Safety and Wellness Coordinator presented an overview of opioid trends in Virginia, with emphasis on Fairfax County's opioid epidemic response, including information on projects receiving funding from the opioid settlement. The majority of fatal opioid overdoses in Fairfax involve fentanyl, a synthetic opioid. Fentanyl is found in a combination with all types of substances, including cocaine and heroin and we see a great deal of it in counterfeit pills.

There is currently a high level of community interest related to the opioid issue and there are resources and information online that can be shared with the community. At the core of funded projects from the settlement funds is partnerships. Current projects target adults and youth populations and are in the following categories: prevention/education, early intervention/treatment, data and monitoring, and criminal justice and enforcement. The county is also exploring funding for an additional drug court along with efforts to bring in appropriate online treatment and other services. This includes a regional effort led by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB), in partnership with a vendor, to have a sixteen-bed patient facility. That number is solely a starting place and could change depending on what is provided.

The importance of sharing, community-wide, how to identify the signs of opioid use, what the drugs (such as Fentanyl) look like, and how to account for information sharing within diverse cultures and languages other than English, was discussed. A member also asked about the recent Commonwealth Executive Order that mandated communication from schools when an overdose occurs. It was noted that this effort helps to increase attention to the issue, increases awareness, and maximizes transparency. FCPS endorses the philosophy behind this and are doing their best to be fully compliant.

It is, however, sometimes a challenge to obtain information when it comes to off-campus overdoses, and it is important to safeguard student privacy. The notification is one tool in the toolkit to raise awareness to this issue. Stefan Mascoll provided information about the education and other support services provided by the FCPS Substance Abuse Specialists (SAPS). SAPS provide education at a population level (PTA, substance abuse education k-12). They also work directly with identified/referred students where there is a risk for substance use.

There was additional discussion about the impact of opioid use, an increase in violence, and the need for treatment options not just in Fairfax but across Virginia. There are multifaceted and broad impacts and concern with the lack of treatment resources and access. The data included on the Opioid Dashboard stems from emergency room visits and are the most reliable numbers as these cases have been screened. Members discussed data related to opioids and their challenges. Looking at the dashboard, Opioid overdoses decreased in 2018, and several factors could have influenced this decrease, including the collective work of the Opioid Task Force. Additionally, there was a decrease of drug overdoses during that period. Members also asked about the Narcan training, which the CSB provides on a weekly basis both virtually and in-person and can be conducted in English and Spanish. In-person training is by request. A 10-minute video on how to recognize the signs and how to use naloxone is complete and will be available on the Opioid Task Force webpage in both English and Spanish. The CSB will continue to look at the need for potential translation to additional languages. In conclusion, messaging works and members are encouraged to send out and share information with their networks.

Finally, there was a brief discussion on the Youth Survey Data. While the youth survey does not ask about fentanyl, it does ask about alcohol, marijuana, vaping and the use of prescription drugs outside of prescribed purposes, which in some cases addresses opioids and in other cases does not. That data is broken down by race, gender, sexual identity and sexual orientation. Overall, as a division, 90% of Fairfax County 6<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who responded to the survey do not report using substances. The majority of our youth are not using. This recognition is key as we need to ensure that our prevention messages use a social norming approach. We share this data with our PTA's and with schools to ensure that they are aware of youth voice and the importance of the youth survey.

Presentation: SCYPT Equity Impact Plan (EIP): SCYPT's role is to look at what and who is missing and asking the why questions.

Marla reviewed the draft Equity Impact Plan and underscored that the plan does not directly measure individual SCYPT initiatives but rather measures SCYPT's charge to embed equity into those initiatives. Karla Bruce shared that the previous discussion on opioids and county services shows why we need an Equity plan for SCYPT. There are places in Fairfax County where people face greater barriers in accessing services and targeted approaches with what we know about populations. Not every type of messaging and strategy is effective for every group. It was noted that complaint driven and request driven systems are similar and some may not be aware of what to ask.

The draft plan has connections to the FCPS Strategic and Equity Plan. There was discussion about the ties, for example the School Readiness Strategic Plan. Discussed the lack of resources on the school side to achieve these goals; there are approximately 2,000 eligible students who could be receiving Early Childhood education, but we don't have the space or funding. If we had facility space, we could provide access to early childhood education. Members discussed facilities, co-location and potential options for future Early Childhood education program space.

Chris Leonard reminded members that the equity plans are not resource plans, however and we should work on resource plans within initiative areas, while also looking at equity, putting in dollar amounts of what initiatives will cost. The budget has many priorities, when initiatives aren't funded, still stays on as a need to do and could be funded in a different year.

Members discussed the roles of SCYPT as a body and how to use our existing mechanisms (as appropriate) to move priorities forward (e.g., BOS and School Board to consider the recommendations from the SCYPT body, which is a collective impact approach). The draft Equity Impact Plan will be available on the website, asked members to take another look at the draft and send any comments to Marla. This is a yearly plan, which SCYPT will review again.

Member Announcements:

- School Board Member Ricardy Anderson shared that the FCPS School Board will meet on February 8<sup>th</sup> and students from Lewis High School will open with a performance of the Black National Anthem, in Celebration of Black History Month. Future SB meetings will include students opening from Justice High School.
- Chris Leonard and Jessica Hudson shared that Fairfax County Library is hosting an event on February 25<sup>th</sup> that includes the last living member of the Little Rock 9. Tickets to the event are free. There is no virtual option as this is done in partnership with the McClean Community Center and Oldham Theatre.

Administrative Announcements:

- Marla reminded members that the Promoting Behavioral Health Team, part of the behavioral health initiative, sends bi-weekly emails on a listserv. Members who want to share resources can send to Marla for inclusion on that listserv.
- There are two remaining SCYPT Member Meetings – Wednesday, April 17 and Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. These are both in-person and will be held in Conference Room 11 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Public Comment

None