



Virtual Opioid Task Force Meeting – Update November 22, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

I look forward to seeing many of you at our last virtual meeting of 2021: December 2, 2021. We are so grateful to you for sticking together as we moved to virtual meetings and helping us all to learn from each other. We are very excited to welcome [back] Deirdre Calvert from DPH as well as Sheriff Koutoujian - we all know them to be tremendously dedicated and knowledgeable and they have important information and updates for us. As well, Tanya Lord from SADOD will join us to discuss the realities of bereavement during holiday time and offer us tools to support our clients and colleagues. A tentative agenda is below, but before that, I want to share a few important upcoming events or notices.

On December 2 (the same day as our meeting, but perhaps another person from your organization might be interested) there will be a virtual summit titled: Can Harm Reduction End the War on Drugs? - Learning From the Past to Prepare Our Future Advocacy. According to the sponsors, this virtual summit will bring together Massachusetts service providers working with people who use drugs (in any capacity) to learn about the current state of the harm reduction movement, including ongoing advocacy for needed harm reduction measures here in Massachusetts. This event is hosted by the Opioid Overdose Prevention Training Project (OOPTP), managed by Health Resources in Action (HRiA) and funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) through the MA Department of Public Health's Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS).

I was excited to note that our colleagues Lainie Emond and John Kelley were part of an innovative collaboration between emergency medical services (EMS), public health, and academic partners, we assessed the geographic distribution of opioid related risks to inform intervention efforts. We've heard about this from both of them over the past years - its great to see the important data-driven work [published](#) for others to learn from.

Our colleague, Margaret Hester, from the [Healing Communities Study](#) let us know about the following training series - *Social Work & Responding to the Overdose Crisis Learning Collaborative Series* on **December 8th and 9th 2021**. Please see the attached flyer for more details and register [HERE](#) to receive an invitation and Zoom link. This event is open to all social workers (macro, clinical, students, etc.) interested in learning more about the overdose crisis and harm reduction.

I hope you are all able to gather, safely, with family, family of choice, friends, or as you are comfortable as the holidays approach. It is hard to think that we are approaching the second full winter season of the pandemic - I feel safe-ish with my booster but, even then, only safe-ish. I work to acknowledge that each of us has a different level of comfort with gathering together and hope that we can all find comfort and community as we work together thru this crisis.

Here is the agenda and zoom link for December 2:

Opioid Task Force
December 2, 2021
10:00-11:30am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83435503067?pwd=Vlk0Rm5xTmVKSTlvR21CTE5yQnZBdz09>

Meeting ID: 834 3550 3067

Passcode: 506085

- I. Welcome and Middlesex Update – DA Ryan
- II. Presentations:
 - a. Deirdre Calvert, Director Bureau of Substance Addiction Services, Mass / Department of Public Health
 - b. Sheriff Peter Koutoujian – Opioid treatment in jails and other updates
 - c. SADOD - Tanya Lord, Holiday Bill of Rights for the Bereaved
- III. Group Discussion and Partner Updates
- IV. Adjourn

Warm regards
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