**Minutes of Coalition Meeting Held January 27, 2021**

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| **Present**: Anthony DiLauro (Human Services Council & NPS parent), Dave Walencyzk (Youth Services Bureau), Denique Weidema-Lewis (Norwalk ACTS), Diamond Sead (Human Services Council & NPS parent), Diana Révolus (Common Council & NPS parent), Ed Milton (Teen Talk counselor at NHS), Ginger Katz (Courage to Speak Foundation), Jim Martinez (NPS), Laila McGeorge (Prevention Intern), Margaret Watt (Positive Directions & NPS parent), Maria Escalera (Norwalk Human Services), Nina Chanana (Partnership evaluator), Shamariah Grant (Norwalk Hospital intern), Tory Sullivan (BMHS), Peter King (Alateen), Erma Benedetto (MFAP), Anamilena Moreno (Norwalk ACTS), Danielle Walker (Rowan Center), David Heuvelman (Common Council), Eve St Surin (CAAWC), Giovanna Mozzo (The Hub), Jennifer Rolinson (NPS Health Services), Jessica Feighan (Rowan Center), Lamond Daniels (Community Services), Maggie Young (Liberation Programs), Marcea Koffsky (community member), Maylen Martinez (Rowan Center), Niana Nieves (Family & Children’s Agency), Nicole Hampton (Norwalk Hospital & parent), Thane Grauel (community member & parent), Sgt. David Orr (Norwalk Police Dept), Krystle Moore Spell (Liberation Programs) |
| 1. **Updates on Coalition Work:**

Diamond presented updates on our coalition work since the November meeting:**Community Survey:** Our community survey is extended until mid February due to low response rates. (Limited responses in Spanish, only 1 response in Creole.) We are looking for responses from adults in Norwalk related to mental health, substance use, community norms and resources, which will inform our strategies. * ACTION: Everyone is asked to respond to the survey and share it with their respective networks and ask friends/neighbors to respond. You can share info about the survey directly to your social media from <https://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org/post/norwalk-community-survey-on-substance-use>

**Youth Survey:** We were hoping to conduct the youth survey in the schools in early February but it is on hold pending NPS. We have conducted some youth focus groups but our only survey data is from November 2018. **Youth:** We’ve created a plan for the young adults from the TurningPointCT.org project and the Norwalk SMART Recovery Teens group to offer monthly online drop-in social events for teens. * ACTION: Please disseminate flyer, available on TNP website and on TNP Facebook & Instagram.

**State Opioid Response (SOR) mini-grant** – We are submitting this week for the $5000 SOR grant and are partnering sub-regionally with Westport and Fairfield. Will provide trainings, Narcan, awareness. **Alcohol** – Anthony shared a personal story about the dangers and risks of alcohol and reported on the alcohol workgroup’s [Liquor Stickers](https://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org/post/liquor-stickers-for-norwalk) campaign. These are now in participating liquor stores around Norwalk. Our #MentionPrevention campaign is coming soon as part 2.  |
| 1. **Featured Presentation: The New Marijuana & Our Youth**

Margaret & Nina gave a presentation on The New Marijuana & Our Youth. Our goal is to ensure that all coalition members (and later the larger community) are educated about today’s marijuana and what it’s impact is on the teen brain. It’s important to be informed because there is state legislation that may pass this year to make marijuana available for retail / recreational use for adults. If that happens there will be increased availability to youth and reduced perception of harm among youth and adults. ACTION: Please review the slides (download [full slideshow](https://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org/the-new-marijuana) from webpage) as it contains additional information that was not presented. Please also let us know if you would like us to present any part of it to an audience you work with. Discussion points:* Sgt. Orr: Sees most Norwalk teens vaping THC since it is odorless. The vape concentrate they are using is higher and much more potent.
* Marcea: Legalization of marijuana may normalize marijuana use in youth. Similar to the culture of alcohol use, will parents give their children permission to use marijuana.
* Margaret: Our job as a coalition is to educate the community on the realities and risks of marijuana use so that people can make informed decisions. Legislation will not legalize MJ for *youth* in any case, but it will contribute to further reductions in the perception of harm and increased availability to youth.
* Diamond: Kids come into support groups whose parents approve and let their children use marijuana. Teaching about the risks and dangers of marijuana should be a family bonding activity for parents and their children. We don’t have current data on how much our kids are using drugs during COVID.
* Dave W.: Whether marijuana is legalized or not, the fact is that youth are currently using the drug and it’s already a problem.
* Nicole: Noted that hospital is seeing people come in who used marijuana that was laced with cocaine, without them realizing it.
* Diana: What about medical conditions that are helped by marijuana? For children/teens, the risks outweigh any benefits. Also mental health conditions are not helped but likely worsened by marijuana.
* Krystle asked about holistic approaches and Nicole recommended auricular acupuncture and/or meditation as a holistic pathway for any SUD
* Discussion in the chat about expiration dates for Narcan – Nasal spray expiration dates has been extended (see notice at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph))

Ginger shared her story of her son’s struggle with addiction, which started with marijuana and led to his overdose death. She started the Courage to Speak Foundation in response.  |
| 1. **Website** **Review**

Laila gave a tour of our new website. Please check out [www.thenorwalkpartnership.org](http://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org) to access resources. We will continue to grow the content. * Please visit it and take note of the downloadable resources, infographics, and FAQs on individual pages for mental health or substance use topics. Our Norwalk slides and infographs can also be downloaded from the [Issues Summaries page](https://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org/issues-summaries) on the Resources tab.
* Check out the [Get Help page](https://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org/get-help) for a list of all Norwalk-specific behavioral health treatment and support options for teens, as well as other resources for families.
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| 1. **Action Steps**

Tory listed ways coalition participants can help us work on these topics: * Share our [community survey](https://www.thenorwalkpartnership.org/post/norwalk-community-survey-on-substance-use) – the more data we get, the better we can make a difference. Instagram and Facebook: @thenorwalkpartnership
* New workgroup starting to work on an online Freshman Forum video series (for parents & teens): Kickoff meeting Fri. Feb. 5th at 10am (rsvp to mwatt@positivedirections.org) If you can’t make it but want to join, let Margaret know. This workgroup will also be open to our partners from Westport and Fairfield.
* Join alcohol/marijuana workgroup: Next meeting Wed. Feb. 10th at 3pm (rsvp to mwatt@positivedirections.org)
* Follow us on FB and Instagram @norwalkpartnership
* Please share info about our new teen & YA social drop-in events. **See flyer below!**
* Attend & share! 2 opportunities for parents to learn great info from MADD: Power of Parenting workshop on 2/9 at 6:30pm and 2/26 at 11am. ½ hour video followed by ½ hour discussion. **See flyer below!**
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| 1. **News from The Hub**: Behavioral Health Action Organization serving Southwestern CT

Giovanna shared free upcoming training events: * Data Literacy: February 4th, 1-3pm
* Meth 101: Feb 10 12-1:15 -
* Newest resource in the region is FCA’s Coach program due to COVID 19
* More info, to RSVP, or to sign up for the weekly emails: see www.thehubct.org
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| 1. **Community Announcements**
* NEXT MEETING: **Wednesday, February 24, 2021 from 2-3:30pm – results of community survey**
* Norwalk ACTS & the Center for Youth Leadership are hosting the next Teen Town Hall on **Wed 2/24 at 7pm** focused on LGBTQ community in the schools. Anamilena is looking for teens who’d like to be panelists. amoreno@norwalkacts.org
* MFAP is again doing street outreach to drug users. Finding many individuals who are homeless, providing fentanyl test strips and other resources, including new crack kits.
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