



Mission: Prevent and reduce youth substance use and abuse in the communities of Madison, Chatham Borough and Chatham Township through collaboration, education and community-wide change.

Madison Chatham Coalition Membership Meeting

January 21, 2025- 9:30 am In-Person/Hybrid Meeting

Meeting Minutes/Summary

Attendees:

Allison Bardon (MCC Director), Jen Caldwell (Drew University Civic Engagement Coordinator), Ed Stoner (Y VP of Advancement & Strategic Initiatives), Gabe Suarez (MCC Staff), Rozella Clyde (Chatham- citizen), Elyse Wheatley (MCC Staff), Kristin Perconte (PCP Clinician), Alex Mandala (CHS SAC), Therese Farrid (Drew University Counselor), Christine McIntyre (PCP Director)

9:30 Meeting is called to order (Allison Bardon- MCC Director)

- Allison opens the meeting by thanking everyone for coming. She asks everyone to introduce themselves, which aligns with above attendance, and then shares the agenda for the meeting.

9:34 MCC Updates (Allison Bardon- MCC Director; Gabe Suarez- MCC Staff)

- Gabe says that they went to the Academy of Saint Elizabeth's (AOSE) last Friday and did a wellness table during their lunch. The wellness table is either focused on mental health or substance use, and this one focused on the fatal vision goggles. They had activities to complete with the goggles on, like picking something off the floor, trying to throw a ball in a basket, walking in a straight line, and more to test hand-eye coordination. This is always a very interactive and well-liked tabling at every school, and it was the same at AOSE.
- On the same day, they had a meeting with the AOSE cohort of the Teen Task Force. They are working on an initiative called "Stress Down Day" with the group and the members are going to be running the entire thing. AOSE requires uniforms for their students, but they have dress down days to dress casually if they raise money for a cause. With the "Stress Down Day," students can dress casually if they attend workshops that the Teen Task Force will be running about mental health, substance use, time management, and emotion regulation. The hope is to have that occur in late February or early March. The members had a lot of great input and we want to ensure that they have all the time that they need. Allison adds that AOSE has been great about letting MCC into the school to speak with students. They have a school-wide study hall, which we plan our monthly tables and meetings around.
- Allison explains that next week they have their monthly tables at MHS and MJS. PCP and MCC alternate the focus of the table between mental health and substance use. This month the focus is 'Anxiety is Sour, Coping is Sweet' with warheads and anxiety attacks. MJS will focus on a wellness wheel and helping students find what they need to work on.
- Gabe continues that they will be at the Drew Internship Fair and they will be hosting a Teen Topics with Sam Dooley at MHS. Allison mentions that normally they are hosted at the Y, but this will be hosted at MHS during their support block. The MHS SAC is incentivizing students to attend that with it being Teen Dating Violence Prevention Month.

9:41 DFC Site Visit (Allison Bardon- MCC Director; Elyse Wheatley- MCC Staff)

- Allison moves onto discuss the DFC site visit on February 26th. She explains that we are a federally funded organization through the drug Free Community Support Program Grant, which is housed in the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the CDC. As part of the program, we are required to receive a site visit from our project officer.
- Allison shares that they have a good lineup of people willing to talk as part of the visit. It is an opportunity for the coalition to share all that they have done in the past years and they want to see coalition members are part of the visit.
- Elyse explains her role in explaining the evolution of the Teen Task Force. Starting from the original members then moving through the current cohort of people, she is going to share everything that they have worked on and the struggles they have faced as a group.
- Allison explains that the Teen Task Force has been central to many of the coalition's efforts. Allison adds that Elyse joined in 2020 and many of the initiatives they started with her cohort are still happening today. Elyse will be joining Zoom to give the presentation and answer any questions that they have.
- Allison explains that Alex Mandala from CHS will be speaking to represent schools, which is one of our strongest sectors of MCC. She will be speaking on all that MCC does with the schools, the student survey in particular.
- Allison continues that Kenny Shannon with Madison PD will be coming with the MHS SRO and the juvenile detectives to speak Law enforcement is our other very strong sector and it will be great to have them present on our partnership and work.
- She shares the Christine McIntyre from Project Community Pride will be speaking about the link between mental health and substance use. Christine will be speaking about joint initiatives and how MCC and PCP have shifted to include one another in their initiatives in the past years.
- The visit is supposed to be 3-4 hours and it is going to be packed with things. They have explained it as an opportunity to brag and share all they have done and the challenges they have accomplished. Allison says she is very excited and that we will be well prepared for it and asks if anyone has any questions or comments.
- Rozella asks if they are going to talk about all the materials they have created on the site visit. Allison explains that they only require 3 things in advance of them coming, which are two sets of meeting minutes, the most up-to-date needs assessment, and any 'products' which include sustainability plans, brochures, rack cards, and more. We will definitely be highlighting all MCC's marketing materials.

9:49 Initiative Updates (Gabe Suarez- MCC Staff)

- Gabe explains that every year around the Super Bowl MCC does Sticker Shock at local liquor stores. This is a high-risk weekend with lots of parties and alcohol sales. They put stickers that say '21 means 21' on boxes to outline the risks of providing alcohol to people under the age of 21. It is hard to measure exactly the impact of the initiative, but it is best to remind people of what their actions mean for the community.
- To go along with that, Draw the Line is another initiative in partnership with the liquor stores. MCC dropped off brochures and markers for parents to use. They turn the bottle upside down and mark where the level of alcohol was to see if someone was drinking it without knowing. The brochure also had a list of conversation starters for parents. Allison adds that she had heard people saying teens were getting alcohol from their house without guardians knowing about it during key informant

interviews. Being a data driven coalition, we created additional questions in our community survey and then created this campaign to fill the need.

- Gabe continues that they want to revitalize that initiative and bring attention to it again. Allison explains that when asked about where minors are getting alcohol, from an alcohol retailer gets one of the lowest levels of responses. She has been considering if it is worth the time if it is not addressing a large problem that faces the coalition. It may be time to shift their focus slightly, but still do something aligned with this idea, especially around the Super Bowl.
- Gabe moves on to discuss the Potency Matters campaign that he is working on with Sue. She has had three students go through the Madison School District and is something that she is passionate about. One goal of theirs is to educate parents about all of the THC products that have been available since marijuana was legalized in New Jersey. In recent years, products have been developed with much higher potency rates and we want to teach parents about this. The campaign will include conversation starters and empower parents to have conversations with their children.
- They will do this through presentations, videos, paper resources, and more. He explains that in Colorado they started an initiative called the 'Tea on THC.' Colorado was the first state to legalize medical marijuana, but a lot of their counties have banned the use. Using all the data they have gathered, the Colorado School of Public Health is creating something similar to their goal for Potency Matters. They have testimonials from athletes, past users, and more.
- Allison adds that this is a main priority for the coalition and there will be opportunities for more coalition members to get involved with it. Allison and Elyse met recently to discuss the campaigns for the year, and they want this to be started within the first quarter of the year. They will provide more updates on this campaign at the February meeting.

9:59 Data Collection (Allison Bardon- MCC Director)

- Allison shares that we have been running our community survey for the past few weeks and that is posted on social media. The Y also sent the survey out to staff who are 18 and older. She explains that we expanded the survey to include anyone that lives or works in Madison or Chatham, as opposed to just living here. We want to ensure that people can provide input if they work or interact with the youth population in the community.
- Allison explains they are monitoring the progress of that and will evaluate whether or not they need to do any additional pushes.
- The survey asks adults questions about perception of underage substance use in Madison and Chatham. They also added some mental health questions on the survey this year as well.
- She says that they will use that data to help in assisting to update the logic model.
- Along with that, they also are analyzing data from the student survey at Madison High School. The completion rate was in the high 70s which is high for school, and likely due to the change to passive consent in New Jersey. They met with the junior and high school principals to go over the responses, but they are waiting to share the data with the coalition until the schools share it with parents.
- She explains that the data looks very good for the schools. The last survey was completed in 2019 and had a 13.8% 30-day past use rate for vaping, but in May 2024 it was 6%. Every substance except tobacco had a decreased level of 30-day past use. Tobacco is trending nationally higher with the emergence of oral nicotine patches.
- Elyse will be working on a social norms campaign for social media. Allison adds they are also working on vaping signs for the bathrooms at MHS. There are 4 signs and the tagline is that everyone

doesn't do it. Only 3.6% of students are doing it, but they are doing it in the bathrooms as per key informant interviews with teachers. There will be a QR code linking them to the MCC vaping cessation rack card.

- Allison explains that Elyse wants to work on a social norms campaign in order to highlight some of the data that is particularly compelling.
- Allison shares that key informant interviews are almost done. All of the data will be collected and then shared through an infographic. The data will also be used in the logic model. There is nothing shocking so far. She has only interviewed two law enforcement officers so far and juvenile substance use arrests are down to almost nothing. This was one reason she wanted Kenny Shannon to talk during the site visit because law enforcement has limited ability on consequences for underage substance use. We want the number of arrests to be down, but not for the reason it needs to be. We are still able to see the number of youths involved because they are being referred to PCP instead.

10:09 ESL Work (Gabe Suarez- MCC Staff)

- Gabe shares that last year they started partnering with the ESL classes at MJS and MHS. He explains that he speaks Spanish and he was able to connect with the students in that he understands what it feels like to feel on the outskirts in this community. When they visited the classes, they got a lot of feedback about Basketball at the Y and learned they wanted to see volleyball, and they implemented that.
- He continues that he has also been working on translating materials into Spanish. The goal is to meet them where they are and present them with the information they need since they don't come up to the tables very often.
- Allison adds that they are also planning on adapting many of the tablings into workshops for ESL classes to make it more accessible for everyone.

10:12 Additional MCC Updates (Allison Bardon- MCC Director)

- Allison shares that she is starting to work on the non-competing continuation application. This means she is working with the MCC Board to make changes to the action plan and budget.
- She shares that she will be at CADCA next month to meet with all off the coalitions in Washington DC. The first day is SAMHSA Prevention Day and the rest of the week is the CDC portion. She explains that this is a really good opportunity for her to meet other coalition directors and hear what they are working on.

10:14 Sector Updates

Project Community Pride- Christine McIntyre

- Christine shares that they have another Basketball at the Y on March 14th. She wants to push that event to the ESL classes a lot.
- They just started a new program with the art department doing mindfulness in Madison, and they are now spreading it into Florham Park.

Drew University Center for Civic Engagement- Jen Caldwell

- She asks Allison to send the link to the community survey and they will send it to faculty and staff.

- She shares they have Martin Luther King Jr week next week, then they will start planning programs for Black History Month and Women's History Month.
- They also are working with the Career Center for the Intern Career Fair.

Drew University Counseling Center- Therese Farrid

- Therese explains she wanted to come to this meeting to get an idea of how they could collaborate with MCC. She hopes the more she learns about MCC, the more they will be able to collaborate.
- She shares that they work with a lot of different groups on campus, and last semester they focused a lot on athletes. They focus on suicide and safety issues a lot in the spring. They also have peer mentors that can do 1-on-1 meetings and campus-wide intervention.
- Allison adds that they will be at the BeWell Summit on March 11th at Drew University. Students from local high schools in mental health clubs are invited to attend. There is a resource fair which they also attended last year. They felt that it was their most impactful tabling in terms of connecting with teens and they asked a lot of really good questions. It is hosted through the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide.

10:21 Meeting Closes

- Allison thanks everyone for coming and the meeting closes.

Next Meeting:

February 18, 2025 @ 9:30AM

Hubbard Room

Madison Area YMCA