

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
PALLIATIVE CARE AND QUALITY OF LIFE
August 12, 2022**

Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)
The RSA Tower, Suite 1586
Montgomery, Alabama
Virtual Meeting

Members Present

Kristi A. Acker, D.N.P., Chair
Karen Marlowe, Pharm.D., Co-Chair
Gregory W. Ayers, M.D.
Leigh Ann Matthews, M.S.N.
Timothy Mayhall, M.Div.
Richard J. Brockman, J.D.
Sarah Pederson, Ph.D.
Stormy Dismuke, M.S.N.
Annie Hinson, L.B.S.W.

Members Absent

John G. Beard, M.B.A.
Mary Ann Somers, M.A.Ed.

ADPH Staff Present

Karen M. Landers, M.D., F.A.A.P., Chief Medical Officer
Brian Hale, General Counsel
Jacqueline D. Milledge, Director, Bureau of Health Provider Standards (BHPS)
Patricia Watson, State Program Director, BHPS
Leana "Jo" Rodgers, Medicare Other Unit, BHPS
Kierra Montgomery, Office Manager, BHPS

Guests Present

Marie-Carmelle Elie, M.D., University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), Department of
Emergency Medicine
Rosemary Blackmon, Alabama Hospital Association (AlaHA)
Mary Ann Crow, A.P.R.N., Alabama Coalition for Advanced Care Planning

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2022:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Minutes of May 13, 2022, as distributed; the motion carried unanimously.

COVID-19 UPDATE:

Dr. Landers stated that since March 2020, Alabama had reached the milestone of over 20,000 deaths due to COVID-19. She advised that people are still encouraged to take preventative measures, including getting vaccinated. Dr. Landers commented that every county in Alabama now has access to the Novavax vaccine, a two-dose, more traditional vaccine for people age 18 or older.

Dr. Landers stated that information would be forthcoming regarding the Bivalent mRNA vaccines. She outlined the updated COVID-19 isolation and quarantine guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Dr. Landers opened the floor for questions regarding COVID-19. Dr. Acker asked for the current vaccination rate in Alabama. Dr. Landers stated that if you looked at the entire population, Alabama would be over 50 percent but by age breakdown, the older age group would be highly vaccinated, and the population of those 6 months of age and above, would be very dismal. She stated that overall, Alabama's vaccination rate in the school-age group was hovering in the mid 30 percent range.

COMMUNITY COALITIONS:

Dr. Mayhall stated that the Community Collation Workgroup met on July 26, 2022, to discuss their interest in focusing on the issues of developing resources and campaigns to encourage advanced care planning in the community and outlined

initiatives to educate the general public and health care providers.

Dr. Acker asked Mr. Brockman his thoughts on access to provided resources from the nursing home standpoint. Mr. Brockman stated that access and education were tremendously important because palliative care and guiding families is a very difficult subject. Since nursing homes and community residents frequently have questions regarding access to provided services, there was discussion concerning the designation of ADPH as the one-place repository for the information.

MEMBER UPDATES:

Dr. Acker stated that AlaHA recommended that Dr. Pederson, who is already on the council, serve as their representative. Dr. Acker noted that there was a question about a palliative care certified physician from the northern part of the state and asked if anyone had a specific physician that they could contact. Stormy Dismuke stated that she would reach out to Dr. Monica Williams Murphy in Huntsville, Alabama.

OPIOID PRESCRIBING AND REGULATION UPDATES:

Dr. Ayers stated that he did not have any updates at that time.

PALLIATIVE CARE AND EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Dr. Elie, UAB Department of Emergency Medicine Chair, introduced herself and discussed how she started in the emergency medicine field of palliative care.

Dr. Pederson asked Dr. Elie if there were any new barriers that she was seeing now that she has work with patients and providers in Alabama. Dr. Elie responded that in terms of advanced directives there are barriers. There is nuance in the documentation, providers are worried about getting sued, and getting in trouble with other doctors, and they do not understand what their obligations are or what they have

permission to talk about with patients. She stated that part of the education she delivers to providers is what does that paperwork mean, what does it mean to be DNI or DNR, and what does an advanced directive give you permission to do or not to do.

OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Denise Milledge stated that she and Kierra Montgomery are working to collect information regarding the council's history beginning in 2015; to include any achievements that have occurred over the years. Dr. Acker advised that she has an editable copy of a progress report that Nebraska uses that would be helpful for the council to use for its report.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for November 18, 2022, at the Center for Palliative Care and Supportive Care Summit.



Kristi A. Acker, D.N.P., Chair
State Advisory Council on Palliative Care and Quality of Life



Jacqueline D. Milledge, Director
Bureau of Health Provider Standards
Alabama Department of Public Health

Approved: February 10, 2023