

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
PALLIATIVE CARE AND QUALITY OF LIFE
FEBRUARY 12, 2021**

Alabama Department of Public Health
The RSA Tower, Suite 1586
Montgomery, Alabama

Members Present

Rodney O. Tucker, M.D., M.M.M., Chair
Karen Marlowe, Pharm.D., Co-Chair
Kristi A. Acker, D.N.P.
Gregory W. Ayers, M.D.
John G. Beard, M.B.A.
Richard J. Brockman, J.D.
Stormy Dismuke, M.S.N.
Leigh Ann Matthews, M.S.N.
Mary Ann Somers, M.A.Ed.

Members Absent

Timothy Mayhall, M.Div.
Amy L. McAfee, M.S.W.
John P. Miller, M.D.

Staff Present

Mary G. McIntyre, M.D., M.P.H., Chief Medical Officer
Dennis Blair, Bureau of Health Provider Standards (BHPS)
LaKesha Hopkins, BHPS
Shelia Rudolph, BHPS
Jacqueline Milledge, BHPS
Lisa Pezent, BHPS
Tonya Blankenship, BHPS
Leana Jo Rodgers, BHPS

Guest Present

Angie Cameron Smith (Proxy for Richard J. Brockman)

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2020:

The Council was informed that the Minutes of November 13, 2020, will be available for review by the next meeting date.

COVID-19 UPDATE:

Dr. Mary McIntyre provided the Council with an update on the status of COVID-19 and the number of doses of the COVID-19 vaccine received and distributed, and the eligibility group. She

stated Alabama is currently in eligibility Group 1B along with 1A, if everyone has not been vaccinated from Group 1A. Group 1B plus part of 1C includes people that are 65 and older up to the age of 74. The groups that are now eligible to receive the vaccine is estimated based on the population in the state of Alabama to be 1.5 million. Alabama received on average 60,000 doses of the primary vaccine per facility weekly with a decline in hospitalization and deaths per day.

Dr. McIntyre encouraged everyone to spread the word due to the low numbers of those who received the vaccine in Alabama. Currently, 581,317 doses of the vaccine have been administered.

NOTIFICATION OF CORONER AT TIME OF DEATH ON COVID PATIENT:

Dr. Rodney Tucker informed the members of the Council that physicians were asked to notify the coroner at the time of death of a COVID-19 patient. He asked the Department and Council for reasoning behind this directive; however, no one was aware, and Dr. Tucker stated he would try to obtain more information on this issue for future meetings.

OPIOID PRESCRIBING AND REGULATION UPDATES:

Dr. Gregory Ayers made the Council aware that there were no changes being worked on at this time. However, he did inform the Council that the Continuing Medical Education (CME) has been deferred this year until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He went on to say that the CME was waived due to the pandemic and that the CME that is a requirement for those prescribing opioid controlled substances will be resuming and will be virtual. It will be a 12-hour course from March 5, 2021, – March 7, 2021, and applies to prescribers such as nurse practitioners, physicians, and Veteran's Affairs.

COVID-19 IMPACT ON PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE PATIENTS CASE STUDY:

Dr. Rodney Tucker presented a case study to the Council on the impact COVID-19 has had on a patient receiving palliative care. The study provided insight on palliative care needs of patients

during the pandemic. The case that occurred during the height of the pandemic was a patient living in a skilled nursing facility that was suffering from Parkinson's Disease. After the case study was read, he identified the terminal diagnoses to be all the suggested causes which included COVID related illnesses, in stage Parkinson's Disease, system failure, loneliness, or emotional distress. Members of the Council expressed their life experiences in relation to the case study and their thoughts on the matter.

OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Dr. McIntyre made everyone aware that Denise Milledge was acting in the role of Bureau Director, and Lisa Pezent was acting in the role of Licensure and Certification State Program Director, as well as their current roles. She will email everyone's contact information and notes. Dr. Tucker and Dr. McIntyre encouraged everyone to get vaccinated for COVID-19.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for May 14, 2021.

Rodney O. Tucker, M.D., M.M.M., Chair
State Advisory Council on Palliative Care and Quality of Life

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

Approved August 20, 2021