

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
PALLIATIVE CARE AND QUALITY OF LIFE
FEBRUARY 7, 2020**

Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)
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.
Richard J. Brockman, J.D.
John P. Miller, M.D.
Mary Ann Somers, M.A.Ed.

Members Absent

John G. Beard, M.B.A.
Stormy Dismuke, M.S.N.
Jimel LeShun Gibbs, M.S.N.
Leigh Ann Matthews, M.S.N.
Timothy Mayhall, M.Div.
Amy L. McAfee, M.S.W.

Staff Present

Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H., State Health Officer
Dennis Blair, Bureau of Health Provider Standards (BHPS)
LaKeshia Hopkins, BHPS
Faye Allen, BHPS

Guests Present

Mary Ann Crow
Shelly Jeffries (Proxy for Stormy Dismuke)
Michelle Swindoll
Samika Williams (Proxy for John G. Beard)

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 22, 2019:

A quorum of the Council was not present, therefore, a vote on the Minutes of November 22, 2019, was postponed until the next meeting.

OPIOID PRESCRIBING AND REGULATION UPDATES:

Dr. Gregory Ayers informed the members that there were no acute items at the time to present. He discussed an article on AL.com that stated Alabama was still number one in opioid

prescriptions, but that it does not mean that Alabama was number one in opioids altogether. He also reported that the Legislative Session had just begun.

Dr. Karen Marlowe stated that she became aware of two bills last week regarding opioids. One bill would ask all prescribers of opioids to provide education about addiction potential, and the other would limit opioid prescriptions. Dr. Scott Harris confirmed with Dr. Marlowe that the bill regarding education about addiction potential was unsuccessful last year. Dr. Ayers stated that there was already a rule in place stating that every practitioner shall provide his or her patient with risk education prior to initiating controlled substances therapy and prior to continuing controlled substances therapy initiated by another practitioner.

TRANSPORTABLE ORDERS FOR PATIENT PREFERENCES UPDATE:

Ms. Mary Ann Crow shared the revised form from the National Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment that can be used across the United States. Alabama hopes to have a face-to-face meeting in April, the date and location to be determined. Ms. Crow and Ms. Angie Cameron-Smith from the Alabama Nursing Home Association (ANHA) spoke about using the form with the portable Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR).

Ms. Cameron-Smith reported that there are still many issues with nursing homes accepting the form and that some nursing homes are not even using the portable DNAR. Mr. Richard Brockman offered to consult with any facility that is reluctant to use the form.

It was suggested that this topic be a focal point at the ANHA Conference on April 29 – May 1, in Gulf Shores. Dr. Tucker suggested that Mr. Dennis Blair give a brief report from the conference at the next Council meeting.

AD HOC WORKGROUP:

During the December 2019 meeting of the Council, Dr. Tucker reminded the Council that

it was moving into its fourth year and he felt the Council should look at some type of public awareness or communication initiative that would be public and provider-based and would initiate conversations around serious illness.

Following the December meeting, Dr. Tucker, Dr. Harris, Mr. Blair, Dr. John Miller, Ms. Rosemary Blackmon and Ms. Margaret Borders (Alabama Hospital Association), and Dr. Richard Beverly (Blue Cross Blue Shield) met to brainstorm regarding the initiative. The result of that meeting was that it might be appropriate for the Council to establish a workgroup to analyze the feasibility of having a statewide communication initiative that would include multiple stakeholders. Dr. Harris informed Dr. Tucker that, as the chair, he could create an ad hoc workgroup at any time, and it did not have to be an action item for the Council.

The Council discussed composition of the workgroup and decided the workgroup would consist of the following: a member of the Council, a member of ADPH, a representative of Blue Cross Blue Shield, a representative of the Alabama Hospital Association, a representative of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, a representative of AHNA, a representative of the Alabama Assisted Living Association, and a person to represent patients and families.

The Council discussed the purpose, composition, promotion, pricing, and resources of the initiative. Dr. Tucker stated that Blue Cross Blue Shield was interested in providing resources for the initiative; however, there needed to be a partnership among academics, ADPH, providers, and nursing homes. Following this discussion, the following was suggested:

- The initiative would be called the Alabama Conversation Project, with conversations around serious illness being the product.
- Promotion of the Alabama Conversation Project would be through U.S. mail, social media outlets such as Facebook and Instagram, professional newsletters, and

ADPH promotional channels (printed materials, social media, TV studios, teleconferences, video conferences, etc.). Short videos could be produced for hospitals to show patients during the discharge planning process and for physicians to show patients in their waiting rooms.

- A panel and a Q&A session could be held at next year's Summit. Ms. Crow stated that if the Council developed a website for the Alabama Conversation Project, e-mails could be sent out twice a year or even quarterly. Academic settings were mentioned as a venue to reach providers, to include future providers.
- Funding for the project could potentially be obtained from Blue Cross Blue Shield, ADPH, the Alabama Public Health Association (which is separate from ADPH), the Alabama Hospital Association, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Due to the Summit being held, the Council will not meet in May. Therefore, the next meeting of the Council is scheduled for August 7, 2020.

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

Dennis Blair, Director
Bureau of Health Provider Standards
Alabama Department of Public Health

Approved November 13, 2020