



Center of Excellence in Addiction Newsletter – June 2024

Welcome to the South Carolina Center of Excellence in Addiction’s June 2024 newsletter! As the summer heats up, so do our opportunities to connect. The Center is actively planning meetings, training and educational events, and resources to help support you in your work to address opioid and substance use disorder in our state. In this issue, you can learn more about educational engagements we are hosting, be introduced to one of our Advisory Board members and a new diversion program in South Carolina, and see the opportunities and resources we have in store for summer.

Upcoming Center of Excellence Meetings and Educational Events

- A. **[Join our ECHO sessions!](#)** The South Carolina Community Opioid Response Initiatives (CORI) ECHO is a virtual, biweekly meeting that offers a space for county/municipal leaders, their local partnering organizations, and local drug and alcohol treatment providers to learn together and share their experiences around opioid abatement strategies. We have some great speakers and topics lined up for you:
- **[June 29](#)** – **[COE Data Analytics and the Myrtle Beach approach to expanding the continuum of care.](#)** Join us to hear from Dr. Christina Andrews of the University of South Carolina about how our data analysis can support your work and Michelle Smith, Myrtle Beach Opioid Program Coordinator, who will discuss how Myrtle Beach’s innovative approach can decrease overdose rates and increase access to resources.
 - **[July 12](#)** – **[Police and Recovery Collaboration.](#)** How can local police partner with recovery community organizations for post-overdose response? We will hear from the Mount Pleasant Police Department and WakeUp Carolina about their program to do just that.
 - **[July 26](#)** – **[Harm Reduction.](#)** Looking to understand more about evidence basis and implementation of harm reduction strategies? Drs. Katie McCormick and Kasey Claborn of the University of Texas – Austin will be presenting on this topic.

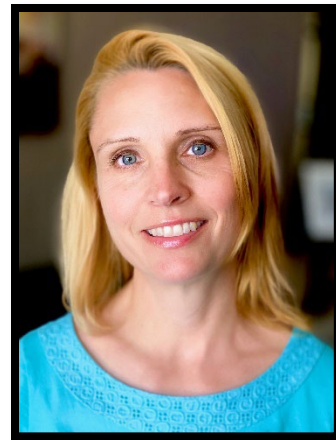
To register for these sessions, [follow this link to create an iECHO account.](#) For assistance with registration or for more details, please email papa@musc.edu, or see this [guidance document.](#)

- B. **[Webinar: Peer-to-Peer Provider Supports for OUD/SUD in South Carolina.](#)** Join us on **August 14 at noon** for a lunch-and-learn webinar about the new Clinician Warmline for OUD/SUD and the Mom’s IMPACTT program. Both South Carolina-based tools make peer-to-peer consultation available to clinicians and providers in our state. Experts from Center of Excellence partner organizations – Michelle Strong, DNP, MSN, FNP-BC, CARN-AP, of Prisma Health, and Connie Guille, MD, of the Medical University of South Carolina – will provide a deep dive into how clinicians can access this kind of consultation support when working with individuals with OUD/SUD. [Register here!](#)

Featured News and Updates from the Center

- C. **Meet [Advisory Board](#) member Melanie Matney!** The Center of Excellence is guided by the input of a 25-member Advisory Board composed of leaders in addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery. We are adding a new feature to this newsletter to introduce those members and learn a bit more about what they do to address OUD/SUD in South Carolina. In this issue, we are learning a bit more about Melanie Matney, System Chief Operating Officer of the S.C. Hospital Association (SCHA) and President of the SCHA Foundation. As a healthcare leader, Melanie says that what she enjoys most about her role is making a difference each day with hospitals and their patients across the state.

Originally from Pikeville, Ky., as the child of an Air Force family, Melanie has lived in South Carolina since 1993. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in health administration from the University of South Carolina, and she is a fellow with the American College of Healthcare Executives. She has served on several boards and held a variety of staff positions, and she has been with the SCHA since 2008. She serves South Carolina hospitals as president of the SCHA Foundation and the system chief operating officer for the association. Her husband, Kevin, and her children, Caroline and Davis, are lights in her life, and she enjoys boating, landscaping, basketball, tennis, and running.



Asked about the SCHA's role in addressing OUD/SUD, Melanie identified this work as a primary issue for her organization and noted a current initiative to enhance crisis care in our state: "Behavioral health – including substance abuse – is a top priority for SCHA. We're driven to improve care processes across the continuum of care for patients and hospitals throughout the state. One area of focus, in partnership with the S.C. Department of Health and Human Services and several other organizations, is development of a learning collaborative to help hospitals in their development of Emergency Psychiatry Assessment, Treatment, and Healing (EmPATH) units. Adjacent to emergency departments, where patients often present in behavioral health crisis, EmPATH units provide quick behavioral health care in a calming environment."

- D. **New Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) programs in South Carolina.** The S.C. Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) was recently awarded a \$7 million federal grant to fund law enforcement diversion programs across the state as a result of collaboration with Center of Excellence in Addiction partners, including the Clemson University Center for Addiction and Mental Health Research (CAMHR). Alongside DAODAS, a Clemson University evaluation team, and the LEAD Support Bureau, CAMHR is leading technical assistance efforts in six diverse cities and counties in South Carolina. First implemented in Seattle in 2011, LEAD is a collaborative effort to offer a pre-arrest, pre-bookings solution, focusing on diverting individuals with behavioral health needs away from the criminal justice system and toward comprehensive support services. The primary role of CAMHR is to provide technical assistance, coordinate trainings through the LEAD Support Bureau, and facilitate a peer-to-peer learning collaborative among the six sites. At present, CAMHR and the LEAD Support Bureau are meeting with representatives from each participating site to discuss and refine their vision for their unique

city/county. CAMHR is also facilitating connections to critical resources provided by the Center of Excellence. Learn more [here](#).

- E. **An update on xylazine scheduling from Center of Excellence partner, Dr. Ed Simmer, Director of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).** Xylazine, also known by the street name “tranq,” is a powerful central nervous system depressant that has recently become a popular drug of abuse. Xylazine has been used appropriately by veterinarians for many years to sedate animals under their care, especially large animals like horses and cows. Unfortunately, over the past several years it has increasingly been used as a drug of abuse. Xylazine depresses respiration and consciousness, and as a result, can cause death. It has caused or contributed to over 100 deaths/year in South Carolina over the past two years. It is an alpha-2-adrenergic agonist, not an opiate, and therefore Narcan is not effective; there is no antidote for xylazine approved for use in humans. The only treatment available is supportive in nature.

Xylazine is not a controlled substance at the federal level and is very inexpensive, according to some reports selling for as little as \$20/kilogram. Because it is not controlled, law enforcement has limited power to prevent its sale and trafficking. Due to its low cost and lack of control, it is often used by drug dealers to “cut” other drugs. For example, fentanyl and illicit stimulants often are found cut with xylazine, since it is much less expensive than those drugs. This leads to many people ingesting xylazine without knowing it. Of note, it is often used by smoking, inhaling, and most commonly, injection, which can lead to severe skin ulcers. Left untreated, these can result in severe outcomes such as scarring, necrosis, and even amputation.

Thankfully, on May 20, 2024, Governor Henry McMaster signed H.B. 4617, which makes xylazine a schedule III drug in South Carolina, giving law enforcement more tools to prevent its sale in the state. This law exempts legitimate veterinary use, so it will not impair needed treatment of large animals. DHEC Drug Control is working with law enforcement agencies across the state to reduce the illegal supply of this drug and to reduce the harm, including deaths, it is causing in South Carolina. We are also working with partners to educate people about the risk of this substance.

Opportunities

- F. **[Funding opportunity alert!](#)** The Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE) recently released a Request for Proposals for its Opioid Crisis Innovation Challenge 2024. Proposals are encouraged to demonstrate “outside the box” thinking, bring together approaches from diverse fields, and engage cross-sector teams focused on innovative payment models, workforce development, and supporting the transition from treatment to recovery. [Review the RFP and learn how to apply.](#)
- G. **Interested in working with the Center of Excellence as a [Technical Assistance provider](#)?** We are always happy to grow our ranks of qualified experts to help deliver technical assistance! If you would like to be considered, please [complete this survey](#), and we may reach out to you as we work to address needs throughout the state. Potential technical assistance activities include providing education on addiction and related topics, strategic planning and infrastructure development, identifying and implementing evidence-based programming and services, grant/proposal writing, program evaluation, and assessing and reporting outcomes. Technical assistance experts working with the Center are offered administrative scheduling assistance and compensation for their time when applicable.

Center of Excellence Resources – Connect with Us!

- **Clinician Warmline:** Practitioners can call **864-914-1301** between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, for free, confidential, clinician-to-clinician consultation on substance use evaluation and management. Expert South Carolina-based physicians and advanced practice nurses are available for consultations on a range of topics.
- **Technical Assistance:** Our technical assistance team is available to provide South Carolina-led support on how communities can address OUD/SUD. Our expertise covers a wide range of topics – data collection and management; prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives; and much more. As you are thinking through your local design and implementation efforts, let us know how we can help. Our free consultation and referral to technical experts is open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. [View the list of topics and connect with us here](#), or e-mail camhr@clemsun.edu with your request details!
- **Our Website:** www.addictioncenterofexcellence.sc.gov
- **Socials:** Follow the South Carolina Center of Excellence in Addiction on LinkedIn and @SCAddictionCoE on X for real-time updates, information, and resource announcements!
- Questions? Comments? Ideas? E-mail our Executive Director, Jodi Manz, at jmanz@daodas.sc.gov.

Look for this newsletter each quarter to stay up to date on the Center's work, find out about upcoming educational opportunities, and learn about new and developing opioid use disorder/substance use disorder (OUD/SUD) resources. Missed a newsletter? No problem – [archived versions](#) are available on our website. If you are not already on our subscription list, please subscribe here: <https://addictioncenterofexcellence.sc.gov/form/news-letter-sign-up>