



COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND WELL-BEING

November 2, 2023

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Bryan, Amy, Chair	Mistry, Bhagwati J. (9)
Bohlin, Dennis (NY), Education Coordinator	Noroozi-Leibowitz, Katayoon (N)
Buccigrossi, Philip (2)	Fialkoff, Bernard (Q)
Duda, Lawrence (3)	Pruden, Peter (S)
McCambley, John (4)	Safferstein, Don (B)
Rosinski, Stanley (5)	Herzog, Robert, Peer Assistance Coordinator
Lucia, Thomas (6)	Vacant, ASDA Representative
Burgart, Stephen (7)	Skelton, Michelle, New Dentist Representative
Mahoney, Timothy (8)	

The Committee on Substance Abuse and Well-Being met on Thursday, November 2, 2023, at NYSDA. All members attended with the exception of Drs. Rosinski, Lucia, Noroozi-Leibowitz and Fialkoff. Ms. Betsy Bray, Director, Health Affairs, and Ms. Jacquie Donnelly, Manager, Health Affairs, were also in attendance.

Dr. Bryan called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. She then asked for a motion to adopt the minutes from the Committee's meeting held on May 19, 2023. Following a motion by Dr. Burgart and seconded by Dr. Herzog, the minutes were adopted as written by unanimous consent.

Chair Report

Dr. Bryan reviewed the written report she provided. She encouraged members to contact her with any concerns or questions. Dr. Bryan stressed the importance of attending component meetings to stay visible and available to members. Attendance at the IDAA and NEPG meetings was encouraged as well. Dr. Bryan reported that the Sullivan Fund currently has a balance of approximately \$45,000.

Education Coordinator Report

Dr. Bohlin reported on the lectures he presented at Touro College (with Dr. Mistry), NYU, Columbia Medical College and SUNY Buffalo. Dr. Skelton will assist him with scheduling a lecture at Columbia College of Dental Medicine. A presentation is planned in April 2024 at the New York County Dental Society.

The Committee discussed how to encourage attendees at presentations/lectures to reach out for assistance with substance abuse or mental health concerns. The development of a questionnaire given after Dr. Bohlin's lectures, which could be completed anonymously, may give someone the opportunity to come forward. Dr. Mistry suggested making resources available from the American Dental Association. Ms. Donnelly mentioned updating the palm card that the Committee had always handed out in the past.

ADA Health and Well Being Summit Report

Drs. Mistry and Bryan discussed the purpose of the ADA Council on Dental Practice's Dental Team Wellness Advisory Committee (DWAC) and the development of the ADA Wellness Ambassador Program created in 2022. Dr. Mistry explained that Wellness Ambassadors hold one-year appointments and are divided into two groups. The Ambassadors are charged with developing programs or activities to make dentists aware of available mental health and substance abuse resources within their state.

Drs. Herzog and Mistry and Ms. Donnelly reported on their attendance at the Summit. A written report was provided as well. Dr. Herzog reported on one of the panel discussions highlighting the physician model, the Federation of State Physician Health Programs (FSPHP). The mission of the FSPHP is to "support physician health programs in improving the health of medical professionals, thereby contributing to quality patient care." The FSPHP would like state dental programs to join the Federation. Dr. Herzog explained that they have been working to reform state licensure questions that ask about past mental health diagnoses and treatment. These types of questions often result in higher insurance premiums for the dentist. The FSPHP, along with organized medicine, has been successful in removing these questions from license applications and credentialing forms in 26 states for physicians and physician assistants.

Ms. Donnelly discussed Resolution 517, passed at the ADA HOD meeting, which directs the ADA to create a pilot project to assist a limited number of states develop legislation that prevents discrimination in licensing and/or credentialing against dentists who have received counseling, therapy, or treatment for mental health issues. The resolution further directs the ADA to develop a toolkit for use by other state associations.

Component Activity

Members reported on activities in their components and the dentists they are currently assisting.

Dr. Bohlin mentioned that he is working with a dentist who could possibly succeed him on the Committee and would like to invite him to the spring meeting. Dr. Mistry is conducting a one-hour "lunch and learn" yoga course on November 9 sponsored by the Ninth District. She is also conducting several wellness courses at the Greater New York Dental Meeting. Dr. Mistry would like to offer a "lunch and learn" course to the dental schools. Dr. Safferstein reported that he has published some mental health articles and information about the Committee in his component newsletter.

Peer Assistance Coordinator Report

Dr. Herzog reported on the dentists he and members of the Committee have been assisting. He spoke of a referral received from the Committee for Physician Health about the wife of a surgeon

who was a dental anesthesiologist and was abusing Propofol. Unfortunately, the dentist refused Dr. Herzog's offer of treatment and subsequently died of an overdose.

He then gave a report of the NYS Professional Assistance Program's (PAP) meeting held in September. The PAP hearing panel now includes three dentists – himself, Dr. Stephen Burgart and Dr. Richard Goliber. Dr. Herzog pointed out that the PAP is New York's diversion program for all healthcare workers with the exception of physicians, who have their own program. The addition of 3 dentists to the hearing panel allows for dentists to be better represented. There has been an increase in both dentists and nurses in the PAP over the years.

New Business

Committee's Relationship with the NYS Education Department (SED)

Dr. Herzog discussed the cases of three dentists with substance abuse problems that he tried to assist. All declined proposed treatment recommendations and assistance. Dr. Herzog said he is concerned that these dentists could be treating patients while impaired and are a potential danger to not only their patients, but to themselves as well.* He proposed adopting a new internal policy for the Committee to refer dentists (who are in grave danger of inflicting harm) to the State Education Department for intervention.

The group discussed strategies to work with dentists and SED in cases of extreme drug/alcohol abuse.

Well-Being Referrals

Ms. Bray and Ms. Donnelly spoke of their research into two organizations that provide mental health resources and counseling as a possible member benefit.

Component Website Visibility

Ms. Donnelly stressed the importance of including information about the Committee and contact information on the members' component websites, including a link to NYSDA's website for additional information. She said she researched every component website and found the majority did not have information available for their members. She provided the members with a template for use on their component website and/or in their component newsletter. Ms. Donnelly urged the members to speak to their component executive director and said she planned to as well.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

Adjournment

Following a motion by Dr. Buccigrossi and seconded by Dr. Safferstein, the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

* Two dentists subsequently died from their disease.