Name of Committee: **Substance Use Prevention Subcommittee**

Chair: Laura Mitchell Phone: (410) 422 – 2694 Committee Email:

Vice Chair: Phone:

Communication (e-list, etc): N/A

**SUBCOMMITTEES / WORK GROUPS** (if applicable): None/TBD

**GOALS & OBJECTIVES**: Educate families, students, and the community at large about substance use prevalence, risks and ways to prevent substance use among students. Advocate for services for students who have substance use issues and help ensure the continuation of recovery academic programs.

**Substance Use Prevention Subcommittee Activities**

The Substance Use Prevention Subcommittee continues to partner with several outside groups and agencies toward prevention efforts and to address current substance use by MCPS students.

Committee work:

* Working to assemble resources to supplement the “Protect Your Family” initiative on the MCCPTA website. The objective is to educate parents and guardians about the unseen dangerous substances in their homes and provide tips for creating and maintaining a safe space and healthy habits for their teens and tweens to help reduce the temptation and opportunity to use substances. Eliminating, or at least reducing, the availability of these substances during periods of stress reduces the risk of turning to substances on an impulse or out of boredom and curiosity. The supplemental resources will provide more in depth information on each topic covered and resources to find help when needed.
* The presentation is in the folder and you are encouraged to share it widely. Most every parent that has seen it has said they hadn’t thought to do one or more of the actions shown.

Montgomery County Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council (AODAAC):

Attended monthly Council meeting as the MCCPTA representative. We continue to see increases in fatal and non-fatal overdoses during COVID-19. Stressors, lack of access to care as many treatment centers refuse new patients, and support meetings switched from in person to virtual.

* The Prevention subcommittee recommended, and the Council approved,

Parents Against Vaping E-Cigarettes (PAVe)

* Spoke with Linda Willard from the Maryland pod of PAVe about ways to collaborate to provide education on the dangers of vaping to students and parents and provide information on how we can advocate for laws that ban flavored vapes at the local, state and federal levels of government. We are working to schedule a date for a webinar, perhaps an MCCPTA Presents event, for Montgomery County.

Opioid Intervention Task Force (OIT):

* The group continues to work with local pharmacies to distribute Deterra drug deactivation kits and information pamphlets to patients prescribed opiates. The kits neutralize left over opiates and make them safe to dispose of in the trash. This keeps these dangerous drugs out of the house where they can be accessed and misused by teens. This group also does community education. We are working on more partnerships with local pharmacies to distribute free packages of Deterra with opioid prescriptions, as we did with Safeway pharmacies last year.
* The OIT group has now combined with the Many Voices, Smart Choices group to streamline our efforts to strengthen and support prevention, treatment and recovery in Montgomery County. The Recovery Academic Program (RAP) is also a part of this effort. This program is funded my MCPS and provides a safe learning environment and substance use recovery programing for MCPS students continuing their education after treatment.
* Because there is an inextricable link between mental health, substance use, and increased risk of suicide, a Suicide Prevention group is forming from the members of the above-named groups. We are a part of that effort as well.

*Parity and Equity Coalition, Legal Action Center*:

* The most pressing issue for this group is fair and equitable coverage of mental health and substance use treatment via telemedicine by insurance companies and Medicaid. This is proving particularly challenging for audio only, or telephone only, appointments. It is a safety concern and an equity issue for patients who do not have access to internet services and devices needed for an online visit but cannot get in person visits at this time.
* The group began discussing the legislative priorities for the 2021 Maryland General Assembly session which includes the continuation of coverage for telemed services post-COVID-19 and balance billing issues (when a provider tries to bill the patient for the balance after insurance payments, often in violation of their provider agreements). We will continue our work to eliminate the barriers to SUD and mental health treatment that insurance companies continue to erect, in violation of the Mental Health Parity and Substance Use Equity Act. The Chair has joined the legislative committee to advocate for bills that will provide adequate care and insurance coverage for mental health and substance use treatments in Maryland.
* The PEC is attending the Maryland Insurance Commission meetings to ensure that insurance companies are accountable to their customers for maintaining an adequate network of providers for mental health and substance use disorders to serve their subscribers without excessive wait times.

*MCPS:*

* The Chair worked with Dr. Christina Conolly, NCSP, the Director of Psychological Services to record an upcoming installment of the MCPS Waymaking series. The episode features Ed Clarke, Chief Safety Officer at MCPS and myself discussing the risks outlined in the “Protect Your Family” slide deck. It will be released on October 28th and be pushed out to all MCPS schools and families. That video was a part of the Mental Health Awareness week and can be viewed here: [https://youtu.be/EOolPxmQ6EU](https://youtu.be/EOolPxmQ6EU?fbclid=IwAR2Urp6fjiMOg8DT2Z1aUYFgaAkyaUAPwpILnlDgrEW9fEvH_Dp_OtrTuvU)
* I continue to work with OSFSE on the implementation of [Handle With Care](https://handlewithcaremd.org/), a program that has first responders notify school officials when a school aged child is present at a scene to which they responded. The school is then able to meet with the child with a trauma informed approach to assess the level of trauma (if any) experienced and to provide or refer the family for trauma informed care. Addressing childhood Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) in a timely and effective manner is a very important step toward reducing the risk of future. Studies have shown that more than 80% of individuals treated for substance use experienced at least one ACE and most went unaddressed.
* Local police departments are starting to put this initiative into practice, informally. We are working to ensure that privacy and other critical components of the HWC program are happening with fidelity, even in the informal practice. A pilot of Handle With Care was slated to begin in September, however, that was delayed due to COVID-19 and distance learning. I feel strongly that this the very time we need this program the most. We know that reports of child abuse and neglect are down substantially because students are not in school being seen or able to reach out for help. If MCPS were made aware of calls for service to the home, for whatever reason, their follow up outreach might reveal the students’ need for help.
* Reviewing and providing input on the new MCPS substance use plan/policy.
* We have been asked, and have agreed, to participate in the planning of Anti-Vaping Symposium with MCPS & MCCPTA.