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:

* Created the “Protect Your Family” initiative 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 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 the October 1st MHAC’s, AODAAC’s & Citizen Review Panel’s Virtual Fall Forum: Many Pathways to Family Recovery which included a resource fair and Substance Use & Mental Health Recovery Pathways speakers from Tree of Hope and Sheppard Pratt.
* Attended monthly Council meeting and discussed the 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, the adoption of the “Protect Your Family” initiative as one of the Council’s priorities for the year. AODAAC will feature the presentation on their website and link to MCCPTA’s website for additional supports and resources.

MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

* Partnered with MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) to promote the “Protect Your Family” initiative and provide additional resources for the support page. These include the [Power of You(th)](https://powerofyouth.com/) and [Power of Parents](https://www.madd.org/the-solution/power-of-parents/) alcohol education and information booklets linked here. They may be interested in being a page sponsor on MCCPTA.org.

Opioid Intervention Task Force (OIT):

* The C.O.P.E. trailer to educate community members on the signs of substance use, particularly youth use in the home, is a mock teen bedroom and bathroom which allows for guided tours to adults who are shown some of the places illicit substances could be hidden in a typical room, what some of those substances look like and resources to access if they suspect use. The C.O.P.E. trailer made its debut at the Mental Health and Wellness forum in January 2020. Plans to have the trailer at the Delegates meeting and local schools were put on hold due to COVID-19 but will resume when possible. In the interim, the group is working on a virtual tour option.
* 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.
* 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.

*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.

*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.
* 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.
* 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.