

Draft Minutes
MSSNY
Committee on Addiction and Psychiatric Medicine
October 16, 2020
8:30 AM

Present

Janine Fogarty, MD Asst. Commissioner
Stephen Hermele, MD Chair
Marvin S. Rabinowitz, MD Vice-Chair
Scott Breidbart, MD
Gregory Bunt, MD
Frank Dowling, MD
Lynda Hohman, MD
Nina Huberman, MD
Glenn Martin, MD
Jeffrey Selzer, MD
Norman Wetterau, MD
Barbara Ellman, Alliance

Absent

Subhash Chandra, MD
Laurence, Epstein, MD
Manassa Hany, MD
Paul Haffey, MD
Brian Johnson, MD
Hemant Kalia, MD
Russell Kamer, MD
Leslie Marino, MD
Darvin Varon, MD
Anar Yukhayev, MD
David Kerling, Student

Excused

Joshua Cohen, MD Commissioner

Staff

Patricia Clancy, Sr. Vice-President Public Health Education and Managing Director Governmental Affairs
Maureen Ramirez, Administrative Asst.

Invited Guest

Bonnie Litvack, MD President

- 1 **1) Welcome**
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3 **2) Approval of May 1, 2020 Minutes – approved with edits submitted by Dr. Hohman**
4 **and Dr. Hermele**
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6 **3) AMA Opioid Task Force Report and the Cannabis Task Force – Dr Dowling reporting –**
7 The report summarizes that over the last several years there has been a huge increase in
8 use of the PDMP, which is used universally in New York because of due to pressure of
9 the reporting law. The report indicates that there has been an increase in stimulant
10 related overdose deaths and a shift from heroin to fentanyl. Also, a shift to heroin and
11 stimulants are on the rise. There is a great increase in the number of people certified to
12 prescribe buprenorphine. Along with this increase, in New York anyone can go into a
13 pharmacy and get a two-pack of Narcan intranasal without a prescription. The AMA is
14 still keeping track of the PMP's nationally. A question was asked "has the AMA taken a
15 position regarding treatment via telehealth since more of this is being done during the
16 pandemic? There's concern that the DEA may pull that back. The belief is that the AMA
17 is supportive of maintaining the inroads that have been made regarding telehealth. Dr.
18 Litvack mentioned that both the AMA and MSSNY have been very active in preserving
19 the advances that have been made in the area of telehealth. Dr. Dowling stated that
20 there is a push throughout the medicine with physicians to maintain telehealth,
21 particularly within addiction medicine, as it increases access to patient care. There is
22 concern that telehealth might create a situation where patients won't feel the need to
23 physically see the treating physician. This is a concern that MSSNY, the AMA and

24 NYSPA are keeping an eye on. Another concern mentioned, is that law enforcement has
25 known for quite some time that the pills involved in overdoses are often not pills that are
26 prescribed by physicians. Yet this information is not brought to light, certainly to the
27 detriment of physicians. Unfortunately, there is no way during the tox screen to
28 determine whether the fentanyl came from a prescription or whether it was manufactured
29 on the street. It's only within the last four or five years that law enforcement is openly
30 trying to determine where the drugs that resulted in the arrest came from.
31 It was discussed that China has declared fentanyl and all its analogues illegal. Isn't there an
32 opportunity here to get the government to put pressure on the Chinese government to deal
33 with the origin of the fentanyl and clamp down on it? Dr. Dowling indicated perhaps it's a
34 question that should be brought to the AMA Opioid Task Force.
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36 **4) Newly formed AMA Cannabis Task Force** –Pat Clancy advised the committee that the
37 AMA has created a new task force called the Cannabis Task Force. It came about from
38 a resolution last year. Dr. Joshua Cohen who is a Commissioner of Public Health and
39 Education at MSSNY, has been appointed by the leadership at MSSNY to serve on that
40 task force. The purpose of the AMA's task force is to evaluate and disseminate relevant
41 scientific information to health care providers and to the public. The task force had its
42 first meeting last night. This task force is supposed to work hand in hand with the Opioid
43 Task Force and the Pain Task Force that the AMA has. It is important to note that
44 MSSNY is one of the few medical societies that has a representative on the task force,
45 and a representative on the AMA Opioid Task Force. Question – will the task force look
46 at cannabis on the streets and not just the medical cannabis? People are using
47 marijuana that are laced with opioids and stimulants. Discussion followed regarding
48 marijuana in the treatment of Opioid Disorder. The first meeting of the Cannabis Task
49 Force was mainly an opportunity for everyone to become familiar with what the task
50 force has been charged to do. The task force will be evaluating information and getting it to
51 the health care providers and the public. The task force has not been charged with
52 looking into policy and making recommendations. They are going to look and see what
53 states are doing and what scientific evidence they relied on to change the law or move
54 forward with the legalization of recreational marijuana. In addition to the healthcare
55 aspects, Dr. Cohen spoke about the impact that legalization has had on crime and motor
56 vehicle accidents and wants the task force to look into the public health implications of
57 legalization too. ASAM has a new policy regarding legalization. It is clear that ASAM
58 does not support legalization of marijuana. ASAM supports decriminalization but has set
59 forth several requirements that should be followed if it becomes legal in a state. Very
60 few states that have legalized are following any of ASAM's recommendations. ASAM
61 has also been clear that it is not useful but can be harmful for use in Opiate Use
62 Disorder. In 2018 the governor's office asked MSSNY about reducing harm should
63 legalization occur. MSSNY came out with a statement regarding how NYS can mitigate
64 the public health impact. The statement from ASAM is on its website and will be
65 distributed to the committee. There was discussion regarding rescheduling of marijuana.
66 The Council for Science and Public Health has done another report that would come
67 before the AMA's interim meeting. This committee should look at that report. Pat Clancy
68 mentioned the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use. Pat indicated that the quest to
69 legalize recreational marijuana continues in the Senate and The Assembly. Many are
70 looking at this as a source of possible revenue for the state. While legalization may not
71 occur this year it most likely will be a 2021 budget issue. It will require vigilance and
72 diligence going forward.
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74 **5) Consolidation of OMH and OASAS** - Both these agencies are exploring possibly
75 merging into one state behavioral agency. GNYHA has long advocated for this
76 integration to improve patient experience, improve treatment outcomes and reducing
77 costs. An effort had been proposed three or four years ago and they lost interest in it.
78 OASAS Commissioner Arlene Sanchez and OMH Commissioner Ann Sullivan will be on
79 the listening tour panel. The concern expressed is that this type of merger historically is
80 very detrimental to the addiction side. It seems that mental health gobbles up resources.
81 Advocacy is much stronger on the mental health side than the addiction side. The state is
82 facing a tremendous deficit as a result of COVID 19. The feeling is that anything the
83 state can do to consolidate agencies and save money they're going to do. Dr. Selzer is
84 trying to gather analyses from other states where this merger has taken place. The hope
85 is they will provide a framework that addiction services will not be adversely affected by
86 the merger. New Jersey was mentioned as where addiction treatment was not adversely
87 affected. NYSAM will be taking a look at it as well. Hope that with the merger, the
88 agencies would operate as two distinct agencies, but under one agency head. This is a
89 good opportunity for NYSPA, NYSAM and MSSNY to get together and put together a list
90 of bullet points. A committee member agreed that this was a good idea and that a list of
91 bullet points should be developed. It was agreed that best way to proceed is to see what
92 NYSPA and NYSAM are going to do, then share those points with MSSNY.

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94 **6) 2021 Committee Dates** – February 19th, May 7th and October 22nd.

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96 **7) Adjourned**