

From: Brian Lowe [brian@burlingtonvt.gov]
Sent: Thursday, December 24, 2015 1:54 PM
To: Donovan, Thomas; Allen, Susan; Chen, Harry
CC: Kaulius, Jennifer; Brandon del Pozo
Subject: Follow up on yesterday's meeting

Dr. Chen, T.J., Sue –

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with the Mayor and Chief del Pozo yesterday, and for all your help organizing & hosting previous meetings as well.

The Mayor asked that I follow up on three points, as he is on board for a short planning effort over the next couple weeks intended to evaluate and appropriately resource this initiative.

First, we have a Council meeting on 1/11 at which we are committed to providing the public and Council an update on the opiate situation here in Burlington. The events of the last couple months and even the last 48 hours really underscore how critical that report will be, and the Mayor would like to be in a position to outline State support for this initiative as it is critical to our report and plan for action within the City.

Second, he wants to be clear that he does believe this effort will require a 3-person team embedded in the police department and reporting to the Chief. Certainly, he is open to having someone from a different State agency filling one or more of those spots, but T.J.'s analysis that the team has to be singularly focused on this one issue for it to be successful was well taken yesterday (when T.J. tried to do something similar without any new resources, the person tasked with the assignment was constantly distracted).

And third, the Mayor wanted to lay out our diagnosis explicitly in an email, as the diagnosis underlies the proposal we are making and he wants to make sure you understand where we are coming from and have an opportunity to engage us if you disagree with the analysis below.

1. We agree some information exists on the opiate challenge we are facing, in no small part because of the efforts of the Governor, T.J., and many others.
2. The information that does exist is vested in different agencies at the State and local level. It is not well coordinated - not all stakeholders who need that information have access to all of it, and often that access is ad hoc or by request (there is not a system of regular updates to relevant stakeholders). Further, information sharing is not successful when it is done ad-hoc among only heads of various agencies.
3. Some information is missing (for example, it took months for our small task force group to all come to a shared understanding of how many people were on the active waitlist).
4. Acquiring and sharing this information is vital to deciding what kind of interventions would be most effective and making sure appropriate preventative action is taken (i.e., Bob is getting out of jail in 2 weeks. He is a heroin user who has tried to get clean. He does not have shelter when he leaves prison, etc.)
5. The lack of a coordinated system for sharing information about the opiate epidemic is a symptom of the underlying problem of lack of a clear "leader" of the effort. This is different than the leadership the Governor and T.J. have done to bring attention and resources to this

problem already. A “leader” in this context we define as someone able to direct some meaningful amount of the resources of different agencies (with different funding streams, responsibilities, agendas, and constituencies) in order to help (i) gather info, (ii) direct / conduct analysis, and (iii) set priorities / metrics for measurement (not necessary leading or controlling the ensuing operations), and (iv) hold people to account - "you said you could help us identify the number of people who do XX last week, but you have not yet delivered and this is something we need to better inform our decision-making...etc." In the model we have discussed, this leader is Commissioner Chen, sitting with Chief del Pozo at the VT equivalent of Compstat meetings.

Please let me know what you think. Many thanks again for your help and time here, and Sue I will follow up to your separate logistical email with Commissioner Chen’s scheduler.

Thank you,
Brian

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