Board Newsletter

May 2023

Insights for the Quarter

Volume 6 of the Share Health Southeast Georgia Board of Directors newsletter includes updates on Share Health Staff, Board Members, and events as well as the emerging public health issue, Xylazine. The next board meeting will be held Tuesday, May 9th at 5:30 pm in Baxley, GA.

Board Member Updates

Greenleaf Behavioral Health Hospital hosted a Mental Health Resource Fair Saturday, March 4th at the Valdosta Mall. Community members were invited out to speak with vendors to find out more information about mental health. Jamayla Morehead, Share Health Board member, would like to thank all the vendors for participating in the Community Mental Health Resource Fair. Greenleaf's goal is to continue to educate the public about mental illness, raise awareness surrounding research and treatments, and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. We look forward to more mental health events for Greenleaf and all of our 16 counties.

National Crime Victims Rights' Week 5K

On Saturday April 29th, 23 enthusiastic runners lined up under the start line for the Coalition for a Healthy Appling County’s (CHAC) 2nd Annual National Crime Victims Rights’ Week 5K. The runners were joined by the Appling County Sheriff’s Office, family members of victims such as the family of Casey Nicole Davis, the Charlotte Floyd Gore staff, Share Health Southeast Georgia staff, and plenty of Sheriff deputies. Proceeds from the 5k will be donated to the Charlotte Floyd Gore Center to help support victims, and their advocates. The Somehow Related Band played upbeat music to get the runners ready to race! Before the race began, Stacy Gruber, Zariah Shaw, and Anne Jackson all read aloud the names of each victim in Appling County. It was a simple way to honor the victims and remind the families of victims that they are not forgotten. All of the runners did a fantastic job! Community Bank of Georgia’s very own CFO, Randy Hicks, came in first place. On behalf of CHAC, we would like to thank Tri County Chiropractic and Hunter Johnson ACE Hardware for their generous donation and being named our Bronze Level Sponsors. We would also like to thank Segura’s Taqueria y Tienda and Appling Christian Academy for their water station sponsorships. We would like to give a special “thank you” to the Police Chief, Jeffery Taylor, for donating extra trophies to CHAC to give to the winners and the Sheriff’s Office for providing traffic control and blue ribbons with each victims' name. CHAC is able to provide so many open doors and opportunities, and this wouldn't be possible without our volunteers. Thank you!
Share Health Staff Updates

Ayanna Parrish, our COVID19 Health Equity Navigator, will graduate from Georgia Southern University's Jiann Ping Hsu College of Public Health with her Master of Public Health degree in Health Policy & Management on Tuesday, May 9th. Originally from Atlanta, GA, Ayanna came to Share Health last April when we were awarded the COVID19 Health Equity Navigator contract to provide education and outreach to high-need communities throughout the 16-county target area regarding the efficacy of COVID19 vaccine, information, and support to access COVID19 tests and vaccines and through focus groups, interviews, and community assessment, determine the roots of vaccine hesitancy. Ayanna has supported Crista with the development of COVID19 materials, attended outreach events in our 16 counties to distribute COVID19 health education materials and test kits, managed the data collected from events and survey collection, and provided biweekly and monthly data reports to track the trends of COVID19 in our 16 target counties. Her next steps are to complete her practicum internship and obtain a job at the VA Hospital in Atlanta. Congratulations Ayanna on obtaining your MPH!!

On November 19, 2022, Ms. Florina welcomed her 7th grandbaby, a little girl named Raelynn. Though she was born 3 months prematurely and weighed 1 pound, 11 ounces, she is now home and thriving, currently weighing over 7 pounds. Congratulations to Ms. Florina and her family on their new arrival!

Grant Writing Workshop

Share Health hosted a 2.5 hour grant writing workshop in Ware County on Friday, March 3rd. This workshop was presented by Barbara Bruno. Preparing for a Successful Grant Application was the topic of the workshop. There were 14 partners in attendance from Appling, Wayne, and Ware Counties including the Coalition for a Healthy Appling County (CHAC), the DREAM Diabetes Project, the Okefenokee Alliance for the Homeless, DPH, Fairhaven Jesup, Coastal Pines, Okefenokee RESA, Action Pact, and Unison Behavioral Health. The workshop objectives were: 1) To increase knowledge of the grant writing process, 2) To understand the advantage of strategic partnerships when applying for grants, and 3) To develop an understanding of the importance of advance planning when considering applying for a grant. Partners walked away with information on the types of questions they should ask upon applying for a grant including: Does my organization have a strategic plan; how to successfully plan for a grant including identifying partners and creating a timeline; what information they should have on hand including an organizational chart and summary, and most recent local data applicable to the funding needs; evidence based programs to help address the problem or challenge the partner is trying to solve; and types and examples of potential funding sources. This is the first of 3 workshops that Share Health will host. Two additional workshops will be offered over the summer: Fundamentals of Grant Writing and Resource Development: Finding Grants and Funding. We would like to thank the Okefenokee RESA for hosting us and look forward to the next workshop!
Wayne County Recovery Coalition - DFCSP

On Saturday, April 8th, Share Health submitted the Wayne County Recovery Coalition's (WCRC) Drug Free Communities Support Program (DFCSP) grant. Share Health will serve as the fiscal agent overseeing this grant if received. During year one, the Coalition will focus on alcohol and prescription drugs as their drugs of choice and will add tobacco and vaping in year 2. Share Health is excited for this opportunity because being a DFCSP applicant will open the door to other federal grant opportunities only available for DFCSP grantees. We should hear back about our status by the end of September. The grant year typically runs from September 30th to September 29th of each year.

Emerging Public Health Issue: Xylazine

Xylazine is a non-opioid agent increasingly being found in combination with opioids such as fentanyl. Xylazine, which has not been approved by the FDA for use in humans, can cause severe circulatory changes with devastating effects on human tissue leading to painful open lesions, necrosis, and potentially limb loss. These wounds can develop in areas of the body away from the injection site and may become life-threatening. Practitioners must be aware of risks posed by xylazine and prepare to manage patients accordingly. SAMHSA has put out an alert to provide information about the consequences of xylazine exposure, what practitioners can do to mitigate harm, and how SAMHSA is responding to this emerging public health challenge. Xylazine, a veterinary tranquilizer, has been linked to an increasing number of overdose deaths. Known as “tranq” or “tranq dope” in the illicit drug market, xylazine can cause drowsiness, lethargy, and in rare instances, apnea and death. While xylazine is not an opioid, it is dangerous because it can depress breathing, blood pressure, heart rate, and body temperature to critical levels. Unfortunately, naloxone does not reverse the effects of xylazine. Routine toxicology tests do not test for xylazine, so it may therefore be under-detected and under-accounted for in overdose cases and other life-threatening events. Severe withdrawal symptoms may develop from xylazine, which are, by themselves, unlikely to be managed by medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) (i.e., methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone). Providers should consider xylazine exposure if patients are not responding to naloxone or when there are signs or symptoms of xylazine exposure (e.g., severe necrotic skin ulcerations). Any individual who is suspected of misusing substances containing xylazine, whether intentionally or not, should receive counseling about the dangers of this substance and extensive advice on harm reduction. Because xylazine is most often a contaminant with opioids, such as fentanyl, the individual should also be offered access to MOUD referrals and treatment as they can reduce opioid overdose risk. While testing remains limited at the current time, local health departments may have partnerships with toxicology laboratories that can identify xylazine in drug or biologic samples. Please contact your state and local health department for more information. Along with the Department of Health and Human Services partners, SAMHSA encourages health care professionals and patients to report adverse events resulting from possible xylazine exposure to their local health department, poison center or the American Association of Poison Control Centers at 1-800-222-1222. FDA’s MedWatch Adverse Event reporting may be completed online at www.fda.gov/medwatch.