

Georgia Poison Center Staff Meeting Minutes

Date: August 27th, 2024

1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

In Office: Gaylor Lopez, Kayla Ellis, Jason Tully, Patrick Filkins, Stephanie Hon, Tiana Witcher, Jasmine Gibson, Jill Martin, Robert Geller, Wilson Boyce, Ty Minton, Britni Overall, Matthew Dernbach, Tyler Lopachin, Tori Ehrhardt, Travis Mok, Patcha Yenjabog, Ajani Jeffrey

Remote: Donna Evans, Karen Kinan, Christina Hash, Brett Debruyn., Erika Lockhart, Perri Kern, Kimberly Capell, Alexander Rentschler, Kiet Ngo, Dionna Douglas, Sandra Riddle, Canaan Yunez, Jason Tully, Julia Heard, Miguel Velazco, Kwaku Asamoah, Darrielle Barnes, Alison Jones, Jill Martin, Crystal Proshek, Sal Hamed, Shannon Wright, Britni Overall, Christy Hallett, Jamila Hudson, Miguel Velazco

1:30 PM— Meeting Introduction/Acknowledgement—GPL, CH:

- **Acknowledgement** -Dr. Lopez welcomed the group and the group shared their heartfelt condolences to Christina Hash on the loss of her Mother.
In lieu of flowers, the team was encouraged to consider **donating to “Brew Columbanus”** in Ireland, a place like Ronald McDonald House that supported Christina and her family.
- **CH:** Shared how the organization provided affordable lodging close to the hospital, which was a blessing during a very difficult two-week stay and expressed deep gratitude for the support she received from the Poison Center Family.

1:34 PM— RTS: 0:04:10 -New Hires/Position Changes -GPL:

- **GPL:** We have a trifecta of folks celebrating their **8th GPC Anniversary, Kwaku, Karen and Erica** congratulation and thank you for **8 years of service**.
Also, we want to congratulate **Patrick for 5 years of service, Stephanie for 16 years of service** and my long tenure of **36 years of service**, as I started in the 8th month of 1988.
- Our HR consultant, Sherika Bentley, has recently resigned, and a temporary replacement, Rita Page, is helping during the transition.
We should have a new HR consultant by next month.

1:51 PM— RTS: 0:09:54 -Education Department Updates: -GLP:

- Upcoming community events include health fairs at **Town Center, on Oct. 5th**, thank you to **Donna, Kwaku and Tiaona for volunteering**.
Oct. 8th and 9th from 8am to 3pm, we have events scheduled at the airport and on **Oct. 28th we have one** scheduled in **Alpharetta from 8 to noon**.
- Then on **Oct. 28th we have a professional education class in Summerville**, Britni is working on getting CE's for SPI's. There are also ongoing developments for online courses related to cannabis and naloxone.
- In **September** we will focus heavily on suicide prevention awareness across social media platforms, in recognition of **Suicide Prevention Month**.

2:17 PM— RTS: 0:16:02 –Information Technology Updates –GLP, WB, AJ:

- **Avaya:**
- **WB:** Avaya maintenance is scheduled for tomorrow starting at 1:30 PM and is expected to take a full four hours because it includes about six months' worth of updates. Going forward, updates should take less time because fewer numbers are being forwarded and some updates can now be done in production without taking systems down.
- **Door Access:**
The server that controls the door system currently isn't protected by antivirus or firewall

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monitoring, which is a security risk.

The technician is coming in on Thursday to install software, so the system can be properly secured, once that's done, the door access issue should finally be resolved.

- **Chat Service**
- **WB:** Because of vulnerabilities that had been used in a breach in 2019, were showing up, the leadership immediately shut the system down. Updates and security patches are underway, but the chat will not be brought back online until it is fully secured.
- **GPC:** These security efforts can be disruptive, but they're necessary. During recent security testing, a third-party vendor was able to break into the chat server and actually impersonated both a poison specialist and a patient in live conversations.

2:47 PM— RTS: 0:28:17 –GPC Operations –GPL, CH, JH, JT, DD, SLP,

- **NPDS Coding Survey/Postponed –CH:**
- **The New Toxins Database –GPL, JT:**
 - GPL:** I've given access to the toxins database to a select group of colleagues and Jason is going to tell us how he likes it.
- **JT:** Noted: this is going to be as supplement to what we currently use for **Poisondex** and **Micro medex**.
 - We will still use **Micromedex** to code substances and transfer them into a chart, but there are occasionally areas where we have a particular drug, with a particular triage value that we may not have a triage number for in our system or **Poisondex**.
 - Showed how quickly and clearly the system pulls up **methemoglobinemia treatment with methylene blue**.
 - Instead of clicking through multiple tabs in **Poisondex**, everything appears right up front in one smooth scroll.
- **DD:** Added that she especially likes the **observation time guidance**, which helps with decisions about monitoring and possible admission.
- **SLH:** Emphasized that observation times should always be interpreted in context and focused on **return to baseline**, not just fixed hours.
- **GPL:** Because there is a limit on how many people can be logged in at the same time, we are asking that you be mindful and **log out when finished**, especially during busy shifts, so others can access it.
 - For now, you should use it for reference only and wait for formal guidance on sharing or copying content.
- **HR Advocate Change**
- **SLH:** In the regard to Sherika's departure, Rita Page is currently serving as the temporary HR consultant, so if you need employment verification for things like student loan forgiveness (PSLF), housing, refinancing, or other paperwork, they should contact me directly, so I can make sure the go to the correct HR person and don't fall through the cracks during the transition.

2:57 — RTS: 0:56:51 –Medical Director Update –GPL, RG, SLH, JH:

- **RG:** Updates are in progress for **ToxSentry** and **Query Builder**, including fixes for lab unit conversions.
 - A new **NPDS requirement (effective Jan 1, 2025)** will require capturing the exact "verbatim" search term entered, even with typos, just ignore it as we need it to confirm whether or not it has been fixed in the updated version.

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- Dr. Geller will officially transition the Medical Director role to Dr. Morgan on December 1st.
- Recruitment for next year's medical toxicology fellows is underway and off to a strong start.
- For those going to NACCT a possible informal gathering is being planned so we keep you updated on that.
- **GLP:** For Toxins, please contact IT before entering the wrong login three times as it can lock everyone out of the system for up to an hour.

3:06 PM— RTS: 1:15:58 –GPC Operations continue –GPL, SLH

- **NACCT 2024**
 - **Congratulations** to all the SPI's whose posters were selected and will be attending the NACCT 2024 conference. **Chris Hash** will be doing a case presentation, **Crystal** will present her poster on her study of acetaminophen dosing and endpoints, and **Amber** will be presenting her poster on her acephate study and to take the **ABAT** exam.
 - We will also be celebrating **Brett** who will be honored at the **SPI Award Ceremony for his 20 years of services as a Certified Poison Specialist** and **Sandra on her upcoming retirement**.
- **Public Health Updates**
- **SLH:** Reviewed infectious outbreak cases and how to report, stating that a follow up email with how to report will be sent out.
 - **Listeria** outbreak linked to vegetables from an Ohio farm (specifically cucumbers) and a major recall of Boar's Head Strasburg brand liverwurst produced between June 11 and July 17. As of August, the outbreak had resulted in 43 hospitalizations, 3 deaths, and 13 cases across the states.
 - A confirmed case of **Measles in Fulton County**, a resident with no travel history but significant hospital exposure, leading to ongoing secondary and tertiary exposure concerns.
 - **Note: Measles are extremely contagious, more contagious than COVID**, and can linger in a room for **up to one hour**, putting unvaccinated individuals at risk even after an infected person has left.
 - **I will send out reporting steps via email for individuals** who are expected to report **daily temperatures and symptoms** through a state-run online portal but, call the Poison hotline if their system is down or inaccessible.
 - **Please notify** me if there's a problem where you can't get a hold of an epidemiologist, or if phone numbers aren't working, or if there's no phone number listed. Staff should **collect full caller and patient information**, document all questions, and complete the disease report before forwarding cases to epidemiology.
 - **Callers should not be placed on hold** while staff attempt to contact **epidemiology**, even if the situation feels urgent.
 - Wait **30 minutes** before contacting the backup epidemiologist, as required by protocol and if there is still no response within about **one hour**, or if a provider is urgently waiting for guidance, then be sure to escalate to me.
 - **Monkey Pox**, although there **has not been a case reported in the states**, there have been reports in pockets of Africa. If someone calls regarding the **Monkey Pox Vaccine**, **CDC is a good source** of information, and the **Health Department has a link** that I will send out for anyone who may want to get vaccinated.

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- Also note: the **DPH has great information on** how to get the **COVID Vaccine** to deal with the current KP Strand and variance that has been spreading and you can still advise people to go to their local pharmacy for the vaccine.
- **Laundry Pods**
 - Laundry pod exposure study is still on going, the poison center has participated in it for the **last 12 years** and handled **a little over 600 laundry pod exposures in 2023**, generating approximately **\$30,000** in funding.
 - Remember the laundry pod exposures are considered **study exposures**, meaning chart documentation is reviewed beyond standard QA and should include:
 - 1. Whether the container was **open or closed** and describe **how the child accessed the product** to strengthen data quality.
 - 2. Follow-up guidance is automatically provided in SPI notes based on exposure type and that ingestion cases require **attempted follow-up within 12–24 hours**, even if the caller cannot be reached.
 - The study is classified as an **IRB-approved, no-consent retrospective public health study**, and staff can collect exposure details because it falls within normal poisoning history practices.
- **Tox Request**
- **SLH:** Reminded staff about using the **Tox Request Required (Tox Req)** follow-up priority, which was reintroduced through an email sent in **late June/early July**.
 - **Tox Request** is meant to be used when a toxicology fellow gives specific instructions for continued case monitoring or requests updates after follow-ups.
 - Staff should use **Tox Req** when fellows request updates after repeat testing or follow-up evaluations, such as scheduling follow-up EKGs within **30–40 minutes** or providing case updates later in the shift.
 - **Tox Req** follow-ups can be scheduled at any time, including overnight, such as **2:00 AM or 3:00 AM**, if requested by fellows.
 - Toxicology attendings monitor cases closely and expect fellows to receive updates, especially for critical cases initially discussed around **7:00–8:00 PM**.
 - Please remember to confirm with fellows if continued updates are still needed, as **Tox Req** is typically most appropriate within the **first 24 hours** of a case and can later be changed to another priority level if updates are no longer required.
- **Diamond Shruumz**
- **SLH:** There have been reported **130 nationwide Diamond Shruumz exposure cases** (from poison centers and health departments) as of August 9, including **approximately 50 hospitalizations and 2 potential deaths**.
 - These products are recreational items sold as gummies, chocolate bars, and cones, with most exposures involving intentional use by middle-aged adults rather than children. The **cookies and cream cone products** appear most strongly linked to severe outcomes such as intubation, seizures requiring benzodiazepines, ICU admission, decreased consciousness, and respiratory failure.
 - And **dark chocolate products** show a concerning statistical association with exposures.

4:03 PM— RTS: 2:17:40 Brief discussion of Cannabinoid Products –GPL, M, JH, SLH:

- **MV:** Expressed concern about the **toxicity, unpredictable effects, and misleading labeling of newer hemp-derived cannabinoid products**, noting he has seen severe reactions in ICU patients and highlighting how easily these products are sold in retail stores.

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- **SLH:** Clarified **Diamond Shrooms do not contain THC** but explained the **2018 Farm Bill expanded hemp-derived cannabinoid products**. She raised concerns about poor regulation, inaccurate labeling, pesticide contamination, and noted Georgia products can contain up to 0.3% THC, often with increased milligram dosing to maintain psychoactive effects.
- **GLP:** Reported ongoing **legislative efforts to close loopholes allowing Delta-8 and Delta-10 products**, stating attempts have been unsuccessful due to strong industry lobbying, though advocacy efforts continue with a new Farm Bill in development.
- **JH:** **Highlighted the widespread public availability of these products**, noting they are commonly sold at gas stations and other small retail locations.

4:15 PM— RTS: 2:29:44 –Diamond Shrooms Update resumes –GPL, SLH

- **SLH:** Reported that **FDA testing of approximately 22 Diamond Shrooms product samples and raw ingredients** found no THC but identified concerning substances including psilocin-like compounds, **pregabalin, kavalactones, muscimol, and ibotenic acid** in raw ingredients.
 - The products are marketed as containing muscimol or *Amanita muscaria* mushrooms, which are intended to produce calming GABA-like effects, but severe symptoms such as seizures suggest excitatory compounds like ibotenic acid may be contributing.
 - Ibotenic acid has not yet been confirmed in finished products and that treatment remains supportive care.
 - Surveillance data shows **Georgia as a hotspot with 23 total cases** submitted to FDA and CDC, including **7 cases reported directly to the Georgia Poison Center**, compared to **7 cases in Arizona and 17 cases in North Carolina**.
- **Bulletin Board Reminder**
- **SLH: When to Work bulletin board**, should only be used for scheduling issues such as callouts, late arrivals, and shift changes.
 - Please do not post clinical or case-related details because **When to Work** is a **third-party system with a large user base** and has previously experienced security and phishing incidents affecting other poison centers.
- **SPI CE's**
- **SLH:** New SPI Continuing Education (**CE**) **articles** are being uploaded to the training section on Bezoar.
 - They can be accessed through the Georgia Poison Center training website under the monthly **CE articles** section and will include **at least 6 to 9 CE articles by the end of the year**.
 - **CE** modules can typically be completed during shifts and encourage staff to report any access or technical issues.
- **PharmD Student Updates**
- **SLH:** PharmD students are finishing their rotation at the end of the week, with the next group scheduled to begin in October.
 - Drew has been closely monitoring and training the current students by supervising calls, consultations, documentation, and assessment planning.
 - He will begin joining the call schedule in September with **approximately three weekday call shifts**, with weekend call responsibilities expected to begin later in the month or possibly in early October.
- **Hospital Phone Number Updates**
- **SLH:** Please send hospital number update requests through Bezoar under the ToxSentry hospital name section, including request date, initials, hospital name, and the number to be added.

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- **MicroMedex**
- **SLH:** Several poison specialists have been selected to participate in beta testing and will provide feedback to Micromedex (Merative) and this could lead to future updates or enhancements to **PoisonDex** and other platforms.

4:33 PM— RTS: 2:48:59 –Real Time Updates –SLH, PF

- **When To Work Scheduling**
- **PF:** There are **13 open shifts** available in **When to Work** and encouraged staff to pick up extra hours or overtime.
 - **PTO request deadline is at the end of September** and the **holiday sign-up sheet** for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year scheduling will be distributed soon.
- **Real Time Update**
- **PF: HRSA Real Time Grant site visit went well** and that **five new hospitals** (Jeff Davis, Taylor, Bleckley, Bacon, Coffee Regional, and Northeast Georgia Health System) are expected to join the consortium soon.
 - Real-time calls will be simplified and handled like **Grady Suboxone consults**, with SPIs primarily collecting patient contact information and connecting providers to the toxicology fellow.
 - The program operates **24/7 for medical backup**, though recovery coach follow-up is not 24/7 and requires accurate patient contact information.
 - Volume data showing **36 patients enrolled since March 2023**, with poison center involvement in about **30% of cases**, averaging about **1–2 calls per month**.
- **Staff Performance Raises**
- **SLH:** Confirmed what Julia and Dr. Lopez shared about the **pay-for-performance increase being effective around August 11** and appearing in recent paychecks.

5:03 PM— RTS: 3:02:16 –Meeting Closing Remarks –GPL, SLH, JH, KA:

- **Closing Remarks**
- **JH:** Thanked day shift staff, **Donna**, and others for assisting the night and evening teams during a busy Sunday and helping maintain coverage.
- **SLH:** Thanked **Crystal** and **Kiet** for assisting when North Carolina’s poison center was unexpectedly down, requiring Georgia to handle their calls for approximately 2 to 2½ hours.
- **GPL:** Acknowledged, **Kwaku’s** question and stated he would follow up with HR to confirm annual health screening procedures, including how they may be combined with flu shots and COVID vaccinations.

5:05 PM— Meeting End

******* Next Meeting September 24, 2024, 1:30pm-4:30pm *******

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