



PARSE FULL COALITION MEETING NOTES

FEBRUARY 8, 2024

Moderators:

Jonathan Rosen, National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training; Industrial Hygiene Consultant at AJ Rosen & Associates LLC

Allison Weingarten, LMSW, MDB Inc., Communication and Outreach Consultant with the National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety & Health Training

Chris Assini, Director of Policy, FOR-NY

Jonathan opened the meeting.

Steering Committee Update with Kristen Chalmers:

Legislation: The proposed legislation now has bill numbers: S8381/A9063. The legislative committee has been working with the bill sponsors Senator Fernandez and Assemblyman Steck. A fiscal analysis of the bill needs to be done to ensure legislation will provide the necessary resources to the state agency and to grantees to do the Recovery Ready work of outreach, training, certification, and job placement. Chris Assini noted that to increase interest and support of the proposed legislation we need to hold community listening sessions and community meetings. An email to all coalition members includes access to the bills, a factsheet, and a sign on to support the bill: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSexYKapAH8Lb_6r-BynOg3p8yBxowPQ-kmjMHIfMWwYuFHjg/viewform Additionally, a spreadsheet has been established to track contacts with legislators: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gaiWt-s8j5Dhwmw3HL-xWI78RTzkE40E/edit#gid=1211213275>

Employer Outreach: We need a Recovery Ready Workplace Toolkit to give out to workplaces in RRW outreach. It was agreed that we need to customize our own NY State Recovery Ready Workplace Toolkit modeled off existing toolkits from New Hampshire, other states, and US DOL that have successfully implemented RRW initiatives. It was agreed the NYS Toolkit needs to be brief, concise, and flexible to effectively tailor a program to the needs of large and small businesses. In many unionized sites, Member Assistance Programs are doing the work under the leadership of LAP (Labor Assistance Professionals) certified leaders.

Angelia had attended a very successful RRW summit in North Carolina hosted by PRISM (People's Recovery Initiative for Solutions and More) and observed high participation rate of HR Representatives at the event. Their outreach effort among HR representatives was strong and effective and perhaps something we need to do as well. However, some committee members have found their outreach to be more effective by initially dealing directly with top management instead of HR departments. To get a clearer picture on this matter, Angelia will ask PRISM's

Executive Director to speak at an upcoming coalition meeting to share their approach to employer outreach.

PARSE Member Survey:

Sarah Toledano put together a PARSE Member survey to learn more about what recovery ready workplace activities members are currently engaged in. She also wants to know if funding was available, what would member organizations do with those resources. Click to access the survey: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfGW6e6jQMc9hk6Rvf3AJsjvmFSteL7eAxEgKtEDCVm34c93A/viewform?pli=1>

Legislative Update: Kim Bernstein, Legislative Director with Senator Fernandez's office discussed the introduction of the Recovery Ready Workplace Act, bill #S8381. The RRW Act outlines what an organization has to do to become a certified RRW and what they need to do once they are an RRW which entails the following:

- Make public their intention to be an RRW.
- Have a plan in place, working with their employees, their union if applicable, experts in the field, and those with lived experience.
- Put together a committee that includes employees, their union if applicable, experts in the field, and those with lived experience.
- Create best practices and review best practices annually and make updates if needed.

Additionally, the legislation would support staff at the state agency to establish an advisory board to help develop criteria for certification and oversight of the program. Additionally, funding using non state revenue sources such as opioid settlement funds and existing federal grants would allow the state agency to fund organizations to begin or expand outreach, training, certification, and job placement work and allow Member Assistance Programs to expand their efforts as well.

The legislators are working to have RRW Act included in the State budget. The budget is in process and is due April 1.

Q & A:

About bipartisan support needed for passage: There appears to be bipartisan support for this bill as they already have engaged support from both Democrats and Republicans.

About funding: Total reliance on state funding may not be needed for the RRW Act as some funding might also come from the Opioid Settlement and existing federal grants such as ARC, SAMHSA Block grants, and UDOL ETA grants.

Not-for-Profit Lobbying for Legislation Restrictions:

Assemblyman Phil Steck addressed the situation under 501 (c) (3) rules that allow a not-for-profit organization to lobby for or against legislation. There are certain conditions that would allow some form of lobbying but he recommends that not-for-profits consult a lawyer before engaging in any lobbying activity. Assemblyman Steck suggested we reach out to the Commission on Lobbying for guidance on this issue.

Assemblyman Steck asked if there is anything in the bill that any member in attendance would like to see added or changed to call his office and ask for his Legislative Director Allison McLean when calling (518) 455-5934.

George Korchowsky of the NYS Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC Program) pointed out that ARC's Federal grantees are allowed to write a letter to their legislator on behalf of legislation provided they do it on their own time. They cannot use time charged to the grant for lobbying work.

Break Out Rooms: Ideas on legislative outreach to labor unions, employers, and NFPs.

Group 1: Chris Assini, George Korchowsky, Al Perez, Cora Long (Subcontractor-Recovery - NH RFW Initiative), Armando Crescenzi, Kristen Chalmers (Education Specialist & Clinic Social Worker at University of Rochester)

Kristen, in her capacity can't directly advance legislation but she can reach out to her union contacts and her advisory board members to educate them. In the early stages, the recovery ready workplace needs to address preventive work such as looking at stress in the workplace and bullying in the workplace.

Armando suggested maybe having a recovery ready workplace to be staffed completely by people in recovery to offer them a chance to find employment.

Group 2: Justin Jiminez (Mental Health Association Employment Manager), John Nimmo (Health and Safety Specialist of Laborers' Health and Safety Fund), Kayla

Justin's organization has people in his organization whose role it is to reach out to legislators. In his role he reaches out to champions in the workplace that support RRW.

Group 3: Liza Ochsendorf (Director, Warren County Dep't of Workforce Development), Sal LaFemina (Executive Director, Beacon Family Wellness Center), Santiago Idlet (Peer Counselor, MAP at Local 28), Sarah Toledano (Associate Director, Center for Academic Community Engagement at Siena College), Scott Curry (Disability Resource Coordinator- Sullivan County Center for Workforce Development)

Liza is meeting with the NY Association of Training and Employment Professionals and will make them aware of the legislation and the PARSE website.

Outreach efforts from other members in the group include contacting SAMSHA, SOAR, state opiate response, treatment facilities, chambers of commerce. Sarah shared the data on RRW benefits to employers. Contact the 33 workforce boards throughout the state. Reach out to industries prone to higher SUD rates, such as the NY State Hospitality Training Association, reentry programs, drug courts, the Bar Association, Columbia University's HEAL program and social worker member organizations.

Group 4: Jonathan Rosen, Annette Bernhardt (Gino Macchio Foundation), TJ Smith (NYC President of Labor Assistance Professionals), Jim Murphy (Member Assistance Representative, CWA Local 1101)

As president of LAP, TJ has been sharing the legislation information with all his members. The employers are not as welcoming to RRW as labor unions are, so his concern is that businesses might be put off on going through the certification process to become an RRW. Jim shared the

same concern in that some of the wording in the legislation might put tight restrictions and rules in place and may discourage businesses from becoming RRW Workplaces.

Jonathan noted that the bill is flexible and specifically discusses member assistance programs as a viable peer approach that can be used to implement the RRW. The unions with MAP programs have a different approach to peers than the professional peer model in the recovery community. Both approaches can be used in implementing the legislation. The certification process is not an enforceable standard, but a voluntary one.

Meeting adjourned.

Next full coalition meeting is March 5 at 3pm.