

MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2023
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY
COMMITTEE MEETING
6:00 P.M.

Public Health and Safety Committee
Walterboro Wildlife Center
100 S. Jefferies Boulevard
Walterboro, SC 29488

Present: Chairman Phillip Taylor called the meeting to order with Council Members Dr. Joseph Flowers and Bubba Trippe present.

Others Included: Kevin Griffin, Meagan Utsey, Sean Thornton, Kaela Brinson, David Greene, Barry McRoy, Buddy Hill, Dr. Vallerie Cave, Wade Marvin, Sandy Polk, Jimmy Hiott, James Brown, Gar Linder, Rolet Buckner, Kellye Whitaker, and Mark Wysong.

Councilman Bubba Trippe gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Taylor: Stated, we would like to thank all elected and appointed officials, and all the individuals that are here tonight. We are here to find out information. We cannot be everywhere, but many of you get reports and attend to incidents. We are here tonight primarily to address nuisance issues and public safety issues as it relates to violence such as, shootings, stabbings, and loud noises. For example, we have a shooting range in a community. Every month at our Council meetings we have citizens coming and talking about loud music at all times of night in various places. So, tonight we have designed an opportunity for everyone here to go to a breakout session with a group. Everyone here should have an agenda, and that agenda has a color. Everyone will subdivide into groups based on the agenda color at the round tables set up. I would like you all to be a think tank for a moment. Sit with your group and brainstorm issues, trends, and things we need to take a stronger look at in the county.

Breakout Session

***At this time the breakout sessions began.

Below you will find a combination of all the information that was given by each team during the breakout session:

Community Issues	Solution Ideas
Attendance, Gang Violence, Mental Health, Vaping, and Marijuana.	Parent Involvement, Parent Classes (Life Skills), Activities Outside of School: Arts, Robotics, and Computer Classes for Parents, Access to USC Salkehatchie (Walterboro) iCarolina Lab, and Court Support (Truancy).

Drag Racing on Hwy 21 and Trash on the Roads.	Johnsville Community Center, Litter Clean up (April 21st Litter Clean up Team), Another Smoke Alarm Blitz, and Additional Patrols.
Jail Conditions and Staff Safety	Working on Bids for Repairs. Looking at Regional Sites in Colleton, Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, etc.
Job Retention and Shortages: how to keep Colleton Citizens in the county versus traveling out of the county.	Incentives and Recreational Activities: Colleton has a portable pool and will be having sessions this summer.
Nuisance Businesses	Tickets are being issued and fines given. Looking at other county ordinances for guidance.
Infrastructure Growth will cause traffic concerns	Road Maintenance and Speed Bumps
Homelessness	Need more services and resources for men and women. Additional funding for outreach. Obtain a list of resources like churches.
Mental Health Crisis	More resources for on-scene crisis issues.
Idea for Juvenile Concerns	Create a holding facility for Juveniles (For Profit).

Chairman Taylor: Stated, I wanted to let everyone know that Coastal Mental Health had unforeseen circumstances that involved all their staff, and they are unable to attend tonight.

Public Presentations

1. Dr. Vallerie Cave, Superintendent: Stated, I would like to talk with you about some of our strategic priorities and where we are. (Please see attached slide show.)

Councilman Trippe: Asked, did you say you are having issues with adults vaping? Are these employees?

Dr. Cave: Stated, yes.

Councilman Trippe: Asked, are they still working there?

Dr. Cave: Stated, I am unable to answer that because it is a personnel question. I do promise that I am dealing with everyone on this.

Councilman Trippe: Stated, thank you.

No further questions.

2. David Greene, CCFR Deputy Chief: Stated, I am going to talk with you all about Gunshot wounds/ Stab-Penetrating Trauma, and Overdoses. (Please see attached slide show.)

No questions were asked.

3. Buddy Hill, Sheriff: Stated, I have a few stats that I would like to run through with you all and touch on a few things that Dr. Cave talked about. So far in 2023, we have had 2 homicides. Both of those homicides we had people in custody. One of them was gang related. Some of the problems we had at the high school have been related back to this. When I say gang related, we think of traditional gangs, which is people out here doing criminal activity to make money. That is not what these kids are doing. These kids are aligning with each other and “beefing” with each other, or whatever term that they use, and they are using social media to keep things stirred up. Something as simple as saying a sentence, and it sparks it just like that. So, we have been able to partner with the school and they have done an excellent job. They get all of our juvenile reports. The reports are sent straight to them for their review. If we have something major happen, we will call them the night that it happens so that they can be aware of it. When they know two families may have been involved in the incident, they will keep them separate for a day or two. This is the right thing to do to keep things simmered down. The other homicide that we had, the statement that the individual gave us was, “I wanted to see what it was like to kill somebody.” I do not know how you combat that, but that is what we do. We have had 14 attempted murders and drive-by shootings, a lot of them are gang related. Of the 14, 7 of them have been the same groups shooting back and forth at each other. We have made some arrests in that, and we have seized some weapons. So far this year we have seized 30 weapons including handguns, shot guns, and rifles. We have been very aggressive with trying to get these guns off the streets. Narcotic offenses, so far this year we have made 22 arrests. The substances have been from marijuana, meth, cocaine, crack, and more. Orders of Detention, this is the mental health patients, so far this year we have served 28 orders of detention. This means that the Probate Judge signed an Order, and we have to go and pick them up and bring them to the hospital for evaluation. In total we have dealt with 62 psychiatric patients this year. The numbers keep rising and we are only in the fourth month. Noise, suspicious activity, nuisances, we have responded to 668 calls this year so far. That includes suspicious persons and vehicles as well. Welfare checks, we have done 371 so far this year. As you can see, we have a lot of calls that we respond to, and we are down personnel. We get a lot of support from the schools and the city police department. Dr. Cave will tell you that we come 20 deep sometimes when we get a disturbance call. When the City police department and SCDNR hear the call, they are coming. So, it is not just us, it is the whole law enforcement community that pitches in. We are all shorthanded except for DNR, everybody wants to work for DNR. We are all pitching in and doing the best we can do. We have a litter problem in this county and a host of things we need to work on. I do this every time I speak, if you know anyone that would make a good deputy, dispatchers, or a good detention officer at the jail, send them to me. Detention officers and dispatchers can start at the age of 18.

No questions were asked.

4. Jimmy Hiott, Colleton Medical Center CEO: Stated, Dr. Cave hit right on the biggest topic we have to address at the hospital, which is mental health. We have an adult in-patient unit that keeps 16 patients in every night, with a length of stay anywhere from 4 days to 7 days. Where that runs into having a good relationship with our Sheriff and City is, workplace violence, we seen that escalate last year to 20 instances where we had an injury to an employee. The good thing is, in the

first quarter, that number is down by 50% year over year. I think mental health in our community is going to continue. The folks with DSS see the social issues. We have families that come and drop family members off and say, "I can't deal with this anymore." So, these are the things that the hospitals see a good bit of. I appreciate, as Dr. Cave does, that our City and County, if there is an incident that occurs in our community, sends one if not two officers to the hospital. Typically, if there is a shooting or incident in our community that somebody is going to follow them to the hospital, and we go into a lock down. That number was not as high as I expected it to be. We only went into lock down 15 times last year. It gives the county or city a chance to investigate and let us know that it is okay to come off of lockdown. Mental health is our biggest opportunity right now. We see 16 patients every night and hold 1 or 2 in the ER every night. We are looking to expand that service due to the issues in our community.

No questions were asked.

5. Wade Marvin, Chief of Police for The City of Walterboro: Stated, I would like to start off by saying that we would not be as successful as we are without the surrounding agencies as well. We work very well together, and I think it suppresses what most people don't see. We deal with a lot of things that never get seen, and that is because of the leaders in this room and some that are not here. I have some stats as well, violent crimes, property crimes, and calls for service. Covid messed it up a little bit. One year you will have a spike with 3 or 4 homicides and then one year you will have 1. So, it looks like homicides have decreased by 300%. It is hard to say exactly because they always go up and down, but gradually they are increasing. We are seeing more and more property crimes and financial crimes. Just in our community alone we can account for almost 10 million dollars in fraud. At the last minute somebody in another county can send an email to a law office where they have hacked into their computer and changed the email address from a lower case "m" to a capital "M" and have them transfer the funds to a different department. We are seeing check fraud and identity fraud. It is overwhelming the amount of fraud that we are seeing take place with people who do not know any better. Fraud crimes have increased the most compared to violent and property crimes. Calls for service have also increased, similar to the Sheriff's Office, and we have less personnel. Nobody wants to be a cop or be in that position where they are put in a split-second decision and overseen with a microscope. The training has increased 10-fold in our department and is being sent out through the academy. We are trying to have better equipment and training so that the officers can make better decisions in the field. The main crime we see is from a very small group of people. Generally speaking, it is not a bunch of different people committing a bunch of different crimes, it is a small group of people continuing to commit crimes. We run into initial problems where we will arrest them, and the Solicitor's office can only do so much. They look at the criminal history and the prisons are full, and they hear, "the prisons are full...don't send them up here...get rid of the cases." So, it is a ladder that we have to fight every day to try and get this small group of people to calm down. Like the Sheriff mentioned, when we sit them down and ask them why they killed this person, they tell us they don't know, and they honestly don't know. It goes back to a post that somebody posted 2 years ago or even 10 years ago, or about what somebody said, or they heard they said. If someone was to beat up your child, you have a crime and could solve that. We are seeing homicides where people were shot, and we are asking what happened, tell us what caused this. The answer is something like they said something about my shoes at school. So, these are the kinds of things we are dealing with daily, and it is very difficult. We had a homicide a couple of months ago and the people were literally spitting on us,

yelling at us, and sneaking behind the cars acting like they had guns and were going to try and shoot us. Someone was shot and killed on their property and they're doing this. It is hard to combat that. We are doing everything that we can. It is increasing a small amount, but it is not decreasing. It would be a lot worse without the leaders in this community that work on it together.

Rolets Buckner: 1. Asked, "What are you doing to help the trust issues between community and police?" There is so much distrust. How do we combat that? Bad attitudes do not do it. Is there anything that you are doing to help the trust issues? I do not get in any trouble, none, but I am afraid of our police. I wanted to know what you are doing to help that in the community. If I am afraid of them then who else is afraid.

Chief Marvin: Stated, I think it starts at home. If we are riding through the community, we have parents that come up and say, "Tell my kid you are going to arrest them if they do not put on their seat belt." They automatically instill fear instead of the parents doing what they are supposed to do and telling them it is the law in the State of South Carolina, and we are not moving this car until you put your seat belt on. Instead, they make us the bad guys. So, when we go to a house that has been shot up and we say what can we do? We are here to help, and we are met with obscene language. We have done a lot of things and we are trying to start younger, as Dr. Cave said. We are doing "Pops with Cops" and "Cookies with Cops" we go into the school system. Everybody in this community knows that I will always return a phone call or have a conversation with them wherever they are at, but they do not want to. They would rather blame us for the problems that are happening in the communities, when that is not the case. I will help anybody at any time. I have left my house and my children to go help other people. We talk about it often to try to bridge that gap, but I do think that it takes two people to bridge a gap, not one. Someone told me a long time ago that there are two ways to feed a pigeon, you can sit on a park bench and try to talk to them and throw breadcrumbs, but if I take the loaf of bread and throw it at them, they are going to scatter. So, it takes two people wanting to have a relationship to have one. I think it is easy to sit back and point a finger and say what are we doing?

Ms. Buckner: Stated, I am not pointing fingers.

Chief Marvin: Stated, No, not you. Generally speaking, it is easier to blame somebody else than to step up to the plate.

Sheriff Hill: Stated, piggy backing off of what he has said, James Brown is our community officer. The city has been doing the same thing, we are trying to have community events throughout the county. Now there again, I have not been able to let James do everything I want him to do simply because of manpower. I have him working in the schools because we have been shorthanded. During the summer, he will be doing events. We are trying to be folks together. I am not going to stand up here and tell you that law enforcement nationwide have not made mistakes, but there again, we cannot paint everybody with the same brush just because somebody did something bad does not mean we are all bad. When you look at the number of interactions we have daily, it is a minute number, but one number is too many. We have to work on bettering ourselves every day in this profession. That is one way we are trying to do it with folks like James who get out here with the whole community. People say I live in the Smoaks community, Colleton County is our community. It is not just sections of the county, we live in those sections, but as a whole black,

white, male, and female, we are all a community. James has done an excellent job on making a good impression and bringing people together. That is something that we are going to try and expand on when we can, and as we can. I don't know if that helps.

Ms. Buckner: Stated, it does help. When he is out the people are smiling and they are interacting with everybody. There was an incident with the Police Department when you all did an event located at Burger King. It was a good process, you had quite a few officers there, but you only had like one officer that would talk to everybody. There was a whole group of officers that wouldn't talk to the children. That kind of bothered me because they would only talk to their friends and family instead of all the children. There was an officer there that was happy with everybody. When James is out in the community, he talks to all the children. I would like to see more happy interactions with the police and children like you did at Burger King. I do know it helps the children to be better with the police officers, and not afraid of them.

Sheriff Hill: Stated, this is the kind of feedback that we need. Of course, I appreciate the feedback right now, but you said you saw it that day and it bothered you. If you will pass along that information to whomever, we need to know those things when it happens. Call us the next day or that day and let us know. We need honest feedback, and we can take constructive feedback. This is how we will get better because we do make mistakes. These officers sometimes are a little introverted, and in this business, you do have to be extroverted to a certain extent. We can pass this along to our guys and gals that they need to mingle when we are having these events.

Chief Marvin: Stated, I was one of the ones inside that day shaking hands. However, you are right, and I can see that. I went and read some Dr. Suess books a couple of weeks ago. We have Mrs. Edwards; she is our community liaison officer. She is wearing many hats right now too because of being short staffed right now. I went to Forest Hills, and she went to Cottageville Elementary and read them books. We do try to go to different little events. We are working on it and trying. We have Kevin Martin, an outgoing personality and very understanding. I wish I had 30 more Kevin Martins in a sense. However, that is not going to happen. To find anyone who wants to work in Law Enforcement is difficult, but to find someone who is willing to go the extra mile is rare. It is something that we will try to work on. We are going to do "Pops with Cops" throughout the schools and communities. We have done it the last few summers.

Dr. Cave: Stated, April 28th is Colleton County read day. Every cop, as well as anyone who would like to can come in and read to the schools. This is sponsored by the library, and it would be a great time to come in and read.

No further questions.

6. Sandra Polk, DSS County Director: Stated, if you type in dss.sc.gov and scroll over to Colleton County, it will give you statistics on Colleton County specifically, as well as what is going on with DSS. Most of you in this room are very familiar with DSS and what we do. DSS over all has a negative light in the community because we generally take their kids from them. That is not all that we do. We work with the school district most often daily trying to help figure out what to do with the youth involved with gangs and attendance issues is a major issue. I was surprised to see the drop out statistics for Colleton County. They were alarming to me. As far as

my agency goes, we have made a lot of improvements for families to get resources. You can go online and apply for child support, apply for food stamps, and check your food stamp balance. Technology through DSS is improving drastically. We are trying to do a "411" where you will type DSS, and it automatically pulls up on your phone. Of course, covid affected us just like everybody else. They had a lot of funding for families with covid, and with the funds that they provided we offered in the fiscal year 2022, over 26 million dollars in food stamps. Last month they cut the program, so for the seniors in our community that were getting the maximum amount of benefits, \$250-\$300 a month, will now be back at \$90 a month. You will now see an increase with families that are really hurting, and the senior citizens that don't really get anything already. So, this is a huge concern for me, that the senior citizens in the community that have depended upon those benefits are not going to get those any longer. Unfortunately, the Federal Government cut that program off and we no longer offer that program. In general, Colleton County has been doing very well, as far as Foster Children go, our numbers have decreased by about 30%. We do have a need in our community for foster parents. We won an award a couple of years ago for having the most children in their home county. Right now, I have only 5% of my children placed in this county. They are in Columbia, Beaufort, Greenville, and Spartanburg. Right now, a lot of my staff spend their days traveling to and from to bring the children back to the community so that they can have visitation with their family. That is a problem for us. It is causing a lot of burn out among the staff and causing the staff to put in extra hours. Due to our foster care numbers going down our family placement numbers have gone up. We have done a really good job placing the children in the home of their relatives. Individuals do not have to be biologically related to the child in order to take the child. If you are their coach, a church member, or somebody the child knows, we can now place those children in the homes of non-relatives. We have a few of those placements now and that has been a blessing. They can now provide financial assistance to those families if they will go through the licensing process to get licensed as a foster home. They will get a stipend to take care of those children. We have seen an increase in kinship caregiver placement throughout Colleton County. Overall, we are doing very well. Our biggest issues are like everyone else in the community with problems with behavior and mental health. We have clients walk in the door seeking mental health services. They may need a prescription or help paying for their prescriptions. In the past we were able to help pay for those prescriptions, but the funding has been deferred to other agencies like Lowcountry Community Action Agency. We refer a lot of people there to get assistance. In His Name Colleton has increased working with the homeless population. They have a really good program and are located right across the street basically. They are doing a lot of good things in our community. We provide food if they need food and try to get them as much assistance as we can. The Fire Department gave some MRE's that they had, and we have been giving those out like crazy. The people have loved that. There are a lot of things going on now. They have great podcasts on the DSS website and videos on adoption. We have a few children that are up for adoption right now within our community. We are fixing to start the heart gallery back up. It is on the state website, and you can go online and see all the children that are available for adoption within the state. There are Colleton County children on that website that need a permanent home. We are super excited about the changes going on within our agency. If we can figure out how to fix the attendance issue and help the mental health crisis. We want to be here to help them if they have a breakdown. Go on and check out the website. It can all be done on your phone now, and online. An individual can do anything online, from applying for assistance to adopting a child.

Ms. Buckner: Stated, I work for the Board of Disabilities, and I did have a client have her children removed from her care. The thing that I really enjoyed about that was they did not have a problem working with me because I am the key to the client, but that she had someone who gave her parenting skills. She went through classes before she could get her child back. She enjoyed it and I was able to sit and work with her while she worked online. I really appreciated the service that they gave to her in order to get her children back.

Mrs. Polk: Stated, we are trying to get more resources in Colleton County. Most of the resources that we have are in Charleston, Beaufort, and Dorchester County. Faith Church has started a new parenting class, and it is amazing. They actually have a class graduating on the 16th of this month from the class. They are offering daycare services for the parents who are attending the class. It is provided in the afternoons and on Saturdays. Homebuilders, and a lot of the same resources Dr. Cave was just talking about for mental health. There are several agencies now that are working within our community, and it has made an improvement as far as our families go. That is the whole purpose of DSS, to engage the families versus the way it used to be taking the children from them. That is not what we do anymore. Just because they test positive for drugs, sometimes we do not remove them from the home. It depends if the children are on the drugs, how bad it is, and what is going on. So, we are trying to bring the services into the home rather than taking the children out of the home. Right before I came to this meeting, I received an email from someone who works for the FCC, and they have funding for Colleton County citizens for broadband and will pay \$30 a month for the household to get broadband out in the rural communities for the school district. They will also purchase laptops if the child needs it for school. She is looking to come speak to Colleton County so, I wanted to pass that information along while I was here. There is 30% of Colleton County citizens that are receiving this service and there are 5800 that qualify. It is a huge resource for Colleton County. It is through Jim Clyburns office.

Chairman Taylor: Stated, thank you to everyone and I hope you all enjoyed yourself even at the breakout session tables. If you have other things that maybe you didn't touch on this evening, and you would like to email the county please do that. There are other things that maybe you would like to have addressed. We are going to end this part of the meeting. We will not take any action during or after the Executive Session.

Executive Session

Councilman Trippe moved to go into executive session to discuss the following: Legal Advisement. Dr. Flowers seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

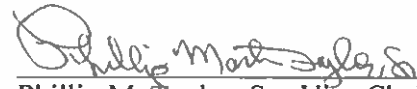
Councilman Taylor moved to exit executive session. Dr. Flowers seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Dr. Flowers moved to adjourn the meeting, Councilman Trippe seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Committee Meeting
April 10, 2023

This 2nd day of May, 2023.


Phillip M. Taylor, Sr., Vice Chairman

ATTEST:


Kaela Brinson, Clerk to Council

Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting

Colleton County School District Presentation
April 10, 2023
Dr. Vallerie C. Cave
Superintendent of Schools

1

Current Strategic Priorities/Key Goals Safety and Security



- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Expanded Mental Health Partnerships
- Substance Abuse Interventions
- Young Men of Hope Mentoring Program
- De-escalation Models-Mindset and CPI
- Clear Bookbags/Scanners
- Expanded SRO Partnership
- Improved Emergency Communication System District Wide
- Navigate 360 implementation
- Gang Awareness Professional Development
- Active Shooter/Reunification Drills
- Providing Fingerprint ID Kits (SCDE)
- Improve Progressive Discipline Plan
- Operation Cougar Nation

2

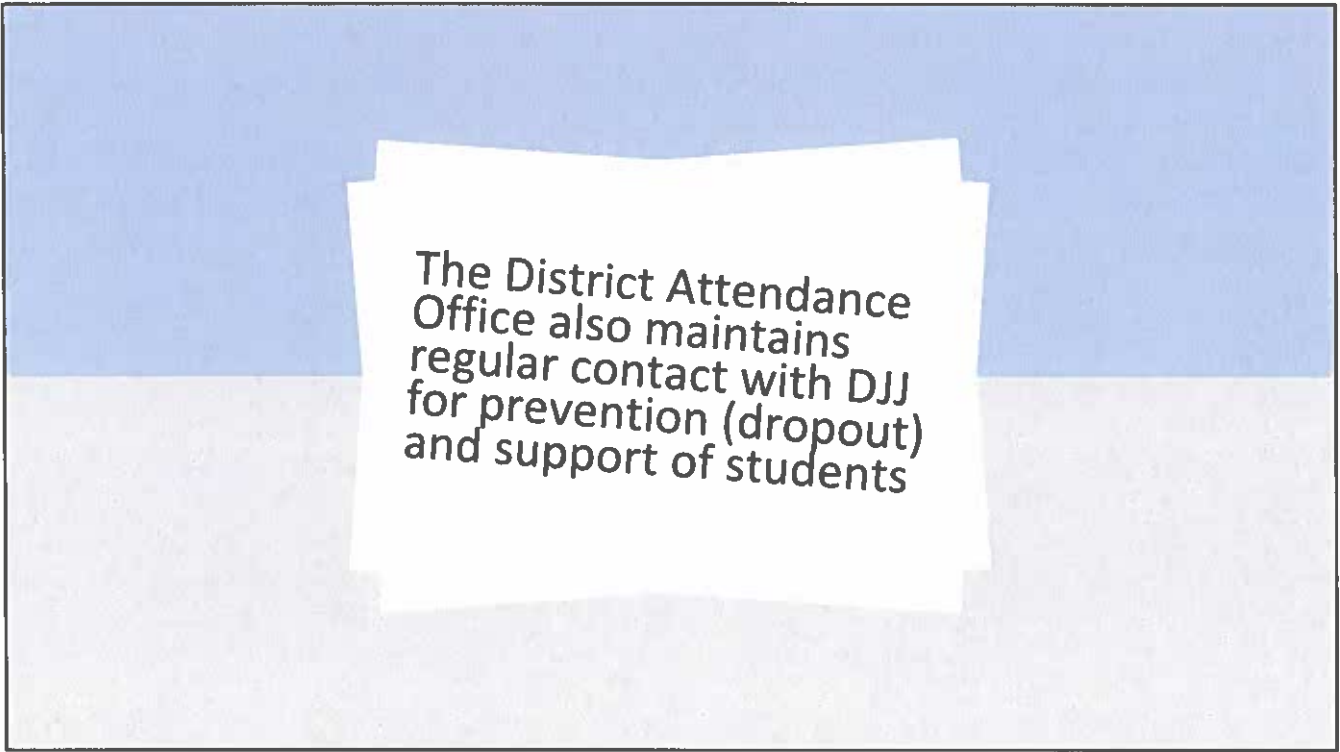
**Cooperation With
Community
Partners**

Schools Role in Public Health
and Safety

3

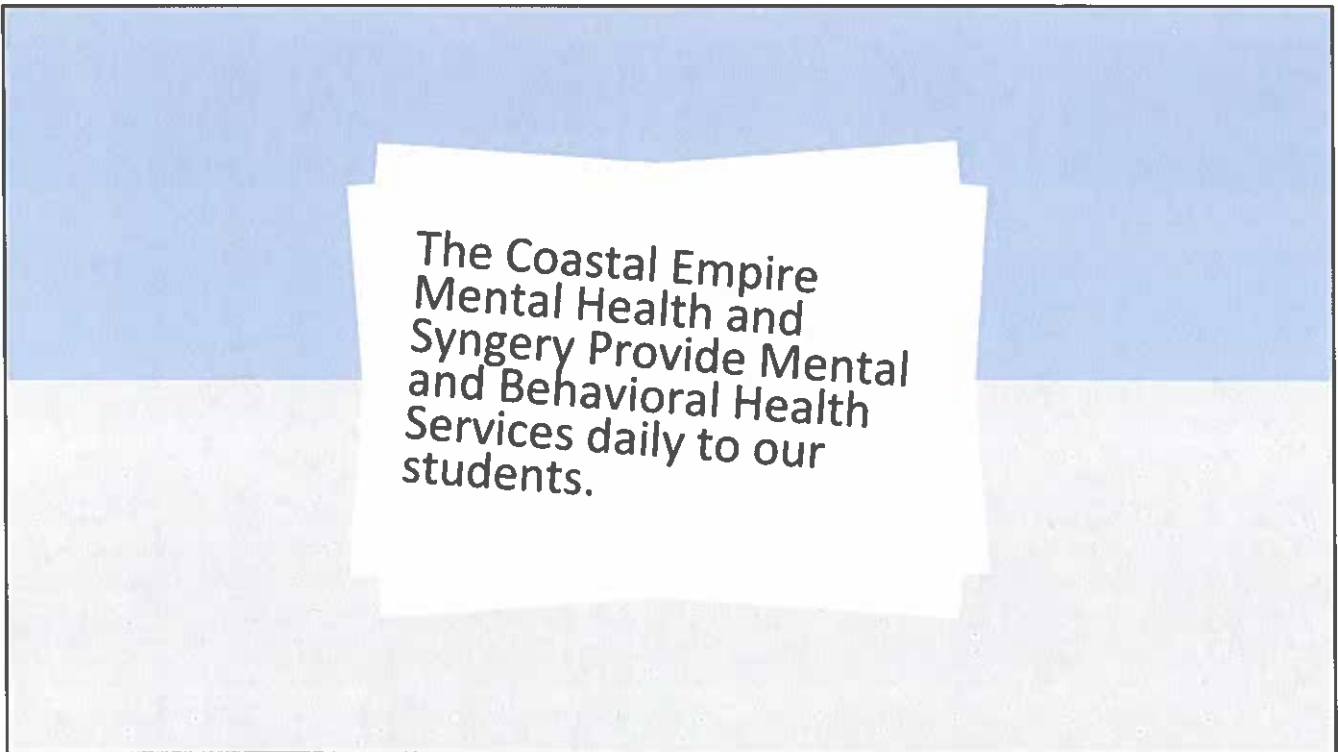
**The Office of Safety and
Security works closely
with DJJ in coordinating
services for students.**

4



The District Attendance Office also maintains regular contact with DJJ for prevention (dropout) and support of students

5



The Coastal Empire Mental Health and Syngery Provide Mental and Behavioral Health Services daily to our students.

6

The Colleton County Sheriff's Department provides SRO's partially funded by a grant and CCSD General Budget for all schools. Athletic Events and other school and district functions on a fee basis.

7

The District and the Colleton County Fire Department have worked together to get all schools in the district the most up to date Weather Radios

8

The District is working with CCFD to ensure First Responders have adequate Communications at all locations

9

Future Strategic Priorities/Key Goals

Safety and Security



- Peer Mediation – Grades 4-5
- Safety Patrols – Grades 4-5
- OLWEUS Re-implementation - Districtwide
- Town Hall Meetings on Safety and Security
- PBIS Professional Development
- Expand our Alternative Learning Services

10

The Office of Safety and Security is applying for DOJ grant for the installation of Environmental Sensors to reduce the vape usage in school.

11

The Issues We Face

- Gang Activity in Community and School Impact
(FIGHTING)
- Lack of School Attendance and Enforcement Support for Truancy
(ATTENDANCE)
- Disruption of Public School and Enforcement of Misbehavior
(CONFRONTATION AND ALTERCATION)
- Vape Problem is Major Concern beginning in 6th grade
 - (TOBACCO AND MARIJUANA USE)
- Parental Responsibility FOR Misbehavior and Charges that can be enforced

12



13

Colleton County Council Public Health & Safety Committee

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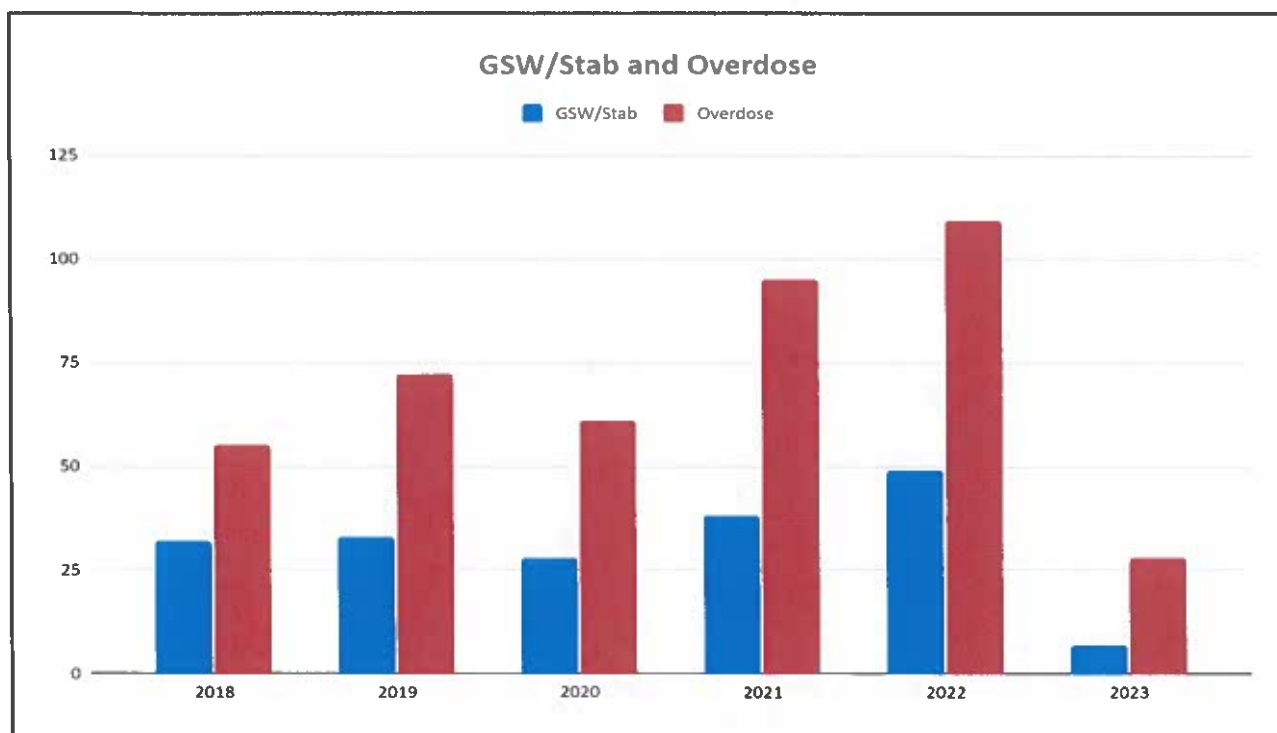
Colleton County Fire-Rescue
Dr. David A. Greene, Deputy Chief

Gunshot Wounds (GSW)/Stab-Penetrating
Trauma & Overdoses

GSW/Stab Wounds

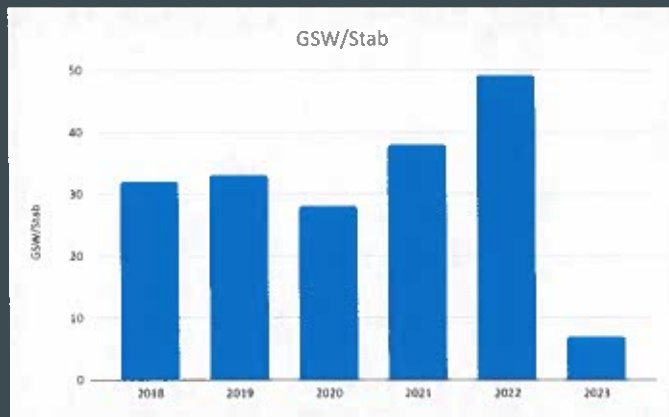
Since January 1, 2018, Colleton County has seen 187 GSW/Stab Wounds and 420 Overdoses.

Last year saw a 53% increase in GSW/Stab Wounds and a 98% increase in Overdoses from 2018.



GSW/Stab Wounds

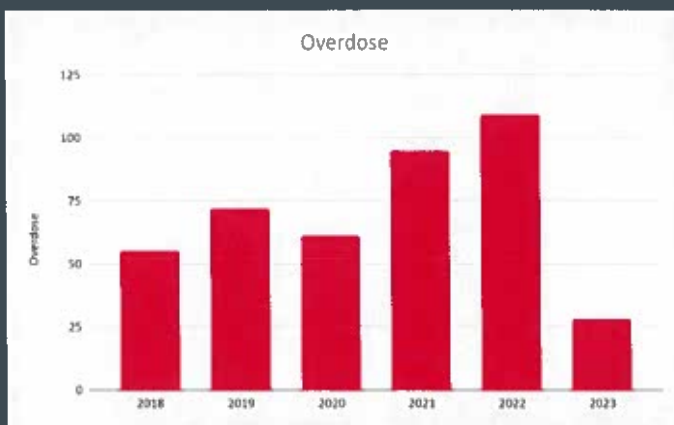
Data from our patient care reporting is not all inclusive as some GSW/Stab Wound patients are transported to the hospital in a private vehicle.



Data does not include intent (self-inflicted wounds versus those inflicted by others) as this is a law enforcement determination and may not be definitive at the time the patient care report is completed.

Overdoses

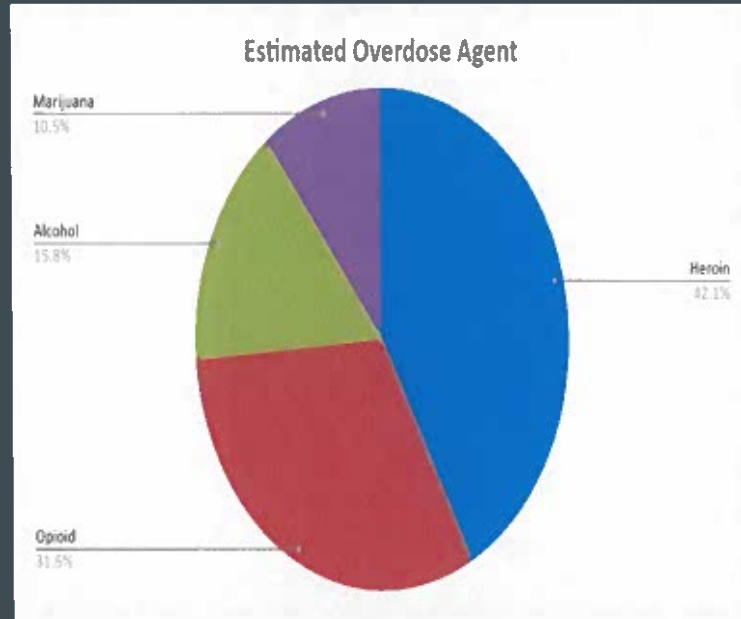
Overdose data includes accidental overdoses (i.e. to prescription medications)



Data does not include patients that died as a result of an overdose (coded as Apnea or Cardiac Arrest on our Patient Care Reports). The cause of death and any contributing illicit drugs is a Coroner's Office determination and is not available at the time our Patient Care Reports are completed.

Overdose Agents

Based on available data, we estimate that the leading overdose agent is Heroin (a natural opiate), followed by other opioids (morphine, codeine, fentanyl, methadone, tramadol, etc.), then followed by alcohol and marijuana (which can be laced with other illicit drugs).



Xylazine

- non-opioid agent that the FDA originally approved in 1972 as a sedative and analgesic for veterinarians
- cannot be reversed by Narcan (available OTC for opioid overdoses)
- Without aggressive airway management, artificial ventilation and cardiac arrest management, a patient that overdoses on Xylazine has an extremely poor prognosis.

Xylazine has recently been detected in a number of illicit drug overdoses in Charleston County.

Questions?