

Covering Substance Abuse and Recovery: A Workshop for Journalists

*A one-day workshop on how to cover
a difficult but important subject*

AGENDA

Delta Marriott Downtown
1441 Winchester Ave. • Ashland, Ky.

November 15, 2019



Institute for
RURAL JOURNALISM
& Community Issues

 University of
Kentucky



The University of Kentucky's Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues and Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) have organized this workshop, for journalists from all levels, filled with experts on the problem of substance abuse and how to cover it. Our goals are to make sure you:

- Understand the depth and breadth of the problem and how it affects local communities
- Know how to get reliable data and other local information for your reporting
- Develop local, state, regional and national sources for stories and story ideas
- Hear reporters explain how they cover the problem and the people affected by it
- Appreciate that local news media have a major role to play in reducing the stigma that inhibits local action

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Friday, Nov. 15, 2019

(8:00-8:30 a.m. Registration opens and continental breakfast available)

Part One: DEFINING THE PROBLEMS



8:30 Welcome, statement on why this is important and what we want to accomplish. **Al Cross**, director, Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues, editor and publisher of Kentucky Health News, and extension professor of journalism, University of Kentucky.



8:35-9:05 Origins of the Epidemic: Drug-company marketing, lax monitoring of pill distribution, most recently revealed by DEA database uncovered by The Washington Post and the Charleston Gazette-Mail. Covered by **Eric Eyre**, Gazette-Mail reporter who won a Pulitzer Prize for exposing “in the face of powerful opposition” what the prize jury called “the flood of opioids flowing into depressed West Virginia counties with the highest overdose death rates in the country.” Also, it’s not just opioids; addictions can encompass multiple substances. In 11 states, opioids were responsible for less than half of drug overdose deaths, as use of substances like methamphetamine are on the rise.

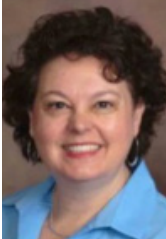


9:15-9:40 The Role of Journalists: How Stigma Inhibits News Coverage and Community Action. **Jennifer Reynolds** with ORAU provides an overview of research that highlights how stigma inhibits progress and why framing matters.

9:40-9:50 Break



9:50-10:15 Effect on the Workforce and How Substance Abuse Hurts Local and State Economies. Covered by **Jacqueline Pitts** of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, which recently held an Opioid Summit, the first meeting of its kind by any state chamber.



10:15-10:35 Policy, Politics and Public Health: Local health advocates are quite used to butting heads with their local policy makers when it comes to implementing evidence-based health policies – think smoking bans and syringe exchanges. Kentucky Health News reporter **Melissa Patrick** will explore the reasons for this disconnect and the importance of local reporting to make sure the science of such matters remains front and center.



10:35- 11:00 50 Years of Criminalizing Disease: Demanding New Approaches and Better Outcomes. Kentucky's prison population has soared more than 700 percent since 1970, largely a result of using the criminal justice hammer to address a public health crisis. In the meantime, the toll of substance use disorder has only grown more deadly and devastating. Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Secretary **John Tilley** believes it's time to demand a new approach that focuses on treatment, community-based interventions and data-driven solutions that not only produce better outcomes for public safety, but also save lives. As a former journalist and lawmaker, he is a leading advocate in Kentucky's struggle against substance use disorder. Over the past decade, he has championed a multitude of innovative reforms and has worked tirelessly to make Kentucky a national model for change at the intersection of incarceration and drug control policy.



11:00-11:30 The Biology of Addiction: Why We Must Understand the Fundamentals to Tell the Full Story. **Dr. Matt Christiansen**, Department of Family and Community Health, Marshall University School of Medicine, discusses how addiction works in the brain and how that affects our understanding of the nature of addiction and the narrative and policy-making that follows.

Bridge Lunch:



11:30-12:45 Keynote Speech (via Skype). **Beth Macy**, author of *Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company that Addicted America* discusses how she tracked the perpetrators of the epidemic and how she gained the confidence and trust of those affected by it.

Part Two: COVERING THE ISSUES



12:45-1:30 Reporter **Terry DeMio** and Photographer/videographer **Meg Vogel** of the Cincinnati Enquirer discuss how to cover people with substance-abuse disorder as “human beings with addiction, families with a family member who has died from this disorder, not a ‘criminal,’ and science-based reporting.”



1:30-2:15 Covering Substance Abuse and Recovery in Small Towns: **Sharon Burton**, incoming president-elect of the Kentucky Press Association, tells how her Adair County Community Voice, a small weekly with a local competitor, has done many news and feature stories about the problem and people who have overcome it. Also, **Phillip Lee**, a person recovering from addiction who writes a column, “The Journey of an Addict,” for rural newspapers in the area, will give his perspective.

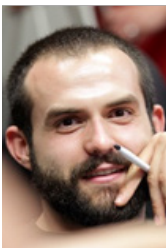


2:15-3:00 Developing Relationships with Sources: coroners, first responders, law enforcement, treatment community. How to find credible sources with lived experiences, and how to use and not use social media. Covered by **Deborah Yetter**, Louisville Courier Journal, who began her journalism career in Harlan County, Kentucky.

3:00-3:15 Break



3:15-4:00 Barriers to Treatment and Recovery: lack of treatment facilities, especially in rural areas; need for more medication-assisted treatment; insurance coverage, and more. Covered by **Dr. David Wolfe**, Lead Addiction Psychologist, and **Kelly Whitley**, Patient Advocate Coordinator, from Valley Health Systems, Inc.



4:00-4:45 Covering Recovery and Behavioral Health. Speakers include **Bishop Nash**, health reporter, Huntington Herald-Dispatch; **Dr. Lyn O'Connell**, Associate Director of Community Services, Division of Addiction Sciences in Family Medicine, Marshall Health; with journalist-training material from **Kristin J. Steele** of Marshall University.

4:45-5:00 Final Questions, Story Ideas, Wrap-up. All presenters are asked to participate.



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