

DRUG FREE ASHLEY COUNTY COALITION

Minutes for May 12, 2026

12:00-1:00 p.m., Hamburg School District Administration Office

MEETING OBJECTIVES: RECOGNITION OF *May 10-16 as NATIONAL SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION WEEK*; SHARING OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND UPCOMING EVENTS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cathie Hillier, Harry Hillier, Arlyn Richards, Elizabeth White, Lisa Riels, Chris Hammond, Officer Nicole Carter, Jaci Clavet, Billy Stafford, Sherri Hendrix, Haley Chavis, DeVonda Brown, Linda Rushing, Eric Shoffner, Hamburg Police Chief Johnny Oliver, MSgt Joshua Adams, Patty Defee, Jennifer Johnson, Drew Johnson, Vivian Guimbellot, Ally Tyler, Hamburg Mayor David Streeter, Arnetta Pugh, Katie Hernandez, Kim Johns, Ephraim Johnson, Hamburg Superintendent Nathan Sullivan, Bro. Joel Whittenton, Mike Neal, Janie Carter, and D-FAC Students Prevention Leadership students: Kolbie Thomas, Jacob Barley, Emersyn Cannon, David Mondragon, Nyla Black, Jaydon Tullos; Present on Zoom: Tempest Alexander and Tyisha Johnson-Fletcher

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:

Eric Shofner opened the meeting by recognizing individuals in attendance, first-time attendees Patty Defee (Medders' Funeral Home); Jaci Clavet (City of Hamburg); Bro. Joel Whittenton (Ashley County Baptist Association Missionary); and Zoom participants.

OLD | NEW BUSINESS:

- Approval of April 14, 2026, Minutes
- Recognition and introduction of new member: Ally Tyler, Healthcare Sector; Outreach Coordinator, Gammel's Pharmacy

COMMUNITY EVENTS (since last meeting):

April 18: Tyiesha Johnson-Fletcher reported on the Teen Talk: Inspiring Future Leaders Conference. The presenter was Kendetta from Teen Health Mississippi who trained attending adults to be facilitators. There were separate sessions with the youth on one side, so they could feel free and comfortable to talk about what was going on in their lives, and what was going on in the community. They talked about drugs. They talked about being in relationships that might have been abusive or peer-pressured with drugs. Tyisha states that she feels like Teen Talk needs to be promoted for any community because of drug awareness – the teens need accurate information. The parents need to be aware of what's going on, because there's a lot of information that the teens are not talking about. So, on the adult side, the questions that are being asked that the teens are not talking about. Tyisha stated that she feels like teens do come talk to her, but they don't talk to their parents. Perhaps they need to feel comfortable, or maybe they feel like the door is not open enough where they can feel comfortable talking about it. So, Teen Talk is something that can be brought to a community. The Teen Health MS staff helps prepare for the session after a date is scheduled and requires facilitators to complete two Zoom trainings.

April 20-21: Mike Neal and Tempest Alexander reported on the Wingtips, Sneakers, or Heels: Walking in One Accord to Prevent Substance Abuse, a faith-based conference at Lake DeGray. Mike said the first, gentleman that got up shared that funding for a lot of the programs like we do has been cut. He said in the beginning when drugs first became a problem, the people to step up were churches. And churches banded together and did things, and he says, it looks like we're going to have to get back to where churches are more an active part of addressing the problems in our communities.

April 25: Eric Shoffner reported on Rx Take-Back Day. Seventeen pounds were collected at Gammels'. Exactly 50,240 pounds were collected in Arkansas according to MSgt Joshua Adams who was on the National Guard Drug Task Force team transporting the collection to a disposal site in El Dorado. Eric made the point that 17 pounds may not sound huge but considering the weight of a 200 milligram pill, there would be 2,000 of those to make up one pound. Seventeen pounds is 34,000 pills off the street. So, 17 pounds does make a difference. Takeback is always available at Crossett PD, Hamburg PD, and Ashley Co. Sheriff Department. Prior to this takeback, Arkansas had collected 330 tons of medications since the event's beginning in 2010.

May 1: Tempest Alexander reported that the Sustainability Training sponsored by MidSouth Training Institute and the Community Empowerment Council was well attended in Crossett. Jessica Simpson from MidSouth confirmed that the Ashley County attendance was the largest in several presentations over the state during the week. The presenter offered sound advice and simple procedures for examining a non-profit's "health" and ability to "stay alive after the grant."

May 4: D-FAC staff printed, provided postage, and handed off 214 postcards on Social Hosting Prevention to the two school districts to mail to parents of graduating seniors.

May 5: Mike, Lisa Riels, and Elizabeth White reported on the South AR Prevention Summit in El Dorado. The keynote speaker was Jermaine Galloway with Tall Cop Says Stop organization. His information was very helpful for parents, school, and community

members. Lisa and Liz described one session that was eye-opening (and scary) about what is available to our kids on social media and how easily predators can engage and harm them.

May 9: Tempest Alexander with Community Empowerment Council and Arnetta Pugh with Phoenix Youth and Family Services sponsored a Teen Driving ROADeo for teens and parents. The session was about distracted and drugged driving prevention with teenagers, and how to prevent vehicular fatalities. There were different vendors that would normally be involved when such a tragedy occurs. Although there were no local auto insurance companies on site, some did provide promotional materials as did Holt Auto Group. Tempest did a presentation on distracted/drugged driving with data specific to Ashley County. The AR D&FA Dept. of Motor Vehicles office hearing officer was there to talk about traffic tickets and suspended licenses, as well as presenters from Arkansas Highway Safety Patrol. The Arkansas Trucking Association and Arkansas Best Freight pulled in an 18-wheeler with a simulator for whomever wanted to see what it's like to drive as an 18-wheeler and learn the do's and don'ts for dealing with 18-wheelers. Or the program could simulate driving a car and how to safely drive in the proximity of (how to share the road with) an 18-wheeler on the highway. We also had our own Mike Neal (a former master mechanic) demonstrate general maintenance for checking oil, antifreeze, tire air pressure, and making sure gas and fluids are adequate. If anyone wanted a demonstration on how to change a tire, he was willing to do that, too! Tempest stated she would like to do something like this again, possibly in Hamburg next fiscal year.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

May 14: Phoenix Youth & Family Services Annual Domestic Violence and Substance Use Prevention Conference

May 30: FUN DAY at E. C. Crossett Youth Center (Bouncy Houses; Dunking/Dousing a Cop; Human Hamster Balls; face-painting; balloon animals; food and fun!

Date to be announced for Sector Leader Workshop/Training Session

PRESENTATION/SPEAKER: Eric discussed a news release on the first Arkansas overdose death from a new synthetic opioid, "LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Arkansas health officials and state police are warning the public about a powerful new synthetic opioid that has surfaced in the state and is linked to a deadly first-of-its-kind counterfeit pill case. The drug, known as cyclophrine, is a synthetic opioid that Arkansas State Crime Laboratory Director and Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Theodore Brown said is about 10 times more potent than fentanyl. Brown said the drug first came to the attention of Arkansas investigators earlier this year after a young man in Central Arkansas was found dead in his bed. White tablets discovered at the scene appeared to be oxycodone, but testing later determined the pills were counterfeit and contained cyclophrine. 'That tablet was an illicit or fake tablet, and that tablet directly caused my patient's death,' Brown said. Health experts say the drug is not approved for medical use in the United States and is manufactured illegally before being mixed into other substances or pressed into counterfeit pills. Cyclophrine, first identified overseas in 2024, has since been linked to more than 40 deaths in Tennessee and has also appeared in several other states. 'We know that one pill can kill,' Brown said. 'If you consume a pill that does not come from a licensed professional, that does not come from a pharmacy, that pill cannot be trusted.' (Source: ARK Fox 16 News, May 12, 2026)"

DISCUSSION/OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Haley Chavis from Century Next Bank announced that the United Fund of Ashley County is awarding the Drug-Free Ashley County Coalition a \$1,625 grant to offer Operation Parent Handbook Informational Sessions to parents. More information will be forthcoming regarding times, dates, and locations for the sessions. The grant will allow D-FAC facilitators to purchase handbooks and provide refreshments for parent sessions. Additionally, both the Community Empowerment Council and Phoenix Youth & Family Services have also contributed books to distribute to parents.
- Lisa Riels recognized graduating Hamburg High School graduating seniors who have been members of the D-FAC Prevention Leadership Team. Students Nyla Black, Lakin Fernandez, and Jayden Tullos were presented with graduation and gift cards congratulating their accomplishments and in appreciation of their service to the Coalition and to their peers.

The general membership meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

[The officers and staff entered a closed Executive Committee meeting following the membership meeting to discuss future potential grant proposal(s).]

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 9, 4:00-5:00 pm at E. C. Crossett Youth Center

Minutes submitted by Janie Carter, Member-at-Large, Executive Committee