

Community Engagement Subcommittee Minutes – February 16th 2012

Present: Kathy Kraft, Bari Klein, Carole Boniface, Kathy Burley, Vanessa Milio (sub), Rob Bailey, Kelly Lepley, Rebecca Hartwig, Mary Nasuta, Gale Sauer, Robin Stokes-Smith.

Absent: Jeff Gilbert, Sanciarhia Jones, Jayne Klein, Katie Richardson, Mary Hastler

The meeting began with the showing of the Healthy Harford Don't Wait Activate video, and a PowerPoint presentation on the following:

- History of how we arrived at this point;
- Integration of the committee with the State Health Improvement Process (SHIP), Local Health Improvement Process (LHIP), hospital community benefits project and Community Transformation Grant;
- Framing the issue of obesity in Harford County, and defining the role of the Community Engagement Subcommittee

Many members said they would like to show the video via their respective offices. Although the video is available on-line, it was stated that to loop it or access on restricted internet was difficult. DVDs will be provided to committee members at the next meeting.

Suggestions on where to play the video included: physician waiting rooms, schools, Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), Chamber of Commerce homepage, public access TV, school websites, movie theatres, Eden Mill Nature Center, Anita Leight Estuary Center, Student Center at Harford Community College, Community Action Agency, Social Security Office, dentist offices, Upper Chesapeake Health TV's, and 95.1 Christian radio station. Also send to politicians to post on their pages or via e-mail.

The group discussed the definition of community engagement and provided suggestions on how to engage the community. These include contacting politicians to make sure parks are funded and stay open for public use, informing the community of local farm to table restaurants, and using Facebook to share information on Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs).

It was noted that the Aegis needs a health reporter, and that Ava Marie from Channel 11 seems to be open to reporting on public health issues. A good time to report health items on TV is in the morning when people are getting ready for work.

It was clearly voiced that in order to facilitate change we need to educate the community about the problem, and support engagement as part of the solution. Facebook was mentioned as a good means of engaging the community. It was noted that the present number of friends on the Healthy Harford page is small and needs to be increased. Facebook advertising was mentioned as a potential means, as was encouraging subcommittee members to like and share posts.

Reaching out to the schools, Mary Nasuta reported that Ginny Popiolek has a list of creative ways that Harford County Public Schools are initiating School Wellness Programs. Group thought it would be a great idea to highlight the more interesting ones.

Other engagement suggestions were:

- Business lunch and learns
- Volunteers in the community to educate the public
- Non-credit course at the community college
- Instructing child care centers

Since committee members come from all different backgrounds and subject matter expertise, websites were shown and an accompanying sheet was provided that listed internet sites where committee members could boost their knowledge concerning the national, state, and local conversation on obesity. The food writer Michael Pollen was used as an example of keeping messages simple, memorable, and succinct.

Dr. Hartwig suggested looking at websites such as Collaborate for a Healthy Weight (<http://www.collaborateforhealthyweight.org/>) and American Academy of Pediatrics (<http://www.aap.org>) for small grants.

Next meeting will be 8:00am Tuesday, February 28th, Harford Community College