

MEETING NOTES

Local Health Improvement Coalition TOBACCO WORKGROUP

Tuesday, June 5, 2012, 8:30 am

City of Havre de Grace Government Center, 711 Pennington Avenue, Havre de Grace, MD, 21078

Attendees: Vickie Bands, Chair (Upper Chesapeake Health System)
Greta Brand, Health Educator, Community Representative
Karen Goodison (Upper Chesapeake Health System)
Mary Kate Herbig (Harford County Law Department)
Karen McElwain (Upper Chesapeake Health System)
Laura McIntosh (HCHD, Health Policy Analyst)
Dr. Russ Moy, Deputy Health Officer (Harford County Health Department [HCHD])
Linda Pegram (HCHD, Public Health Education)
Dottie Ruff (HCHD, Public Health Education)
Anthony Scaglione (City of Havre de Grace Wellness Consultant)
Patrick Sypolt, Risk Manager (City of Havre de Grace)
Bill Wiseman (HCHD, Public Health Education)

1. General Business:

- For the benefit of new members, Ms. Bands summarized the purpose of the Tobacco Workgroup in the context of the Local Health Improvement Process, citing current adult and youth tobacco use data. It was noted that Workgroup Meeting notes would be emailed to all members, as well as posted to the HCHD website, *Harford County Local Health Improvement Process* webpage, under *Workgroups*, "Tobacco Use Prevention/Tobacco Free Living."
- Mr. Wiseman briefly discussed the relationship of concurrent tobacco-related activities being conducted by the LHIP Tobacco Workgroup and the Cigarette Restitution Fund (CRF) Tobacco Program Coalition and staff.
- Dr. Moy provided an overview of the relationship between the LHIP Tobacco Workgroup and additional, current health-related initiatives in Harford County, including the County Council Obesity Resolution, the ongoing work of Healthy Harford, and the Health Department's Community Transformation Grant. He placed emphasis on the importance of identifying and utilizing as many relevant community resources as possible with respect to the entire program of work.
- At the request of the Chair, Ms. Ruff provided an account of her CRF Tobacco Program School-based activities among youth, parents and staff of Harford County Public School students from grades K-12, alternative and private schools, and at Harford Community College. Ms. Ruff provides direct outreach through age-appropriate classroom presentations and counseling based on the interest and knowledge levels of students and adults. Due to changes in youth purchasing and tobacco use behaviors as a direct result of trends in tobacco marketing, advertising and packaging, she is placing greater emphasis on cigar and other flavored tobacco products. Dottie also has integrated among grades 4-8, a process of obtaining student "pledges" to refrain from tobacco use that are recorded on large banners.
- Mr. Sypolt and Mr. Scaglione reported on the wellness activities being undertaken in Havre de Grace with City employees.
- In response to Ms. Band's challenge to the group, there was lively discussion regarding what activities the Workgroup might engage in as well as messages the Workgroup might wish to throw its weight behind. Topics included:

- Emphasizing awareness of cigar and “Other Tobacco Product” use, particularly among youth, as much as cigarette use
- Communicating directly with area tobacco retailers regarding prohibitions against sales to minors
- Changing enforcement practices regarding the prohibition of tobacco product sales to minors to “civil” vs. “criminal” statutes in Harford County
- Establishing a “Healthy Store” designation campaign in Harford to recognize retailers that promote healthy behaviors
- Developing/implementing a campaign that focuses on making tobacco use, “uncool”; creating student competitions that provide input into messaging.
- Developing strategies for reaching parents and children, together, to promote parental tobacco use/smoking cessation
- Targeting competitive athletic team coaches and other youth leaders, offering sound-bites for promoting tobacco-free lifestyles
- Developing a strong(er) HCHD website message that promotes healthy behaviors and a tobacco-free lifestyle; translating this message into worksite wellness websites
- Creating a specific anti-tobacco message that is identifiable with the Tobacco Workgroup
- Incorporating a family-based tobacco awareness educational component into the treatment and care of patients with respiratory disease
- There was consensus that tobacco use somehow has become perceived as less of a health threat by the national and local “public” than it once was, amidst the notoriety of obesity. It was also agreed that finding ways to get tobacco use and smoking “back into the public consciousness” and “in front of people on an everyday basis” is critically and strategically important.

2. Project Scope:

- To facilitate community change through the development of more restrictive County, municipal and workplace tobacco policies
- To raise awareness of tobacco issues as related to personal and community health status
- To “light a fire” and ignite interest among Harford County residents, who despite educational and income levels higher than most counties, have higher rates of adult and youth tobacco use.

3. Action Items:

- In consideration of the discussion points (above), members are charged with the task of bringing specific ideas for presentation to the Workgroup
- Names and contact information for other prospective invitees can be forwarded to Ms. Bands for follow-up.
- Locations of meeting will rotate for the convenience of Workgroup representatives.
- Dates are set for monthly meetings, to convene alternately in Bel Air and Havre de Grace

4. Next Meeting:

- July 16, 2012, 8:30 – 10:00am, Bel Air Colored High School Building, 205 Hays Street, Bel Air, MD 21014

5. Adjournment

- 10:00am