

# MEETING NOTES

## Local Health Improvement Coalition TOBACCO WORKGROUP

Monday, February 24, 2014, 8:30 am  
Havre de Grace Municipal Building, 711 Pennington Avenue, Havre de Grace

Attendees: Vickie Bands, Chair (Upper Chesapeake Health System)  
Greta Brand (Independent Health Promotion Trainer/Educator)  
Anne Cerruto (Harford County Office on Aging)  
Karen Goodison (Upper Chesapeake Health System)  
Mary Kate Herbig (Harford County Law Department)  
Mark Lewis (Upper Chesapeake Health System)  
Karen McElwain (Upper Chesapeake Health System)  
Mallory McCloskey (HCHD, Health Policy Analyst)  
Molly Mraz (HCHD Communications)  
Dorothy Ruff (HCHD, Public Health Education)  
Patrick Sypolt (City of Havre de Grace)  
Kristie Willets (Upper Chesapeake Health System)  
Bill Wiseman (HCHD, Public Health Education)

### 1. General Business:

- Chairperson, Ms. Bands opened the meeting, welcoming the membership and introduced Molly Mraz, Communication Specialist with the Harford County Health Department.
- Ms. Mraz reported on a new HCHD CRF Tobacco Program “Tobacco Cessation Texting Program” initiative. As the name suggests, the intent of the program is to allow past, current and non- tobacco users to receive both texts and/or email messages in order to support their cessation efforts. This has been found to be an evidence-based practice according the Guide to Community Preventive Services, published in December, 2011 that “recommend(s) mobile phone-based interventions for tobacco cessation based on sufficient evidence of effectiveness in increasing tobacco use abstinence among people interested in quitting. Evidence was considered sufficient based on findings from six studies in which mobile phone-based interventions were implemented alone or in combination with Internet-based interventions.” Mobile-phone based strategies use interactive features to deliver strategies and support directly to tobacco users trying to quit. Cessation messages are crafted based on the types of information program participants want to receive. Possible topics for messages include:
  - How to handle tobacco cravings
  - Quick tobacco facts
  - Health benefits of quitting tobacco
  - Financial costs of tobacco useProgram participants receive messages at least weekly. Additionally, in order to evaluate the program, the participants are sent a survey, at least monthly, in order to determine their satisfaction with the program as well as whether the texts are helping in their efforts to quit tobacco or stay quit. This program is open to all Harford County residents, and interested individuals are able to register through the Health Department’s website or through the Tobacco Cessation Specialist. Ms. Mraz encouraged all key stakeholders to share this with their clients, distributing a flyer calling the membership to action.
- Group discussion followed the presentation in which Greta Brand asked for social media postings in order to share on her social media sites. Patrick Sieppel and Vickie Bands asked about evaluation and how that would be worked out. Mr Sypolt asked Ms. Mraz to come back at an upcoming meeting to share updates on the program.

- Ms. Bands mentioned the recently convened Maryland Million Hearts Symposium and reminded the membership that tobacco use is among their priorities for reducing heart disease morbidity and mortality.
- Ms. Bands reviewed all elements of the Tobacco Workgroup Plan of Work in 2013 in the context of determining 2014 Workgroup priorities and work plans, focusing particularly on our CTG-funded advertising campaign that included: area billboards, messaging inside Harford Transit “Link” buses, on placards posted at HCHD rabies clinics, the 30-second advertisement that appeared in Regal Cinema theatres, the car magnets that were distributed at the Harford County Farm Fair, and widely disseminated laminated posters. Currently the campaign continues through electronic messaging on the Dagger Press and Harford’s Heart websites.
- In addition, the workgroup was successful in initiating collaboration toward the proposed transition to civil enforcement (from criminal enforcement) of illegal tobacco sales to minors, and crafted a preliminary position statement on e-cigarettes.
- Ms. Bands also reported on difficulties experienced in gaining traction on smoke-free restrictions in low-income multi-unit housing communities in Harford. Some progress has been made as reported in previous meeting summaries and the initiative remains a priority of our Workgroup.
- The recent decision by CVS Pharmacies not to engage in tobacco sales was mentioned and sparked some discussion. Mark Lewis commented that initiatives could be undertaken to dialogue with insurance carriers regarding fiscal consequences related to insuring tobacco users and their potential for economic savings by instituting more prohibitive restrictions on policy-holders. Patrick Sypolt reiterated the importance of persistence of efforts and timing.
- Councilman Slutzky addressed concerns over the consumer/public perceptions of acceptability regarding e-cigarette (and similar e-paraphernalia) use in indoor facilities, and specifically in restaurants. Regarding the totality of Tobacco Workgroup initiatives, he also stressed the importance of clarity of information when communicating with community shareholders and engaging their support.
- After discussion, the Workgroup reached consensus on the following 2014 priority areas.
  - Continuation of work toward implementation of smoke-free multi-unit housing
  - Continuation of work toward implementation of civil enforcement of illegal tobacco sales to minors
  - Continuation of work toward developing a definitive position statement on e-cigarette use
  - Workplace outreach and intervention
  - Tobacco awareness counter advertising/advertising as funding permits

## **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 stimulate greater interest among Harford County residents, who despite educational and income levels higher than most counties, have higher rates of adult and youth tobacco use.
- To implement smoke-free or tobacco-free policies in multi-unit housing.
- To implement civil enforcement procedures for underage tobacco sales to minors.

## **3. Action Items:**

- Review drafts of civil enforcement legislation and related materials
- Review draft of electronic cigarette (E-cig) position statement and related materials

## **4. Next Meeting:**

- 8:30am, March 17, 2014  
Historic Colored High School, 205 S. Hays Street, Bel Air, MD, 21014

## **5. Adjournment**

- 10:05am