



GATHER/GTHHSC Substance Abuse Committee 3/16/06, 3:30, CCBC



Mission: The GATHER/GTHHSC Substance Abuse Committee addresses health and social issues in the Greater Attleboro/Taunton communities resulting from substance abuse.

Vision: This is accomplished by coordinating with existing community resources to heighten public awareness and to develop programs to prevent, reduce and treat substance abuse.

Attendees: Douglas Barbour (North Cottage), Deborah Brown (TPS), Valerie Calais (Arbour-Fuller), Arlene Dickinson (Southbay Mental Health), Annie Gallagher (CPI), Chris Hoeth (Superior Court), Kathy Lalor (CPI), Michael Meleedy (CCBC), Lorraine Rosa (Staff), Maggie Thomson (High Point), Dora Treacy (Taunton Police Department)

Discussion Highlights:

School Drug Policies - Taunton's district wide policy is drafted and includes use of a breathalyzer test. The final policy will be read at 3 school committee meetings, and parents will receive letters. Once it becomes policy, staff will be trained. The policy will state purpose, what the school is trying to prevent and procedures.

After Prom Parties Awareness Campaign

- Prom/graduation safety awareness letters were reviewed. Suggested recipients include GATHER area parents of juniors and seniors, hotel managers, liquor store managers and police departments.
- Press releases highlighting prom safety and liability will be sent to local newspapers, television, cable and radio. It will also be the topic of a local cable police show, presented by concerned high school students.
- Student volunteers will make follow up phone calls in June to assess effectiveness for continuation next year.

Tobacco Mini-Grant Update – Two THS students attended advocacy training. Students brainstormed what they want to change, then wrote a petition, letter, and set up a meeting. A college leader works with students. Peers will meet to select a poster slogan based on a perception survey of students. Later, focus groups will discuss the message, then posters will be printed and distributed. A new survey will be done on 4/25/06.

Area Practices – New Bedford's Students Assistance Program is a voluntary random drug testing program. Parent orientations for understanding the benefits and limitations will be held this month. Participants will receive incentives and discounts from businesses, and parents and students will have a go to point for help with substance abuse issues. Parents will also receive information about how to talk to their kids about drugs. If the discrete saliva test is positive, parents are contacted and further follow up is provided. If negative, parents receive a congratulatory call. Students will receive a drug free employment card they can show employers. This first of its kind program in MA is open to the whole student body.

Fact Sheet: From Policy Impact Communications

- MA House Mental Health and Substance Abuse Committee Recommends Decriminalizing Marijuana from \$500 fine and up to 6 months in jail to \$250 fine for possession (for less than 1 oz)
- AdCare North Dartmouth Outpatient Clinic at 88 Faunce Corner Road is offering a College Substance Abuse Education Group. Aimed at students who have reached an extreme of SA (alcohol and gambling included), with some students coming to the program through court referrals or at the request of parents. Meetings are weekly for 1 ½ hours as a group, and weekly individually with a counselor.
- What's Wrong with Moderation – Most international students are taught to drink responsibly while still under the guidance of their parents, in social situations without getting drunk. It is different in the United States where students may see alcohol as a forbidden pleasure, and as much of it as possible should be consumed when given the opportunity.
- More Female Nonsmokers Dying of Lung Cancer – The same amount of tobacco exposure is more likely to lead to the changes that cause lung cancer in a woman than the male counterpart who gets the same secondhand exposure. About 15,000 nonsmoking women die of lung cancer annually. More women die annually from lung cancer than breast and ovarian cancer combined.
- Taking It On Herself To Sound A Warning – Losing her boyfriend made Haley Cyr speak up about teen drinking. Last November 4, 2005, her boyfriend, who had been drinking wanted her to come with him to

Wendy's. This time, she offered to drive, but when he repeatedly refused the offer and accused her of not trusting him, she walked away. He died in a crash as well as did a friend who accompanied him. Police are pursuing charges against a 17 year old and his mother for allegedly hosting a house party that day. Haley now shares her boyfriend's story at school assembly programs with other teens in hopes they will make good decisions when it comes to alcohol. She feels personal stories carry more sway with teens, especially girls, when they are told by other teens. She doesn't believe the story will stop teens from drinking, but hopes it will persuade some not to drive drunk or get into a car with a drunk driver.

From Tobacco in the News: Campaign for Tobacco-Free kids:

- Government officials gathered in Geneva at the WHO for the first meeting of the ratifying parties of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the global tobacco treaty that became law last year. The United States did not participate in any of the proceedings – including those on key smuggling provisions important to the U.S. – because it has not yet ratified the treaty. Although the Administration signed it in May 2004, it failed to send it to the Senate for ratification.
- Cancer deaths decline, but 1/3 of all cancer deaths remain attributable to tobacco use
- More than 500 internet websites sell tobacco products at lower prices, because they do not include excise or sales tax.

Next Steps:

- ☐ Prom Letters: Get legal advice for prom safety awareness letters to parents, hotels, police, liquor stores and press, then send. Include a “heads up” of dates and towns of events. Create mailing list with high school students.
- ☐ Press Releases: Create press releases for local newspapers, television and radio and distribute to GATHER area media.

Next Meeting: 4/19/06, 3:30, CCBC Family Conference Room, Mill River Professional Center, 1 Washington St.

Contact Persons: Arlene Dickinson, 508-223-4691, Lorraine Rosa, 508-823-4822



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AGENDA

4/19/06, 3:30, CCBC, 1 Washington St., Mill River Place



I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Attleboro + Taunton Area Updates and Trends

III. Grants and Budget

IV. Coalition Building and Technical Assistance: Geographic representation from *GATHER communities* and the following sectors: *Youth, parents, business, media, schools, youth organizations, law enforcement, religious or fraternal, civic, healthcare, state or local government, other*

V. The Role of Community Volunteers

VI. Rolling Up Our Sleeves:

- Prom Season Update
- Next Committee Project

VII. Announcements

VIII. April Agenda (To reflect both Attleboro and Taunton Areas) and Meeting Date/Place

Serving the communities of Attleboro, Berkley, Dighton, Lakeville, Mansfield, Middleboro, North Attleboro, Norton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Seekonk and Taunton