



GATHER/GTHHSC Substance Abuse Committee 2/8/06, 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), Dawn DeCosta (Hockomock YMCA), Arlene Dickinson (Southbay Mental Health), Annie Gallagher (CPI), Gene Hart (Community Care Services), Kathy Lalor (CPI), Garret Madison (Probation), Kelley Mann (CCBC), Michael Meleedy (CCBC), Lorraine Rosa (Staff)

Discussion Highlights:

Networking/Coalition Building – One of the topics Attleboro adjustment counselors discussed at a recent meeting was that of school drug policies. Attendees expressed interest in the “Guiding Good Choices” parenting program. Attleboro schools have been active in several Substance Abuse Round Tables (SARTs).

School Drug Policies – Good examples of school drug policies are those of colleges and universities. These educate and present boundaries. Schools often deal with discipline problems and leave substance abuse problems to the community. Taunton’s policy is drafted and includes use of a breathalyzer test. Other high schools have used these successfully, and may use Ph strips and a flash light devise that shows when alcohol is present on breath.

Youth Treatment - Group counseling is difficult to provide to teens due to insurance coverage and shortage of science based research at this time, to prove that it works well with youth. Juvenile court, judges, probation, case management and parents need to be involved in mandated treatment and consequences. The local first offenders program, Community Drug Education, is a good example of a program that works. Attendees can maintain a clean record by attending the program, keeping them eligible for college loans, entering the military and not limiting employment possibilities. (Possession with intent is a felony).

After Prom Parties Concern – It is essential that parents and youth be involved in planning and supporting successful after prom parties. The following are area best practices:

- North Attleboro High School is using the YMCA for an all night party, and has use of the community room, computer labs, and pool with lifeguard supervision. Parents are welcome and invited, and are encouraged to bring pizza and other food. Area businesses such as Dominos Pizza and Dunkin Donuts have donated snacks at past school events. YMCAs work closely with schools and are insured.
- Old Rochester High School has provided all night use of the YMCA and facilities (rock climbing wall)
- Other all night events with a donated pancake breakfast and a raffle at 5:00 am for a donated used car or a year of car insurance
- Durfee High School is doing a bus trip to a ship in Boston. Attendance requires parents pick them up at 1:00am.
- A Hawaiian Luau or other theme-based party.



Grant Proposal – T.H.S. SADD Chapter has written a \$200 Governor’s Safety grant for parent awareness and peer leadership. They are looking into distribution of a 15 minute CD for parents, a cable show with parents and youth, and use of a pre-prom awareness video.

Committee Goals for 2006:

- Reduce the availability of alcohol to minors.
- Increase balanced representation by increasing attendance and variety of membership
- Encourage involvement and support of parents in the prevention and treatment of adolescents
- Explore SARTs as a vehicle to educate the community
- Address mental health needs of adults and children and the harm reduction model
- Support a social norms approach to promote positive behavior among youth

Announcement: Arbour-Fuller Hospital publishes a Referral Guide which contains a clinical specialties grid with information from each of their facilities. For 24-hour access, call **800-652-5222**.

Fact Sheet: From PolicyImpact Communications

Awareness Campaign (Fitchburg Sentinel) targets adults to combat problems of underage drinking. Parents feel pressure to provide alcohol to their children hosting parties at their homes, and young adults purchase alcohol for teenagers. Drinking is hitting middle schools now. The Fitchburg and Leominster group is starting with YRBSurvey and interviews with children, parents, business owners and school officials to grasp the amount of underage drinking and who is providing the alcohol. They are also doing a sticker shock campaign that states “Providing alcohol to underage people is a CRIME! Penalties may include: Arrest, A fine up to \$2,000 and/or imprisonment up to six months. Thank you for being part of the solution”.

Working Together to Prevent Underage Drinking (Medford Transcript) – Two actions that reduce underage drinking include: 1. Parents keeping tabs and keeping lines of communication open and giving logical consequences. 2. Make it difficult for minors to access alcohol at home or through other adults.

Trends: (Metrowest Daily News, “Treatment Pays Off” – MA exceeds the national average in substance abuse. Almost 40,000 in the state need treatment but aren’t receiving care.

- Alcohol abuse causes more than 200 traffic deaths each year
- Last year’s cost was \$304.5 million
- Drug overdose caused another 574 deaths in 2003
- Millions more are needed to process, feed and house the 1 in 5 prisoners convicted of a drug related crime, plus offenders who commit crimes under the influence or to support a habit.

New Choice in Drug Abuse (Boston Globe) – Prescription drugs, available in family medicine cabinets and online for \$2-5 per does, are the new gateway drug.

Next Steps:

- ☐ Create a parent letter citing the concern of unsupervised youth renting hotel rooms after prom (Deb, SADD)
- ☐ Look for funding to bring Teen Topics back to Taunton middle schools and for an awareness campaign about the trend towards after prom parties in hotel rooms. (Lorraine)
- ☐ Attend “3 Rs of Volunteer Management” workshop (Lorraine)

Next Meeting: **3/15/06, 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

3/15/06, 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. Discussion Topic: After Prom Parties in Hotel Rooms – Changing a “Norm” – What steps do we take?

VI. Discussion Topic: The Role of the Police on the SAC

VII. Announcements

VIII. March 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, Plainville, Raynham, Rehoboth, Seekonk and Taunton