

*Vermont Drug & Alcohol Coalition
Meeting Minutes
December 5, 2007*

Mission Statement: The Vermont Drug and Alcohol Coalition exist to continually improve access to quality prevention, intervention, treatment, enforcement, and recovery services and programs for all Vermonters.

Present: Debby Haskins, Dawn Jorgensen, Joy Mitchell, David O'Brien, John Searles, Patty McCarthy, Ken Libertoff, Kim Martin, Mark Ames, Connie Cooke, Steve Waldo and Connie Beal; a big thanks to Connie for taking the minutes.

(Jeanice Garfield has tendered her resignation; effectively immediately.)

Additions to the Agenda:

David suggested that the group discuss loose-ends of looking to coalitions to get more ideas for the “shelf-life” of the YRBS data.

Patty raised the ongoing conversation about a “work-study” position/intern in collaboration with Coalition of Substance Abuse & Older Vermonters.

Debby brought up Alcohol Awareness month 2008 and asked how we will use coalitions and town hall forums, and what “our” role is in this?

Patty asked for follow-up on the VDAC event planning for May 2008.

John Searles, Vermont Department of Health

Guest Speaker

“The Minimum Legal Drinking Age: A Data-Based Perspective”

- In summary, John presented an in-depth review of the literature & provided international comparisons of issues related to the minimum legal drinking age (MLDA). Further, the presentation explored the argument put forth by “chooseresponsibility.org” (John McCardell) and offered data points to contradict McCardell’s position to lower the MLDA to 18.

Patty suggested that it would be helpful to incorporate data on “college dropouts/grades, participation, jobs” into the presentation. **John** explained that the presentation will be available electronically and through the Prevention Consultants. **Debby** asked what the data says about raising the MLDA to 25? **John** suggested that this may sound ideal, but “politically, no.” **Ken** added his concern that by “elevating the issue” and draws unnecessary attention to the issue. **David** remarked that when we talk with parents, they’re the ones not sure what to do yet in terms of decision making around alcohol and youth and that the people listening include parents, too. **Patty** asked about how much the state loses in transportation funds if the MLDA is lowered. **John** said that 10% (or about \$2 million) is lost if a state lowers the MLDA. **Ken** stated that the culture of drinking in school has developed & is not to be ignored. **Steve** stated his interest in getting a hold of John’s presentation and expressed concern that people are not talking to those who lived through what happened during the 1970s & 1980s when the MLDA was lowered to 18 (e.g. retired police officers). **Debby** said she would like to have John come back to speak and that it would be a good idea to have John McCardell speak at the Governor’s

meeting. **John** will have presentation ready to distribute by January 1st (will email) and suggested folks take a look at a letter to the editor that was published in Seven Days and posted on the website www.why21.org. **Dawn** explained that this is about cultural norms and where communities are going to get their information to make decisions (“It’s about who’s going to be the loudest and utilize environmental strategies”).

Legislative Update, Ken Libertoff

Ken took some time to discuss the upcoming legislative season as January is fast approaching. January 8th the legislature begins meeting and it’s important to have representation/voice at the state house. Ken presented 2 significant points:

1. The Governor will present a very “lean” budget.
2. There will be hearings held (Treatment/Prevention/Recovery)

Ken will be organizing a several-day forum of prevention, treatment, & recovery community for chair of Health & Welfare Committee. **Ken** handed out the legislative priorities for the Vermont Association for Mental Health (VAMH). **Ken** explained the budget process. Furthermore, he explained that the VT State Hospital closing & replacement strategy will be a major project for VAMH (hearings will be held).

Debby explained to the group that Jim Bellino will be retiring, his position will be rehired, but that his legislative piece may not carry over.

Next Meeting: Wed. January 23, 2008

Location: Dept of Liquor Control from 12:30-2:30.

Future Meetings: Meeting Dates: Feb. 27th 1-3 pm @ the Pavilion, 4th floor, March 26th, April 23 rd @ Pavilion 1-3 pm, May 28, June 25th

Dates to Remember:

<p>April is National Alcohol Screening Day March 27th – Social Norms Marketing- ASAP sponsored March 28th – Recovery Day at the State House. May 2008 Legislative Day</p>
