

Vermont Drug and Alcohol Coalition

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

January 27, 2010 Minutes

Present: David O'Brien, Christine Peterson, Patty McCarthy, Mark Ames, Carol Rose, Kelly Dolan, Dennis Menard, Kerri MacLaury and Julie Tessler

By phone –Terri Daniels

Action Steps:

- Christine will check with Connie Beale about the comprehensive list that she was working on
- Kim will add Dennis Menard to VDAC list
- Kim will ask Jim about update on the legislative bills weekly that goes out to VDAC, broader list and capt list serve
- Christine will check with Mary regarding Franklin County attending a VDAC meeting
- Contact Barbara Postman from Vermont Children's Forum or Kid's Vermont to help with having a presence at state house days
- Mark will talk to Joey Donovan, Patty will talk to Virginia about beer tax
- Patty will invite Barbara to next meeting

Julie Tessler from VT Council of Developmental and Mental Health Services was invited to the VDAC meeting to see how we can work together. We can't speak about substance abuse without speaking about mental health. Julie has her pulse on what is going at the state level. Julie gave the board a description of what she does. The VT Council of Developmental and Mental Health Services is the trade association for community mental health centers and developmental disability agencies. There are 17 members and most provide co-occurring services. Her role is to be a lobbyist/advocate for the trade association. This morning they held a mental health day at the state house.

The last 5 years there has been huge support both in administration and legislature for substance abuse services, this is evident in corrections and institutions. When we treat people with substance abuse issues in communities we will have less people going into correctional facilities. State should focus on having adequate support for substance abuse issues in community in order to be saving the state money. Julie focuses on budgetary issues more than policies. She is willing to support our priorities and identified shared goals; she always needs to be educated.

The mental health day went well, more people were involved and also helped plan the event. They took testimony and had a press conference in Cedar Creek room. Had consumers and families there telling stories which made things more real. Goal was to have more informed dialog. The good news for substance abuse is that we were left off the budgetary hit list. Patty talked about testimonies today and loved what they did. Hoped it will be an annual event.

Julie has not heard about the adolescent residential treatment program. Heard that program has not been overly utilized. David mentioned that at the director's meeting they are taking issue about the cuts and data about Valley Vista. Barbara feels that community treatment is more cost effective in terms of dollars invested and would rather see more dollars invested in community treatment. Patty concerned about adolescent treatment program cuts. Mark talked about referrals coming out of DCF, it's worth having more in depth look at the issues. Patty mentioned knowing our priorities are important and our number one priority is financially sustaining whole system.

Kerri MacLaury from Southshire Substance Abuse Coalition talked about how we are throwing money and time into population who are already in need of services. She would like to know more about how to educate a parent about developmental and mental health throughout a kid's growth before they are using. This is how you build those skills and relationship though out their growing up so when they get to adolescence they have those skills already. This would require a big shift in the prevention world. It's co-occurring prevention.

Patty mentioned the early child hood day at the state house; early childhood program days would be a good way to get the treatment, recovery, prevention etc. voices heard too. We should have a table to represent substance abuse in those areas.

Julie suggested contacting Barbara Postman from Vermont Children's Forum or Kid's Vermont to help with this. March 11th is Recovery Day, VDAC used to have a legislative day, it was smaller but we should think about piggy backing on what is already happening. David mentioned we have strong substance abuse coalitions but not mental health community coalitions. On treatment side the field is coming together with substance abuse and mental health. Continue conversation around another integration, empower coalitions to become broader. It's all about wellness.

Emma asked Dennis Menard, Director of Washington County Diversion to come to meeting to represent law enforcement. Over half of their case load is from alcohol and marijuana tickets.

Christine talked about the advisory council meeting and the legislative bill tracking –Jim used to do this and currently we are not sure if this is being done at all. Patty talked about how difficult it is to sort through all the bills. In the past this tracking has been easily posted on the website and distributed on the list serve. Christine will check in with Kim regarding Jim doing this again. Also Barbara approached Patty about giving ADAP funding to VDAC.

Review and approve minutes from October and December 2009 meetings: Minutes from last two meetings were reviewed. David and Christine motioned to approve and Patty and Mark seconds. Minutes accepted as written.

Treasurer's report: Mark reported that it is safe to say that \$220 has come in as dues, Buffy received \$60 and Kim received \$362.50 for administrative work. Total is \$1955.09 in budget.

Membership report: We have had some response to renewals; four new members have joined the coalition. We have 16 paid members, all prevention coalitions except for the Howard Center. David appreciates the timely minutes and agendas. Glad we are spending the money, Kim is doing a good job.

Old Business: Review December Action Steps

Kim reserved a day at the state house for 2011. Christine will check the date and let everyone know. In the past we have been the catalyst for doing a wide awareness day.

Prevention Works reserved the state house lawn for April 14th for prevention day. They will begin planning for this next week.

Alcohol Awareness month is April. Would VDAC want to do something? In the past we have received grants from SAMHSA to have Town Hall meetings. We may include in ADAP funding proposal to do another event like this.

Members reviewed the rest of the action steps, not sure if list of legislators went out from Ken. Discussed being ready for a rally to respond to budget cuts, Patty felt that we could use the list serve to send out an alert to make everyone aware.

Survey went out to members.

Alcohol tax graphic went to Emma.

Christine will follow up with Connie regarding comprehensive list.

Dennis was asked to come to meeting to represent law enforcement. We want a unified voice around substance abuse, Diversion deals with underage drinking and marijuana use.

Dennis talked about Diversion programs. There is a diversion program in every county. Washington County has 3rd highest case load in state, 600-800 cases/ year; 250-300 are criminal court referrals from family and district court which include marijuana possession, underage drinking, shoplifting, embezzlement and vandalism.

Biggest chunk is the Teen Alcohol Safety Program (TASP). Direct referrals from police officers, ticket goes straight to diversion. It is voluntary. Most people do this or offender pays a \$300 fine, gets a 90 day license suspension and it becomes part of motor vehicle record. TASP process includes seeing case managers, and having intake interviews. The criminal cases see the diversion board that hears cases, meets with people and works with them to come up with contract. The other cases get an administrative contract that includes alcohol

assessment, community service hours and contract clause about abstinence from substances. In both cases, if they successfully complete contract their case is dismissed.

Diversion gets a wide spectrum of people, 16-20 year olds those who blew a .25 and those who just were handed a beer at a party, assessment is tailored to who they are. Fine is always \$300 and hasn't changed since 1999. Dennis would like to see this taken out of statute so that it can be made more administrative and raised. Carol was curious about repeat offenders and tracking number of offenses. There is a statewide data base now. Not aware of any data on those who pay ticket as opposed to going through program. Every 4 years there are a whole new set of 16-20 year olds.

The Substance Abuse Advisory Council has been looking at the social host ordinances and whether the system is broken. Willa surveyed the directors about social hosting. In Washington County most all the cases (90%) are referred to diversion. In three years, Dennis has not seen any parent providing or enabling cases. Most are older people, in their 20's. There is vigorous follow up from law enforcement of tracing back to where the alcohol came from at a party.

Dennis thinks that the word is out there for parents, not an upside for parents to provide other than being a cool parent. 22 year olds are getting alcohol for 18 year olds. Good argument for keeping drinking age at 21, otherwise the 18 year olds will be providing for younger teens.

Diversion tasks for providing or enabling a minor tend to include community service and a learning aspect as well, such as research, or interviewing a police officer. Look at Diversion first for any first offender except for extreme violence etc.

Question was raised about why we need both diversion and community justice centers? Diversion cases are pre adjudicated. Probable cause has been found by a judge. Reparative boards are all people that are post adjudication. Potentially some overlap when community justice centers take some pre-charge cases, which are direct referrals from law enforcement officers, never get sent to prosecutor first. Dennis disagrees with this, because we elect the prosecutor and it gives people voice in their county. Dennis will try and attend VDAC meetings when he can.

David sent treatment list to Kim.

Kim will ask Jim about update on the legislative bills weekly that goes out to VDAC, and broader list and capt list serve.

Patty and Christine will talk to Barbara Cigmaglio more about funding and then write up a quick proposal and get to Barbara. We will frame our work as public awareness/information and look at it as an opportunity to conduct a membership campaign based on matching funds. We can provide a voice that they can't provide, can do things that they can't. Without Ken L. funding could be used to continue this mental health work. State offices benefit from having our voice.

Christine talked about Dr Jernigan's visit and the post meeting where long range planning was conducted, such as the beer tax, (the governor does not want to raise taxes). VT is in the middle of state tax rates (about 35th). NH and Maine are higher than VT, NY and MA's are lower. Beer tax is a poor person's tax and we will get a lot of push back from microbrews. Jernigan believes it is a proven strategy. Patty wants to make sure the revenue goes toward programs not roads. Last year Joey Donovan introduced beer tax bill. Mark will talk to Joey Donovan, Patty will talk to Virginia. Jernigan says kids are price sensitive, historically beer was more expensive than milk, juice, now much cheaper. Not a lot of kids going into stores buying beer, they are stealing from parents or getting it from older kids. Research says it reduces use, it is an expensive problem in society. Discussion followed about retail outlet densities, shoulder taps, increasing penalties, education, advertising and perceptions of risk. Board agreed that we should dedicate more time at next meeting to talk about Dr. Jernigan's recommendations.

Mark suggested that we invite Barbara to next meeting. Patty will ask her.

Next meeting: February 24th, 12:30 - 2:30PM at the Pavilion, Montpelier, 4th floor

March 24th 12:30 - 2:30PM at the Pavilion, Montpelier, 4th floor

April 21nd 12:30 - 2:30PM at the Pavilion, Montpelier, 4th floor

May 26th 12:30 - 2:30PM at the Pavilion, Montpelier, 4th floor

June 23rd 12:30 - 2:30PM at DLC

July 21st 12:30 - 2:30PM at DLC

August 25th 12:30 - 2:30PM at DLC

September 22nd 12:30 - 2:30PM at DLC

October 27th 12:30 - 2:30PM at DLC

November/December combined meeting TBA

Adjourned: ?

Respectfully submitted: Kim Martin