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## Minutes 1\_19\_12

AYHSC Minutes – January 19, 2012  
5:30pm-7:00pm

**I. Welcome:** Joe Curro, Cindy Sheridan Curran, Carlene Newell, Judith Carroll, Laura Juitt, Richard Flynn, Jack Flood, Ned Walsh, Colleen Leger, Lynn Horgan

Colleen informed members that the medical marijuana policy presentation and discussion would be postponed until the next meeting, due to low attendance. Interested members can learn more about the history and opposing perspectives on the issue at: <http://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/>. Colleen welcomed new member Laura. Laura is a recent graduate of the Guiding Good Choices program and is interested in learning more about the Coalition. Laura shared with the group her interest in working with teenage girls, and her desire to develop programming that promotes a strong sense of self and optimizes community involvement.

### II. Upcoming Trainings and Events:

Designer Drugs: The New Frontier- Webinar, January 26<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-2:00pm (available on an ongoing basis as a webcast). Colleen encouraged members to take advantage of the free webinar, which will offer current information on synthetic drugs (such as K2, spice and bath salts), their associated risks and efforts to prevent their use. You can view at: [http://www.mctft.com/telecasts/view\\_course.aspx?telecastID=2012-01-26-1](http://www.mctft.com/telecasts/view_course.aspx?telecastID=2012-01-26-1). Colleen offered members a copy of a recent NPR article (shared by coalition member Karen Dillon) on the devastating effects of the stimulant drug called "bath salts".

Parent Focus Group: We are looking for middle and high school parents to participate in a focus group on Tuesday, 1/31/12, from 6:30-8:00 pm, at the Whittemore Robbins House. This effort is part of the Diversion Expansion Project, a collaborative project of AYHSC and Arlington Youth Counseling Center (AYCC). The goal of Diversion Expansion is to understand and address the treatment needs of underserved, substance-involved youth. A youth focus group was held with Ottoson students today (1/19/12). Tomorrow there will be two youth focus groups at Arlington High School (AHS), and next week, there will be a focus group with AHS staff and faculty.

Food and Activity Policy Council Grant- Application deadline: February 17, 2012. This is a 2-year grant (up to \$7,500/year) offered by the Community Health Area (CHNA-17), with funding from Mount Auburn Hospital. The CHNA 17 is comprised of six member communities (Watertown, Arlington, Cambridge, Somerville, Waltham and Belmont). This grant will support existing or new local food and activity policy councils. Policies supported by these councils will increase the availability of healthy foods and opportunities for exercise and movement, particularly with vulnerable populations, with the long-term goal of preventing obesity and chronic disease. The link to grant guidelines is: <http://www.chna17.org/health-initiatives/obesity-and-active-living>

Drug Free Communities Grant (DFC) Continuation Application (Year 5) – Application deadline: February 22, 2012. AYHSC receives \$125,000 in federal funding each year from the Drug Free Communities Program. We are currently in our 4<sup>th</sup> year of this 5-year grant, and we will be submitting our application for our 5<sup>th</sup> (and final) year, which begins October 1<sup>st</sup>. We are looking for Coalition members to help draft an action plan for this continuation grant. Colleen encouraged member participation in this process, which will examine opportunities for strengthening the Coalition's internal capacity, as well as addressing specific local issues around youth substance use. Additionally, this process will allow members to look at ways to increase overall community collaboration.

Colleen provided copies of last year's AYHSC action plan as an example.

### III. Coalition Updates

Parent Forum: Mindfulness – This forum took place at the Ottoson Middle School (OMS) on Wednesday, 1/18/12 and featured the talented Adam Liss. Adam was a captivating speaker who provided an overview of the Mindful Schools curriculum (16 sessions -2x/wk for 8 weeks) to an audience of about 50 parents/teachers. Parents seemed really interested in the presentation, and several expressed support for additional teacher trainings. The program teaches a variety of exercises to help kids stay focused, including purposeful listening as a means of refocusing attention and managing distracting thoughts. This type of program is useful for all populations, including children with special needs, and has been demonstrated to decrease behavioral issues and increase test scores. Coalition member Rebecca Wolfe, who was trained to use Arlington Community Media Inc. (ACMI) equipment, filmed the presentation. Eventually, this will be converted and aired on local access television.

Table Talks/Parent Coffees (name TBD): Lynn provided an overview of this program model that provides parents a comfortable opportunity to communicate openly with one other about underage alcohol/substance use and discuss strategies for prevention. The model was developed as a joint effort by the Maine Office of Substance Abuse, the 21 Reasons Coalition, and the Maine Environmental Substance Abuse Prevention Center. The coalition planning committee (Rebecca, Nina, Karen, Lynn & Colleen) have analyzed the contents of the program and made appropriate revisions, based on the needs of our community needs. The model includes a quiz to assess knowledge of local statistics, local and statewide laws, and other prevention strategies. Lynn administered the quiz to Coalition members, and asked for feedback. Members provided a variety of constructive suggestions, including a suggestion by Carlene to pilot this program at the spring community forum. Joe suggested targeting parents of children preparing for transitional years (ex. 5<sup>th</sup> to Middle School and 8<sup>th</sup> to High School). Perhaps the Coalition could offer parents a “what to expect,” type of resource.

#### Spring Town Hall Meeting/Parent Forum – April or May

The Coalition will receive a federal stipend to host a community forum this spring. Member assistance will be needed to plan this event. Members discussed the idea of using the Table Talk model at the forum, which would involve having multiple, facilitated small group discussions. Members felt it would be useful for the Coalition to provide the attendees with current local information, resources (such as materials and useful website references) to increase parent/caregiver awareness related to youth substance use. Colleen stated the results of the AHS-Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) would be ready in March.

Safe Homes: Colleen provided a summary of the Safe Homes initiative, at the suggestion of Coalition member, Cindy Starks. Safe Homes aims to foster networking opportunities and support among parents who want to prevent underage drinking and drug use. Interested parents are invited to sign a pledge agreeing to play an active role in preventing teen substance use. A parent registry (of parents who pledged) is then created and distributed to facilitate communication among parents. Carlene mentioned this was implemented in the past. One suggestion was made to offer this as a resource to Table Talks participants.