



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Minutes 2_16_12

AYHSC Minutes – February 16, 2012
4:00pm – 5:30pm

I. Welcome (15) Rebecca Wolfe, Captain Richard Flynn, Cindy Bouvier, Cindy Sheridan Curran, Derek Curran, Laura Juitt, Jack Flood, Ned Walsh, Colleen Leger, Lynn Horgan, Aimee Gagnon, Ethel Doyle, Mary Decourcey, John Scheft, Judith Carrol

The meeting began with brief introductions. Colleen welcomed new members Derek Curran, Director of the Arlington Boys & Girls Club and Aimee Gagnon, Teen Librarian at the Robbins Library. Colleen informed the group that she would be submitting the Coalition Year 5 Action Plan with the DFC Continuation Application, and that additional member input would be welcomed.

II. Upcoming Trainings and Events

SALSA (Students Advocating Life without Substance Abuse): A Peer Leadership Model (Webinar)

This webinar is being offered tomorrow February 17, 2012 from 1:00-2:00 pm. This program engages student leaders through role modeling to younger students and the commitment to be substance-free. The webinar will provide a summary of the goals, challenges and best practices of the SALSA program, while highlighting the social norms approach to substance abuse prevention. This model may offer opportunities for our AHS SADD group to consider.

Serving as an Agent of Local Alcohol Licensing Board - 3 Series (3/7-3/9, 3/27-3/29, and 6/18-6/20)

This course will be offered by Law Enforcement Dimensions (John Scheft) & J.B.S Professional Services. It will address the retail regulation of alcohol at bars, restaurants, package stores and other locations. Colleen invited Arlington Police Officers and Coalition members to attend and encouraged members to try to get the word out to the community. Topics addressed will include cops & shops, temporary/one day licenses, TIP certification and regulation criteria. John added that part of the training will occur at an actual bar. Cost is \$325 with the rate reduced for more attendees. Colleen stated the Coalition has money to send 1-2 members to this training.

III. Coalition Updates

Prevention News

Alcohol advertising

Beginning 7/1/12, the MBTA will no longer allow alcohol advertising in MBTA stations or in/on subway cars, trains and buses. Credit for this ban goes to local advocacy groups, including the Allston-Brighton Substance Abuse Task Force and Supporting an Alcohol Ad-Free Environment in Massachusetts ([SAFE MA](#)).

The move comes as proposed legislation to ban alcohol advertising on state owned property gains momentum. Colleen informed the group that House Bill 851 –An Act prohibiting alcohol advertising on Commonwealth Property is now with the House committee on Ways and Means. Colleen will send out information to anyone interested in learning more about this bill.

Prescription drug monitoring & take back programs

A recent review of drug takeback programs nationwide found that programs vary considerably in terms of efficiency and comprehensiveness, and that more data are needed to determine whether take backs reduce the size and scope of the prescription drug epidemic. Carnevale Associates summarized their findings in a

policy brief, in which they also recommended increased research and funding for prescription drug monitoring systems (PDMPs) as a means of modifying medical practitioners' prescribing behavior. MA Senate Bill 2122 aims to strengthen the current prescription drug monitoring program in MA, among other ways, by mandating that prescribing practitioners register with the program, and utilize it prior to issuing prescriptions for narcotics. John added that the bill would also include a reporting requirement that would inform local law enforcement of incidents involving lost or stolen controlled substances. Members inquired about locked box options and pharmacy involvement in this process. Colleen informed the group that AYHSC/APD drug takebacks always include the collection of controlled substances/ narcotics.

Binge Drinking

The CDC recently released a report on the prevalence, frequency and intensity of binge drinking among adults in the US. According to national data collected in 2010, Massachusetts has one of the highest percentages of adults who binge drink (binge drinking is defined as men drinking 5 or more drinks, or women drinking 4 or more drinks, in a short period of time). This report highlighted some key concerns, including that more than half of the alcohol adults drink is while binge drinking, and that more than 90% of the alcohol *youth* drink is while binge drinking. The following is a link to a summary of the findings:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Vitalsigns/pdf/2012-01-vitalsigns.pdf>

Drug Free Communities (DFC) Action Plan -Year 5

This is the final year of our DFC grant. This year, Colleen proposed we increase education on the risks of marijuana use. Many youth (and adults) do not perceive marijuana use as that harmful, or as addictive. Education is needed on some of the health risks associated with use marijuana use, as well as the social, legal and potential mental health implications. Members inquired about local conditions asking, "What is easier to get a hold of alcohol or marijuana"? While the Youth Risk Behavior Survey does not ask specifically about youth access to marijuana, this would be a good question to consider asking, perhaps as part of a focus group. Derek mentioned that youth may think marijuana use is not as bad for them as alcohol, that it is legal, so it is fine to use.

Year 5 Action Plan:

Members generated many ideas on a number of topics, including:

- Marijuana use: promote youth education, conduct youth focus groups to assess perception of access, promote adult education on topics such as perception of use, perception of harm, modeling behaviors and the messages adults are sending to youth. Members also suggested raising awareness about the legal consequences associated with marijuana use and distribution, and about how THC potency has increased over the years.
- Parent support: Engage and guide parents who have students transitioning from elementary to middle school, and from middle school to high school.
- Collaboration: Continue partnering with youth serving agencies to offer parent/youth enrichment on topics such as stress management and social skills development.
- Communication: Increase community outreach by using social media. Members discussed the possibilities of developing an external website, using Facebook, and sending prevention information to principals to include in their parent newsletters.
- Enforcement: Conduct compliance checks of dangerous, unregulated substances such as bath salts and K-2 ("synthetic marijuana"). John informed the group that there is a law that could be used to hold retail establishments accountable for selling harmful products. Prior to enforcing consequences, however, we would need to identify establishments where such products are being sold, educate retailers on their harmfulness, and monitor sales.

Colleen explained that next year will be our 5th and final year of our DFC grant, but that we will be eligible to apply for another 5-year grant. Since we were awarded the grant in 2008, there have been funding cuts to the program, and there are now (and will continue to be) fewer grants awarded by DFC. Our action plan for next year will include capacity building measures (strengthening leadership structure, maximizing committee work, and clarifying organizational policies and procedures). Colleen asked the group to consider coalition sustainability, and inquired,

“what do we want to sustain if we experience a loss of funding” and “how can we effect policy and practice change that will have a lasting impact?”

Spring Forum:

Over the past couple of months, a Coalition planning committee (Lynn, Karen, Rebecca, Nina, Carol, Pam) has been researching and refining the Table Talks model to use in our community. The revised version will be called: Navigating the Teen Years. As discussed last month, members suggested offering a pilot of this model at the Spring Forum. The format would consist of multiple small group discussions, with a facilitator and 8-10 people at each table. The facilitated discussions would include a quiz on youth substance use (including information from Arlington YRBS), and guidance on tough questions/situations parents may experience as they navigate the teen years. Members suggested that we identify the groups of ten in advance, and bring this model to PTO's or to Parent Nights, especially where families are anticipating/experiencing transition years (incoming 6th graders and outgoing 8th graders). This would offer parents a forum to come together and address anxieties about going to a new school. Colleen informed members that there is a \$500 stipend for the spring forum (series). Overall, members felt there is community interest in coming together around parenting teenagers. Lynn asked interested members to contact her re: planning for the Spring Forum and/or the adapted version for parents in the public schools.

IV. Medical Marijuana

Colleen provided a power point presentation on medical marijuana. She informed Coalition members about a statewide advocacy group, Massachusetts Prevention Alliance, which is working to educate the public about the risks of marijuana use, and the legalization of medical marijuana. Colleen credited the MA Prevention Alliance for some of the slides in the presentation. The presentation contained a brief history on marijuana policy, some of the documented health and safety risks associated with marijuana use, and an outline of the legislative and ballot initiatives to legalize medicinal marijuana in Massachusetts. Coalition members were surprised to learn of the extensive range of medical conditions that would make one eligible for medical marijuana, and they recognized the potential for abuse of the proposed program(s). The presentation also included information about state vs. federal law, problems associated with existing medical marijuana programs, implications for increased youth access and decreased perception of harm, as well as increased recreational use/abuse in general, and regulatory challenges associated with doctor recommendations, cultivation, distribution and possession of medical marijuana. The Coalition discussed opportunities to limit the negative health and safety affects that could result from the legalization of medical marijuana, and all agreed that the Coalition should play a role in raising public awareness and educating youth.

V. Meeting Adjournment: Next Coalition meeting 03/15/12