

Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria
Healthy Lifestyles Work Group
Agenda – Wednesday, March 14, 2007
Lee Center, Conference Room 4
12:30 – 2:00 pm

Work group members present:

- Lisa Baker – Director, Alexandria Office on Women; Co-Chair, Healthy Lifestyle Work Group
- Rika Maeshiro – Vice-Chair, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission; Co-Chair, Healthy Lifestyle Work Group
- Leslie Clark – Center Director, Chinguapin Park Recreation Center; Representative, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Angela Crawford – Epidemiologist, Alexandria Health Department
- Linda Cotton – Certified Information & Referral Specialist (CIRS), Department of Human Services
- Rose Berler – Chair, ACPS School Health Advisory Board
- Dick Merritt – Member, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission
- Arlene Hewitt – Member, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission
- Raynard Owens – Communications Officer, Alexandria City Manager's Office
- Charles Konigsberg – Health Director, Alexandria Health Department
- Andres Gaviria – Hispanic/Latino Partnership Manager, American Cancer Society, National Capital Region
- Robin Wallin – School Nurse Coordinator, ACPS
- Cara Pennel – Health Planner, Alexandria Health Department

I. Introductions & Program Updates

American Cancer Society has Relay for Life in April. There are several DC area groups/jurisdictions that are participating. There is also a Latino/Hispanic event in DC for the Metro area.

II. Updates on Healthy Lifestyles Work Group Activities

- Point of decision prompts to encourage stair use

Raynard Owens passed around the seven posters that he redesigned for the Stair Use Initiative. The group agreed that they look great. Michele Evans has been out of the office, but he plans to present the posters to her for approval and print them out tomorrow, so that we can hang them in City buildings this week. We will inform City employees of the initiative by mass e-mail with a message from the Mayor.

Because the Work Group would like to have the Mayor involved and media attention around a community-wide expansion, the subcommittee will begin discussing a potential May or June date. The group has discussed holding a kick-off event at the stairs of the Masonic Temple and needs to look into whether that would be possible.

- Team-based, workplace competition to increase physical activity

The City's eGovernment Department has created a website for the team-based, workplace competition (Cara passed around copies of this website homepage). They are finishing some of the programming for mile tracking and registration and anticipate that the website will be completed, for the pilot with Health Department employees, by April 1. The website allows individuals and teams to track their physical activity. Participants will be able to view their own stats, the stats of the top ten performers (overall, by age and by gender), and compare their team stats to other participating teams. The website will also have the capability of creating reports.

Andres Gaviria suggested asking if they can add a Body Mass Index (BMI) calculator to the website, so individual participants can track weight loss/BMI. There is a pre and post-initiative assessment that participants must complete, so that we can see if the initiative made a difference in their physical activity level. They will also have the opportunity to share success stories.

It was suggested that we create Terms and Conditions that participants must agree to before registering, for privacy and medical liability purposes. It was suggested the Terms and Conditions be reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

- Smoke free restaurant initiative

Volunteer: Bob Custard found a volunteer that will continue the *Proud To Be Smoke Free* program and recruit Alexandria restaurants to voluntarily become smoke free. The volunteer started last week.

Funding: Lisa made arrangements for Cara to present the work group's activities to the City's Wellness Committee (Well! Well! Well!). Well! Well! Well! would like to support the Healthy Lifestyles Work Group activities and have agreed to give \$1000-1500 to print brochures and posters announcing smoke free restaurants in Alexandria.

Posters, brochures: The existing Proud To Be Smoke Free brochures will be redesigned so that restaurants are listed alphabetically by Alexandria neighborhood.

Online restaurant guide: Virginia has an online smoke free dining guide (<http://vasmokefreedining.com/>), in which Alexandria is not currently listed. The Virginia Department of Health is in the process of updating this database and now has Alexandria's smoke free restaurants. VDH was waiting until after the time change to update and post the website, so the new guide should be online soon.

Policy Updates: In late February, the Virginia Senate passed HB 2422, which requires restaurants to post a "smoking permitted" sign in restaurants that allow smoking. Virginians for a Healthy Future as well as many other public health advocates think this bill is taking a step backwards, as it would eliminate the requirement that restaurants with more than 50 seats have nonsmoking sections. According to recent information, Governor Kaine is currently deciding whether or not to amend HB 2422 to completely prohibit smoking in restaurants in Virginia.

The City of Alexandria has initiated a smoke free restaurant effort by using the Special Use Permit process to "zone out" smoking in local restaurants. Compliance would be required in new and existing restaurants. Council approved this initiative and passed it on to the Planning Commission. Dr. Konigsberg indicated that the work group would not be wrong to continue the Proud To Be Smoke Free restaurant efforts.

Federal legislation, S. 625, has been introduced that would grant authority to the FDA to regulate tobacco products. This is expected to come up for a vote by the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee on March 26.

Dick Merritt wondered if the smoke free efforts have strayed too far from the dangers of secondhand smoke and that whatever efforts we engage in should inform people of these dangers (posters, brochures have messages about secondhand smoke). Lisa said that in our marketing efforts, it's best to rotate messages on the posters.

The targets of the posters and brochures would be consumers rather than restaurants. It was suggested that the new Proud To Be Smoke Free volunteer add materials/brochure, when recruiting restaurants that include information on worker health and possible

liability issues in the future. Dr. Konigsberg suggested that we invited the volunteer to attend the HL work group meetings.

III. Future Direction

- Physical Activity/Nutrition initiatives

Cara suggested that since Inova Health System's region wide survey data on obesity will not be released to the public until April 10, that the work group postpone next steps until the next work group meeting in April when the results will be available. These surveys were conducted with ~2000 families in Northern Virginia and will have Alexandria specific data to help guide the future direction and long-term plans for nutrition and physical activity.

[Update: this meeting has just been rescheduled for April 16.]

- Tobacco Use Prevention and Control initiatives

Dick asked whether we should consider an ad campaign on secondhand smoke. It was suggested that we get in touch with the Chamber of Commerce and see if we can link businesses into our efforts. Cara will talk with Ann Huston, Chamber representative on the Partnership Steering Committee and MH/SA Work Group.

Arlene Hewitt suggested gaining more press for the tobacco use initiative. The Partnership could tie into the City's recent efforts to eliminate smoking in restaurants and possibly have Marian Van Landingham, as Chair of the Partnership Steering Committee, interviewed for a local paper and talk about secondhand smoke.

Lisa indicated that Comcast has a bottom of the hour program where they conduct 5 minutes interviews on specific topics and continually rebroadcast on the Alexandria Comcast cable channel. The Mayor also has a 30-minute cable show, but there would need to be a lot to talk about. Lisa suggested tying into the release of the Inova Health Survey.

Find a way to tie into National Associations, particularly those that have an interest in tobacco use/cancer prevention – see if they would fund or sponsor activities.

Other topics:

Cara passed around copies of the new Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria logo and the website homepage.

In discussing the RFP “Take Action: Healthy People, Places, and Practices in Communities Project, ” Rika suggested that the group consider a proposal that would expand current work group efforts to at-risk populations. This RFP indicates interest in health disparities and reaching at-risk groups and the work group’s current efforts focus more on the general population. A small amount of money could be used to translate stair use posters and brochures & posters that list smoke free restaurants, etc. into other languages and ads could be placed in predominantly minority-read newspapers or other publications that list smoke free restaurants. The group agreed that this was a great idea. The due date for the proposal is March 30.

Dick left us with a quote from a previous Commissioner of Health “Lifestyle is mankind’s last unconquered disease.”

IV. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 11 from 12:30 – 2:00 at the Lee Center. The entire group will meet for the first 30 minutes and then separate into subcommittees. **[Update: Due to the delayed release of the obesity survey data and other circumstances, we have postponed this meeting two weeks. The meeting will now take place on Wednesday, April 25 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Lee Center.]**