

***Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria***  
**Healthy Lifestyles Work Group**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**August 17, 2006**

**Work Group Members Present:**

- Lisa Baker – Director, Office on Women; Chair, Healthy Lifestyle Work Group
- Charles Konigsberg – Health Director, Alexandria Health Department
- Arlene Hewitt – Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission
- Rose Berler – Chair, ACPS School Health Advisory Board
- Jerome Cordts – Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission
- Dick Merrit – Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission
- Bob Custard – Environmental Health Manager, Alexandria Health Department
- Robin Wallin – Nurse Coordinator, ACPS
- Capt. Eddie Reyes – Arlandria Area Commander, Alexandria Police Department
- Yon Lambert – Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Coordinator, Transportation and Environmental Services
- Heather Jones – Unit Coordinator Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development, Alexandria Cooperative Extension
- Camille Collier – Smart Choices Nutrition Education Program Assistant, Alexandria Cooperative Extension
- Peggy Cressy – Director, Community Health, Inova Health System
- Velma Tinner – Executive Director, YMCA Alexandria
- Angela Crawford – Epidemiologist, Alexandria Health Department
- Kristin Langlykke – Executive Director, ANHSI
- Cara Pennel – Health Planner, Alexandria Health Department

**I. Introductions**

**II. Discussion for nutrition, physical activity and tobacco use:**

○ **Health Status (Statistics)**

Cara Pennel handed out the local data from the Alexandria Community Health Assessment on the percent of population practicing sedentary lifestyle, percent of population who currently smoke, heart disease death rate and diabetes death rate. There is currently a lack of hard local data, which is needed to guide the selection and implementation of evidence-based interventions for the population.

Peggy Cressy said that Community Health Division, Inova Health System is designing and implementing a survey in Northern Virginia specific for a *Healthy Weight Collaborative* (see below for information). They are currently building questions for the survey and would like to work with the Healthy Lifestyles work group to develop and incorporate questions that meet the needs of both groups. The data collected can provide baseline data for interventions.

## o Existing Programs and Activities

There are numerous programs, activities and initiatives already in place locally. In order to avoid the duplication of existing efforts and to promote collaboration with other community partners, HL Work Group Members already engaged in activities relating to nutrition, physical activity and tobacco use were asked to provide a brief overview of their activities.

### Inova Health System Community Health Division – Peggy Cressy

Inova Health System Community Health Division is launching a comprehensive wellness program to combat obesity, which they are calling a *Healthy Weight Collaborative*. Peggy's group pulled together a leadership group about a year ago and has spent a good deal of time researching best practice programs. They want to create community coalitions using the Communities of Practice concept and are focusing on a program out of Delaware called *5-2-1 Almost None* [5 servings of fruits and vegetables; less than 2 hours of screen time (TV, computer, game system, instant messaging) per day; at least 1 hour of physical activity per day; almost no sugary/sweet foods or drinks]. The collaborative will specifically address physical activity and nutrition as they relate to obesity, with families with children through age 18 as the target audience. Obesity is a complex problem that requires a multi-faceted approach in order to achieve successful outcomes. The *Collaborative* will focus most heavily on designing and conducting a major social marketing campaign, which will be supported by training, technical assistance and program materials that people can download or receive via mail and reproduce on their own.

### Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc. – Kristin Langlykke

Most of ANHSI's activities involve individual onsite counseling. They have recently received funding from the American Academy of Pediatrics to develop and implement a pilot project to prevent childhood obesity (focusing on 3-5 year olds). They are using a model program in a soccer camp. They are hoping to expand the program. Kristin noted that it is difficult to get people to participate in institutional activities, particularly when parents are working long hours or more than one job.

### YMCA Alexandria – Velma Tinner

YMCA has several health promotion and wellness programs. PhD (Physical, Healthy & Driven) has been incorporated into day camps and after-school programs for teens and youth. The program participants are provided a fitness assessment with measures of body fat, weight, blood pressure, etc. and encouraged to eat healthy and work out at least three times per week. YMCA offers water aerobics for the aging population. They partner with local businesses/workplaces and offer incentives of reduced membership fees for employees to come and work out. They provide a Family Friday Night Swim Night for families, which is frequently the only weekend outing for some families. They offer subsidized memberships and fundraise annually (raise ~\$100,000 per year) with 95% of the funds going back into the community.

### Alexandria Cooperative Extension – Heather Jones & Camille Collier

Cooperative Extension offers 4-H Programs at the Recreation Centers in conjunction with after-school programs. Youth ages 5-19 can participate with special age-appropriate programs designed for younger children ages 5-8 (Clover Buds). Youth are provided programs on nutrition and healthy lifestyles. The *Smart Choices Nutrition Education Program* is a nutrition education program that is offered to low-income adults. The *Smart Choices Nutrition Education Program* position for youth is currently vacant.

### Transportation and Environmental Services Pedestrian and Bicycle Program – Yon Lambert

Yon serves as point person in the City for pedestrian / bicycle programs, policies and/or infrastructure matters. The two initiatives that the work group would be most interested in are:

- The Spin City effort to encourage more bicycle use for transportation and recreation and to receive accreditation as a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. At the June 27, City Council meeting, Mayor Bill Euille signed an Action Plan for Bicycle Friendly Communities. Yon noted that Arlington and Rockville are two communities in this area that have Bicycle Friendly Community status.
- The Safe Routes to School Programs have the goal of increasing the number of children walking and biking to school. The program integrates health, fitness, traffic relief, environmental awareness and safety under one program. A new federal transportation bill includes a \$612 million appropriation for a national Safe Routes to School program, of which Virginia has approximately \$13.5 million to support local programs. Alexandria is planning a Walk to School Day on Oct. 4, 2006 for a select number of Alexandria schools. Yon said community volunteers and parents are needed to support this effort.
- For more information about these efforts, visit [www.alexride.org](http://www.alexride.org).

### Alexandria Police Department – Capt. Eddie Reyes

Capt. Reyes serves as an example to other officers in maintaining healthy lifestyles and helps organize and promote annual activities. One activity is the Special Olympics Torch Run in June each year, which involves a torch relay from Northern Virginia to Richmond. The other is the Arlington 9-11 Memorial 5k Run on September 9, 2006 (brochures handed out at the end of the meeting). He is trying to recruit Alexandria City employees to participate in this event. He also announced that the Arlandria Health Fair will take place at the Cora Kelly Recreation Center on September 16, 2006.

### Alexandria City Public Schools – Robin Wallin (see meeting handout for listing of select programs)

Robin noted that many of the Alexandria Schools have activities in place related to increasing physical activity, improving nutrition and preventing smoking, but health and wellness programming is individual by school (programs are not centralized). Many of the elementary schools have walking clubs for both the students and the staff. The Schools work with Partnership for Healthier Kids at Inova Health System for many wellness/health promotion activities. Many of the schools have character education programs. The Middle Schools provide bicycle education and store bicycles for student use. This year, the Schools are increasing student time spent in physical

education and recess. The School food service operation (Food and Nutrition Services) is very proactive and was recently designated a “District of Excellence in Child Nutrition.” Food and Nutrition Services does not contract with outside vendors. The Food and Nutrition Services Director serves on the ACPS School Health Advisory Board. This fall, the School and Partnership for Healthier Kids will be conducting a study at the Middle Schools to determine whether marketing and placement of foods make a difference in middle school students’ decisions. A mandated Wellness Policy, addressing physical activity, nutrition and wellness in the school system, was implemented on June 1, 2006. One of the major changes is that food can no longer be used as a reward or incentive in the classroom.

#### Alexandria Health Department – Bob Custard

The *Proud To Be Smoke Free* program encourages restaurants in the City of Alexandria to voluntarily adopt a 100% smoke-free policy for both indoor and outdoor seating. Approximately 117 restaurants have voluntarily chosen to join the program. However, there is no longer funding to staff this program. Bob would like to have an intern each summer to continue the program. A listing of participating restaurants was handed out, but it is also available on the AHD website: <http://ci.alexandria.va.us/city/health/>.

Other comments:

- Dick Merritt mentioned the importance of having high level leaders involved that are willing to work.
- Jerome Cordts suggested that we really utilize the handout listing of current nutrition, physical activity and tobacco programs. Possibly expand this list to include program title, contact information, # served, budget and what the program does. This can serve as a community-wide inventory and help identify where to put the work group’s efforts/lend support. Note: This list is not comprehensive and will continue to add programs as more are discovered.
- Jerome also asked if this work group wanted to do something new or if we could partner with existing efforts. Lisa Baker answered that there is no need to reinvent the wheel and we should be looking for opportunities to join existing efforts/combine forces and collaborate with other community partners.

#### ○ **Potential Focus & Effective Strategies/Programs**

Arlene provided a brief overview of a meeting and brainstorming session held with Bob Custard, Cara Pennel and herself for tobacco use control and prevention, which included potential strategies for discussion by the larger group, possible actions, other tasks and progress/accomplishments (see handout from meeting “Tobacco Use Control and Prevention”). After presenting the potential strategies and action steps, Dr. Konigsberg suggested to adding legislative advocacy to the list.

#### ○ **Other Possible Work Group Members**

There is a need to recruit additional members to the work group. The following suggestions were made for potential member for the work group:

- Parks and Recreation representative (Lisa indicated she will think about an individual)

- Reverend Brown in Mount Vernon area (is this the same Rev. Brown that's involved with Northern Virginia AIDS Ministries?) or other representative from faith community
- Healthy Families Alexandria representative
- Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)
- Business community
- Youth / Youth organization representatives
- Parents
- Neighborhood / Civic Associations
- Retired volunteers
- OTHERS?????????

Between now and the next meeting, the work group will consider other potential work group members. If you have ideas, please feel free to either extend an invitation or pass their contact information along to Cara.

## **VII. Date for Next Meeting**

Cara will e-mail possible dates and times for the next work group meeting. The meeting date will be determined by the date/time that works for the majority of the work group.