

Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria
Healthy Lifestyles Work Group
Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2006

Work Group Members Present:

- Lisa Baker – Director, Alexandria Office on Women; Chair, Healthy Lifestyle Work Group
- Wede Gibson – Human Resources Manager, Cuisine Solutions (local business)
- Yon Lambert – Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Coordinator, Transportation and Environmental Services
- Peggy Cressy – Director, Community Health Division, Inova Health System
- Andres Gaviria – Hispanic/Latino Partnership Manager, American Cancer Society, National Capital Region
- Heather Jones – Unit Coordinator Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development, Alexandria Cooperative Extension
- Rose Berler – Chair, ACPS School Health Advisory Board
- Arlene Hewitt – Member, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission
- Jerome Cordts – Member, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission
- Dick Merritt – Member, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission
- Rika Maeshiro – Vice-Chair, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission
- Linda Cotton – Certified Information & Referral Specialist (CIRS), Department of Human Services
- Jennifer Schiller – Manager, ECDC African Community Center & Chair, North Virginia Alliance for Smoking or Health
- Bob Custard – Environmental Health Manager, Alexandria Health Department
- Cara Pennel – Health Planner, Alexandria Health Department

I. Introductions

II. Overview & Update on Current Programs

Lisa Baker opened up the discussion for program updates, overviews of new programs and suggestions for additional work group members.

Program Overviews and Updates:

Heather Jones indicated that Camille Collier has resigned from her position as adult nutrition educator. Now both the adult and youth nutrition positions are open, but they hope to have them filled by late October.

Yon Lambert announced that Alexandria is taking part in International Walk to School Day on October 4 from approximately 7:00-9:00 AM. Three schools are involved: Barrett, Polk and George Mason Elementary Schools. A Bike Rodeo will take place at Polk. They are in need of parents and volunteers at all three school that can serve as crossing guards, escorts for students, to help count

students for data collection purposes, etc. Please contact Yon or Cara if you would like to participate. For more information, go to: <http://www.alexride.org/walktoschoolday.php>.

Lisa Baker announced that the Office on Women has activities planned for National Breast Cancer Awareness month in October. October 3, 2006: Dine Out and Shop for the Walk to Fight Breast Cancer – various restaurants, retail stores, spas, and many other businesses throughout Alexandria will be contributing a portion of their proceeds throughout the day to the Walk to Fight Breast Cancer. All funds raised from this event will go to support Alexandria’s Breast Cancer Fund to provide mammograms and other diagnostic procedures for Alexandria women in need. October 21, 2006: 13th Annual Walk to Fight Breast Cancer - participants may choose from a 1.5K/3.5K/5K walk or run at Cameron Run Regional Park. For more information, go to: www.alexwomen.com.

Andres Gaviria works on cancer-based programs in Hispanic/Latino Communities. His program has an interest in prevention and health promotion activities, such as screening, particularly for those cancers that disproportionately affect Hispanic/Latino populations. One program provided to the community through the American Cancer Society is “ACS At Work” to promote early cancer detection and to educate the public by providing employers with the tools, resources, websites, guidelines, referrals, etc. to help their employees. Employees are able to record physical activity and keep track of points. Employers are also encouraged to provide incentives for smoking cessation and provided with cessation resources. On Wednesday, September 20, “Celebration on the Hill” is taking place in DC to celebrate cancer survivorship and empower survivors and others to advocate for laws that will help fight cancer. Groups will be divided by state. VA will have a tent and Congressman Tom Davis may be present.

Cara Pennel announced that the health department submitted a Chronic Disease Prevention Fund proposal on Friday to implement a multi-component initiative for tobacco use prevent and control. If funded, the health department would be able to hire a full-time health educator to implement a clinic-based cessation program for pregnant women and chronic disease patients at Casey and Arlandria Health Centers, to continue the Proud to be Smoke Free program, and to work with day care centers on reducing children's exposure to smoke in homes from smoking parents. The health department would work with a non-profit organization out of Roanoke, Alliance for the Prevention and Treatment of Nicotine Addiction, to implement the clinic-based cessation component (for more information on this organization, see: <http://www.aptna.org/>). **[Update: We should learn whether this proposal will be funded by the next work group meeting].** There is a rally that will take place on November 14 in Alexandria to support a Smoke-Free Air Bill being sponsored by Sen. Brandon Bell. Details are still sketchy, but this is something Healthy Lifestyles work group members might be interested in participating. Patrician Morningstar with the Northern Virginia Office of the American Lung Association had hoped to attend the work group meeting to provide an overview of the programs and services they offer, but was not able to make it.

Jennifer Schiller, with Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) – African Community Center, is also the new chair for the Northern Virginia Alliance on Smoking or Health. She will be able to send updates on the Smoke-Free Air Bill as the date approaches. At ECDC, they provide various programs and services for refugee and immigrant populations, such as youth-related health programs, addressing HIV/AIDS, etc. They also have funding through the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation to conduct youth-focused tobacco use programs at Essex House.

Invitations to work group:

Yon Lambert mentioned that Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, might be good representative to invite from the Dept of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities.

Cara asked that if anyone had suggestions for faith community representatives to serve on the work group, to please let her know.

III. Possible Areas of Focus for the MH/SA Work Group

The work group discussed the handout: *Possible Action Steps and Strategies: Short, Medium and Long-Range*, criteria for selecting strategies, and potential strategies. Comments about the document, the direction of the work group and possible areas of focus include:

- Need to organize the strategy matrix, possibly by population and setting (school-based, worksite-based, etc.) and list shorter-range activities under related, more encompassing longer-range plans.
- Consider moving the strategies that have a strong evidence-based focused to the top of the list. Over time, as more research is conducted and more strategies demonstrate effectiveness, these can be moved to the top of the list. This might be away to expedite the selection process. Other group members indicated that they have evidence-based resources for some of the programs listed. Cara encouraged them to share the information with her.
- **Update: Lisa and Cara attended a meeting on Tuesday with Mayor Euille and Inova Health System's Community Health Division in relation to Inova's *Healthy Weight Collaborative*. Based on this meeting and our work group meeting, it is proposed that the HL work group proceed with the following plan: 1) select a couple of shorter-range strategies/activities that have a strong evidence base which can be started very quickly and 2) wait to select medium or longer-range strategies/activities until after Inova's *Healthy Weight Collaborative* survey has been conducted. This survey will provide Alexandria-specific data/information that will help guide the selection and implementation of longer-range programs by helping narrow the focus, identifying high-risk populations to target, and informing the work group of the community wants/needs. This will also provide us with local baseline data. The survey is tentatively scheduled for October and November with results available in late November.**

The group began working through the strategies. Comments related to specific strategies include:

- #1 – A resource directory should be a high priority; Should consider collaborating with Parks and Rec on their annual community guide; Make sure that directories do not sit in an office, they need to get out in the community (possibly through schools); This would need to be a work in progress as programs and activities continually change.
- #3 – Display space is competitive; Extension may have materials that are already developed for this; If restaurants are being targeted for Proud to be Smoke Free program, would probably not want to add additional responsibility with a nutrition component.
- #4 – This is a short-term strategy that is evidence based and would be attainable; CDC has materials already developed that could be hung up in city buildings and other buildings with stairs.

- While it's important to focus on youth, once they go home, their parents control what they eat, TV watching and to some extent, physical activity. It would be good to get parents and other adults more involved through their places of work. An idea was suggested to publish a guide – “Healthiest Places to Work in Alexandria” (based on “100 Best Places to Work”). Worksites, particularly with all of the national associations located in Alexandria, would be a great target and resource for getting a health message out and it would act as an incentive for work places to get involved through marketing and employee recruitment.

Lisa asked that the group look through the remaining strategies before the next meeting. Lisa and Cara will work to organize and revise the listing before the next meeting.

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.