

Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria
Healthy Lifestyles Work Group – Physical Activity
Draft Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2006

Work Group Members Present:

- Rika Maeshiro – Vice-Chair, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission; Co-Chair, Healthy Lifestyle Work Group
- Linda Blake (for Velma Tinner) – Senior Program Director, YMCA Alexandria
- Leslie Clark – Representative, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Heather Jones – Unit Coordinator Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development, Alexandria Cooperative Extension
- David Del Rosario – City of Alexandria Personnel Services, Member, City Wellness Committee
- Raynard Owens – Communications Officer, Alexandria City Manager’s Office
- Angela Crawford – Epidemiologist, Alexandria Health Department
- Rose Berler – Chair, ACPS School Health Advisory Board
- Robin Wallin – School Nurse Coordinator, ACPS
- Deidre Maccannon – Rachel’s Well, Inc., Vice President
- Cara Pennel – Health Planner, Alexandria Health Department

A1. Provide "point-of-decision" prompts to encourage stair use at worksites or in public places with stairs (could also include improvements with paint, carpeting, motivational signs, artwork and music in stairwells).

Possible action: Hang posters that encourage stair use in all public facilities with stairs.

- It has been proposed to start with City buildings (pilot) and expand this initiative to the rest of the community at a later date.
- It is necessary to find out which City buildings to target – which have stairs.
 - Two Recreation Centers have stairs.
 - Public Schools wouldn’t need signs (limited use of elevator), but school administration/office buildings would.
 - General Services can help identify buildings and which would be appropriate for inclusion – David Del Rosario will check into this.
- Suggestion to get the Mayor and City Manager to sign-off on/endorse this initiative.
 - Should start communication with the Mayor now even though details have not been worked out – to make him aware and to push things through more quickly.
 - Issue a press release for community-wide campaign through City Manager’s Office.
- Need to tailor the posters more for City employees and “brand” them for the City of Alexandria and Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria.

- David Del Rosario and Ray Owens will work on branding the posters with a Partnership logo and tailor for City employees.
 - Ray will enhance the poster design quality to make it more appealing.
 - Purpose of the poster is to serve as an eye-catching reminder.
- It was suggested that while the posters may have a similar appearance and message, the manner in which each building, business/employer, etc. reaches their audience and disseminates information might differ.
- The work group was queried whether the posters should look more professional (seek funding to print posters larger and laminate) or more simple (print on card stock and mount on construction paper). The group thought it was better to make the posters quick and easy. This will let businesses know that the initiative is inexpensive, simple and increase likelihood that they will participate.
- Need to look into size limits of posters in city buildings. It is imperative that the posters be placed near the stairs/elevators to serve their function.
- Need to look at stairwells for safety and security issues (make sure stairwells are well-lit, accessible, unlocked from the inside, regularly maintained to ensure hazards are removed, etc. and possibly encourage improvements in appearance). When expanding to the community, we should have a checklist to see if the initiative is feasible in their structure and of safety and security issues they should assure.
- Begin the City initiative in February and pilot for ~one month (end pilot in late March). Analyze data in April and prepare for community-wide initiative to be kicked off in May (to coincide with National Physical Fitness and Sports Month).
 - Other buildings to include in community wide initiative include hotels, large employers & other businesses, office buildings with multiple smaller firms (go through building management), condo associations, etc.
 - Can also reach businesses through Chamber of Commerce – make businesses aware of the initiative and get buy-in. A Chamber of Commerce representative serves on the Partnership Steering Committee.
- Will need to conduct some type of assessment or survey to quantify stair use before and after implementation. If an intern becomes available, this would be one of their tasks. Otherwise Cara and other volunteers will count people using stairs through direct observation at various buildings for a sample period of time.
- Businesses should have our contact information to learn more about the pilot results and how to implement the initiative at their site (we can provide resources and technical assistance to a degree).
- Kick-off for the City could entail handing out reminders to take the stairs on magnets, paper handout, etc. – possibly target employees coming back from lunch or coming to work.
- General public kick-off might be larger and tie into other events going on in May to attract more media attention (e.g., 5k run)
- In the future, possibly expand campaign and add messages encouraging people to park their cars far away from buildings.

A2. Implement social support interventions by creating or working within existing networks in a social setting outside the family.

Possible action: Develop and implement a physical activity work place “competition” for City employees. Employees will establish teams of 8 people and walk or do other types of exercise, individually or as a team, for 8 weeks tracking their miles. Can hold a celebration event at the end and give awards/prizes, certificates, etc. See example at: <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/>.

- It was proposed that we pilot a workplace competition at a small scale with Alexandria Health Department employees after the New Year to work out difficulties/flaws and then implement on a broader scale at a later date with City employees, hospital employees, school employees, other businesses, etc.
- The work group agreed with this proposal and Cara and Angela will keep the group informed on the progress of this initiative.

Next meeting

- The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 10 from 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. at the Lee Center.