

Health Action:
Planning for a Healthy Sonoma County

Community Health Task Force

MEETING SUMMARY

September 24, 2008

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

North Coast Builders Exchange
1030 Apollo Way, Santa Rosa

Attendance: *Co-Chair:* Santa Rosa City Council Member **Jane Bender**; *Health Action Members:* **Walter Collins**, United Way Sonoma-Mendocino-Lake; **Terry Davis**, Community Volunteer; **Jerry Dunn**, Human Services Department; **Tom Maloney**, Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council; **Andrew McGuire**, Trauma Foundation and Health Care for All-California; **Carl Wong**, Sonoma County Office of Education; *Community Members:* **Mark Charnas**, PyschStrategies; **Mary Clemens**, Sonoma County Regional Parks; **Ginny Doyle**, Area Agency on Aging; **Grayson James**, Petaluma Bounty; **James Johnson**, Permit and Resource Management Department; **Cathy Luellen-Aflague**, Santa Rosa City Schools; **Shan Magnuson**, Asthma Coalition; **Karen Miller**, Agilent Technologies

Opening Comments

Jane Bender welcomed task force members, thanked them for their continued participation and reminded everyone that this is the last meeting of the task force.

Timeline and Creation of Implementation Plans

Ellen Bauer provided a brief overview of Health Action's next steps and plans for implementation planning. The *Priorities for Action* developed by the task forces will be incorporated into an *Action Plan* to be presented to Health Action at their October 3rd meeting. Once approved by Health Action, this Action Plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors and will be posted on the website.

Project Design Teams will be convened to develop 3-year work plans and to identify resources needed for implementation of Health Action objectives. Design Team members will include content-specific experts from the identified local partner organizations, with staffing and support from Health Action and DHS staff and consultants. Design Teams will reach out to the many identified partner organizations identified by the task forces to receive input and participation in project design. We anticipate that implementation plans will be completed by March 2009.

Priorities for Action and Community Meetings

During July and August of 2008, Health Action conducted an extensive process to obtain diverse community input on the *Priorities for Action* developed by the task forces. These included an initial set of health improvement goals and strategies concerning healthy eating, physical activity and access to preventive health care and community resources.

Bobbie Wunsch introduced Selena Polston, a Sebastopol-based research consultant hired to obtain community input on the *Priorities for Action*. As part of this process, 21 "community conversations" with 278 residents from across the county and an on-line survey with 43 responses were conducted. Ms. Polston presented the methodology that she used to conduct the community meetings during the summer of 2008 and reviewed the highlights and major findings from this process. See www.sonomahealthaction.org

for copy of the summary report. Following the presentation, Health Action members asked a number of questions and commented on the findings.

Bobbie Wunsch then led the group through the draft *Priorities for Action* to ask for any input or suggested changes based on the feedback from the community input process. Minor comments will be incorporated into a revised version for review by Health Action.

Task force members were also asked if they had any final suggestions or guidance for the Project Design Teams. Comments included:

Goal 1

- Need to think about how you define “community.” Seek opportunities and messaging at the neighborhood level.
- Be aggressive and specific in reaching out to businesses. Need to understand their concerns and make the business case for wellness policies, programs, and activities. Look at how to restructure existing resources.
- Need to make the case for the consequences if we don’t get more proactive about prevention. Share best practices and find a way to share this with businesses, especially those that are struggling.
- Be careful not to “finger wag” at businesses. Sonoma County businesses have shown that they get involved in the community. Make it easy for them. Find a way to include small businesses without requiring that they come to a meeting. Do outreach and make it easy for them.
- We have to show businesses that we are willing to “walk the walk.” Make recommendations to elected officials to provide incentives to businesses.
- Need to find a way to offer incentives to schools for wellness initiatives.
- Think about incentives at all levels (individual, business, other organizations)
- Include business leadership in these efforts

Goal 2

- Don’t use guilt, shame or humiliation. It doesn’t work well. “Just say no,” also doesn’t work. School gardens help to plant the seeds that support social change.
- Community engagement needs to be a part of all these strategies. Don’t just focus on low-income people.
- Economy is hitting home. 3 years ago 28% of students enrolled in SR City Schools were enrolled in free or reduced lunch program. Last year it was 40%.
- Same trend in Petaluma. 31% countywide.
- Don’t forget about the elderly. There are lots of programs we can leverage to reach this population.
- When looking at the low-access populations, there are often hidden vulnerable populations. Often there are hidden gender inequities (e.g., the mom is the last to eat).

Goal 3

- Focus on the benefits of physical activity
- Include older adults. Support existing programs, like A Matter of Balance.
- Need to get folks to turn off the TV and electronic games.
- Maybe promote a “media fast.”
- Dance Dance Revolution has been popular at schools to get kids moving.
- Need to reach all income levels, so that we can truly change the culture across the board.

Public Comment

Closing Comments

For more information please contact Ellen Bauer at 565-6684 or ebauer@sonoma-county.org or visit the Health Action website at: www.sonomahealthaction.org