

HEALTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK
HEALTH POLICY CABINET MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2011

In attendance: Denise Rushing, Lake County Board of Supervisors; Jim Brown, Karen Tait, Jane McLean and Denise Pomeroy, Lake County Public Health; Lorna Sides, WIC; Terry Rooney, Lake County Mental Health; Tom Jordan, First 5 Lake; Dan Hurst, Lake County Probation; Merrill Featherstone, Tribal Health Consortium; Wally Holbrook, Lake County Office of Education; Adele Pollis, interested resident; Susan Jen and Jackie Armstrong, Health Leadership Network.

Susan summarized the group's December discussion in which smoking was identified as a top priority because studies show that reducing the number of smokers by 1% will produce a 1% improvement in the County's health profile. She added that the American Lung Association's Report Card for Lake County gave Fs to the City of Clearlake and unincorporated area while Lakeport got a D. Report Card criteria include outdoor environments, multi-family housing and tobacco sales reduction. Apparently, Lakeport's grade improved from an F to D because of signage at Library Park notifying the public about a citywide ban on smoking near playgrounds. Dan added that state law prohibits smoking on a playground because of obvious health risks to children and pregnant women.

Susan directed group's attention to the Spectrum of Prevention table on the agenda as a framework for developing an approach and setting goals, evaluation measures and outcomes. Two video advertisements were shown: one fairly graphic ad about the increased risk of heart attack among smokers from the Surgeon General and one ad developed by the State of California in conjunction with the movie industry in which tobacco induced diseases spill out of a cigarette paper which then becomes an origami bird inspiring the viewer to visualize a Smoke Free California. Jim said that neither ad would have motivated him to quit when he was a smoker. Denise R. agreed, saying that it's more important to change a person's culture because we already know that education alone doesn't work. Terry added that the "Truth Campaign" was probably more effective because it warned youth against being duped into supporting corporations throughout their lives.

Other

- A \$495 fine was recently imposed for tossing a cigarette butt in Clear Lake.
- The U.S. waste stream includes 100 million pounds of toxic chemicals used in cigarettes
- San Francisco has banned smoking in all bars and hotels; Lake County lack sufficient public support to attempt something that extensive

Regarding adult smokers, Tom said that smoking is the hardest habit to break among New Beginnings participants. Dan added that there is also a "culture of last substance" in which people continue smoking even though they may have quit other drugs. Denise R. said that the Surgeon General's health warning on cigarette packs is an ineffective deterrent for people without hope for their future.

Regarding young smokers, Susan offered that 14.5 years of age has been reported as the average age at which children begin smoking, though the risk is higher in rural communities. Wally added that 14.5 years marks the end of adolescence when the power of parental influence shifts to peers which is why it's important to target young leaders who can influence other youth.

Denise P. said that her experience working with Tobacco Coalition programs indicated that smoking education needs to start before high school. In response to Jim's request, she outlined Tobacco Coalition priorities identified by the Lake Family Resource Center as:

1. Continue stings to identify businesses selling tobacco to minors
2. Establish the Fairgrounds as a smoke free facility
3. Hire a Spanish interpreter for educational programs
4. Increase youth involvement in educational programs
5. Continue working on countywide ordinance
6. Work with hospitals to conduct smoking cessation for adults

Due to a lack of enforcement personnel, Denise P. reported that LFRC will be using a new approach to deal with businesses caught selling tobacco products to minors. In the future, they will be filing official complaints regarding violators with the state expecting that those complaints will trigger fines and/or negatively impact future permit applications.

Denise R. suggested that adverse childhood experiences are obvious contributors to despair which leads to substance abuse including smoking so that it makes sense to target those kids with coping mechanisms and prevention education. Dan pointed out that not all kids who become smokers are victims of adverse experiences.

Tom shared a few Challenge Day experiences and his shock at discovering that the number of local youth exposed to home environments where marijuana and alcohol are used is a lot higher than national levels. He added that children reporting violence in the home and close relatives in prison are even more shocking. Susan said that she had participated in developing a Peer Education curriculum that included growth development groups conducted by school counselors. The curriculum was successful in lowering adolescent smoking rates and drinking while driving. It was distributed by the Center for Disease Control to schools throughout the US (many years ago).

Wally agreed that the schools are the most logical venue for resiliency and anti-smoking campaigns but reminded the group about the need to align such programs with curriculum accountability standards. Jan added that school nurses had been utilized for these kinds of programs in the past but there are currently only three school nurses in the county and one of those will be retiring at the end of this school year. Susan pointed out that schools also have a tradition of organizational policies that can produce cohesion in messages that are conveyed to students by adult employees. Denise R. said that significant adults are a key factor in helping children develop resiliency.

Dan suggested that it might be possible to attach smoking education to Bowling Prevention Programs which are funded by asset forfeiture money. Susan added that the 4th grade CATCH curriculum includes anti-tobacco educational materials and activities.

Discussion regarding what could and should be done to reduce and prevent smoking in Lake County included the following ideas and suggestions:

- An ordinance banning smoking in County parks may be the best place to start. Scheduling a strategy session with the Board of Supervisors and/or lining up 3 to 4 issues relating to the costs and consequences of smoking will help earn support among members of the Board of Supervisors. Lake Family Resource Center has sample ordinances.
- It would be more difficult to ban smoking on all county property without support of the employees' union and various department heads.
- The governor's realignment proposal to transfer prisoners from San Quentin may represent an opportunity to extend that facility's smoke-free policy to the Lake County Jail.

NEXT STEPS:

- Dan will assess law enforcement support for smoking bans in public places and the jail at the next Chief's Meeting.
- Susan will invite Gloria Flaherty to the next meeting and bring her up to date on discussions to date.
- Susan will attempt to meet with Melissa Fulton to discuss the possibility of local businesses sponsoring/promoting smoking cessation programs.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.