



United Methodist Church
31 Highland Ave, Gardiner, ME

**Work Group on
Underage and High Risk Drinking Among Young Adults
February 28, 2008**

Present at the Substance Abuse Working Group Meeting:

Co-Chairs: Senator Beverly Daggett; Joseph Young, Winthrop Police Chief

Members and Guests: Anthony Anderson, Garrison Beck, Marg Burgess, Peggy Dunn, Jack Fles, Cynthia Flye, Ginny Geyer, Connie Greenleaf, Dru Johnson, Steve Lavoie, Peg Lawlor, Steven MacDougall, Sue McConnell, William McPeck, Robin Miller, Jared Mills, Teri Orewailer, Elizabeth Rowe, Elizabeth Batchelder Smith, Pat Stanton, Kara Strout, Emilie van Eeghen, Doreen Walters, Arthur Warren

Speakers and Resource People: Dana Hamilton, Bill Lowenstein, Frank Lyons, Natalie Morse

HCCA staff: Joanne Joy, Neill Miner, Renee Page, Karen Tucker,

Underage/High Risk Drinking Work Group	Discussion/Presentation Highlights
Introductions	Senator Daggett invited participants to introduce themselves and state their attraction to this working group.
Opening Presentation:	Natalie Morse, Director of the MaineGeneral Prevention Center, provided an overview of the needs assessment that has been completed concerning substance abuse issues across Kennebec County. She discussed: a) the extent of use of alcohol by minors, and b) work that had been done to identify specific responses that could prove useful to communities across the county. Source documents for this presentation will be posted shortly on the HCCA website.
Dinner Break	We enjoyed a healthy meal prepared by White Flour Catering, of Gardiner
Small Group Discussion #1 and 4: Chair: Chief Young Resource Person: Dana Hamilton, Interim ED, Youth and Family Services	LAW ENFORCEMENT GROUP The group discussed a) the implementation of the model policy developed by the Maine Chiefs of Police, from initial work done by the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP). They also discussed the importance of and ways in which to engage with the wider community, in order to receive support to continue to enforce laws that can be unpopular and occasionally controversial. Core observations of this group included:

	<p>area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that law enforcement is at the table at all local and regional meetings ➤ HCCA should make a second round of invitations to groups not represented to ensure that they have the opportunity to participate in the continuing discussions, and urge that all law enforcement entities adopt the Chiefs of police format ➤ Each community and the service area as a whole need to connect and work with a group of citizens that can support their enforcement efforts ➤ The existing laws, including zero tolerance for underage drinking, need to be widely disseminated to youth and their parents and the community at large ➤ As additional efforts are made to continue and expand the Youth Voices groups, a liaison with local law enforcement needs to be established
<p>Small Group Discussion #2: Chair: Senator Daggett Resource Person: Natalie Morse (and Kristen Gilbert, via interview notes)</p>	<p>SCHOOL POLICY DISCUSSION</p> <p>This group reviewed the model policy that has been adopted and implemented in the Waterville Public School System, and discussed the status of alcohol and other drug policies among the school systems that were represented.</p> <p>Key observations and conclusions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Now, policies tend to get revisited following a tragedy or high profile enforcement of the rules ➤ School policy is always a work in progress, and is probably worth re-visiting periodically, to ensure that the current rules are supported and reflective of current thinking ➤ Ideally, policy is developed (or revised) by a group of people representing a broad range of perspectives, including school personnel, parents, students, and key community organizations ➤ The most important part of the policy development and revision effort is the process: it is an opportunity for the different perspectives at the table to identify the most controversial issues, and to reach consensus around those issue <p>Some of the most contentious aspects of the Waterville policy (and the existing policy now in place in our area schools include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Creating and alternative to suspension ➤ Providing for self-referral ➤ Determining what portion of the student’s life outside of school is covered by the policy ➤ Providing for consistent enforcement of the policy regardless of who gets caught and when
<p>Small Group Discussion #3: Chair: Rene Page Resource Person: Bill</p>	<p>YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>This group discussed the critical importance of including and engaging youth in all aspects of addressing the problem of underage drinking.</p>

AdCare Educational Institute

Core observations of this group included:

- Bill Lowenstein discussed the YEPP program, specifically the Alcohol Retailer’s Code of Conduct and how youth were integral in developing and implementing the program. Youth applied for, were interviewed, hired, and paid a wage for the positions. Once hired, youth conducted research, ran meetings, and were integral in designing the program. AdCare is soliciting more youth involvement in the YEPP program. This year long project (the latest in a series of four separate and distinct policy development efforts) demonstrates the power youth can have at the policy level, when properly supported by committed, connected adults.
- The group discussed the difference between simply involving versus empowering youth in the process for change.
- Youth participating in the conversation talked about the value of “reverse peer pressure” to discourage kids from using alcohol versus encouraging use.

**Small Group Discussion #5:
Chair: Senator Daggett
Resource Person: Bill Lowenstein, Director, AdCare Educational Institute**

STUDENT INTERVENTION STRATEGY

This group heard about a program that is offered in Gardiner (and accepts referrals from Hall-Dale). The program teaches students who have violated the school’s ATOD policy about the nature of substance use and abuse; how to sort out the advantages and disadvantages of continued use, and how to reduce the costs of their current choices. The program is an important adjunct to the ongoing enforcement of a strong policy and is one of a small number of skills based program options offered across the state.

Core observations of this group included:

- Currently, the SIRP program is only offered at Gardiner, Lawrence, and Edward Little High Schools and accepts referrals from some neighboring schools. This effective research-based program is not a treatment program, but is referred to as “DEEP for kids”, is offered after school over the course of a week, and can be an alternative to suspension.
- OSA currently funds the program, but cannot support implementation statewide. Bill Lowenstein, Director of Maine Projects, AdCare Educational Institute, Augusta, ME proposed offering training to schools so they could implement SIRP on their own. This would require a champion within the school to continue to support kids after they complete the SIRP program.
- Though the program is currently funded through OSA, it could be funded with Safe and Drug Free School funds. The program does not necessarily have to be a school-based program; it could be community-based.

**Small Group Discussion #6:
Chair: Neill Miner**

RETAILER TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT

This group spoke about strategies for involving retailers in restricting access to alcohol by those who are likely to

Frank Lyons, B C Consulting, Inc. and Doreen Walters, C N Brown, Inc. (The Big Apple Stores)

retailers, including a) training programs to help managers/retail clerks understand and follow the law, and b) the Card ME program, which teaches community members how to engage retailers in a self assessment of their sales and advertising practices, and make changes that can improve their efforts to make responsible sales.

Core observations of this group included:

- Approximately 17-20% of the alcohol that reaches the hands of youth comes from direct purchase by youth or their agents
- Fake IDs are everywhere and it takes a careful, well-informed person at the counter to spot the illegal buyer
- Any successful effort by retailers to discourage inappropriate sales MUST be grounded in strong, clear, existing policy
- At this point, responsible retailers put themselves at risk financially. Without a universal effort, across a wide geographical area to refuse sales to inappropriate customers, responsible retailers will (continue to) be hurt financially. Less responsible retailers will (continue to) benefit from sales turned away by responsible stores.
- At a statewide policy level: The state of Maine needs to create significant penalties for not only stores but also clerks who violate the law. Without consistent enforcement and penalties

Community Meeting Plans: An Update

Anthony Anderson reported out on plans being developed by Gardiner youth and community members to convene a group of citizens in a formal Town Hall Meeting, on April 1st. An invitation to speak is being extended to AG Steve Rowe. Chief Toman, Gardiner’s Police Chief, has agreed to speak.

Senator Daggett reminded the members of the group of

- the importance of using this process to generate follow-up action, and
- the usefulness of conducting meetings in April, community by community, I

in order to generate specific next steps.

Meeting adjourned

Adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Next Meeting

MARCH 27th at the Winthrop Town Office, 17 Highland Ave, Winthrop, ME

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