

Maine Asthma Council
Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2009
Maine Center for Public Health

Members Present: Peter Doran, Donna Levi, Carol Coles, Nancy Dube, Ed Miller, Christy Crocker, Sharon Dow, Renee Page, Desi-Rae Severson, Amy Olfene, RuthAnne Spence, Carry Buterbaugh, Ann Backus, Ruth Lawson-Stopps

Via Phone: Stacey Chacker, Rhonda Vosmus, Elizabeth Foley, Jessica Loney, Rachel Charette

Introductions

Ruth welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table and by the callers.

Announcements

Christy Crocker announced the MIAQC is piloting a weatherization and indoor air quality training next week for the EPA. This is the first time this information is being presented. The trainings will be held Monday December 14th in Brewer, Tuesday December 15th in Augusta, and Wednesday December 16th in Portland. There is still time to register at the MIAQC website. After this pilot training the presentation may be tweaked and offered again in the future.

Ed Miller reminded the council that the Fund for Healthy Maine may be targeted to fill State budget gaps. Ed urged the council to keep the Fund on their radar. Ed also announced that the Partnership for Smoke-Free Kids is working to raise the cigarette tax to \$3.00 a pack.

National Asthma Control – Calais Project

Elizabeth Foley from Medical Care Development (MCD) applied for and was awarded funding for an Asthma Control Initiative from NIH and NHLBI. There are only 13 other states that were awarded funding for this 2-year project. The project kicked off November 1st. The project is aimed at the area of the State with highest ED rates. MCD is partnering with Calais Regional Medical Center, the local HMP - St. Croix Healthy Community, Calais Student Health Center, and other community agencies. They will address asthma collaboratively in all settings schools, homes, and community. The project will involve provider training, education, establishing asthma action plans, continuity of care in the community, and bringing tools and resources to that region of the State.

Maine Asthma Program Update

Ruth announced that the program was funded after much uncertainty that the program would continue. Current funding level is \$450,000 a year for the next 5 years. The position of Program Manager is approved for hire and that job will be posting soon. The Statewide asthma plan is almost ready for publication. There are a few CDC mandated changes to make, these changes do not affect content. Once changed, the report will be final. If anyone would like to see the report before it is printed contact Ruth and she will send along.

Council Workgroup Updates

Homes: Amy Olfene reported that the homes group has had a productive six months. The Homes Quiz hand-out has been finalized and printed after a successful field test at Pleasant Point Tribal Health Days. The hand-out is now ready to be disseminated, anyone needing a supply to distribute can contact Desi-Rae Severson. Donna Levi indicated that she sends the hand-out with her home health nurses when they do a home visit. Public Health nursing is also using the hand-out. Ed Miller suggested making the hand-out available to the home visitation group and child care groups. Carol Coles thought Resource Development Centers would also be a good place for the hand-out. The homes group is also working towards an overall healthy homes concept. This includes lead, smoke-free housing, indoor air quality and others. Amy Olfene is facilitating a group to develop a healthy homes training curriculum.

Schools: Renee Page reported that the schools group has developed asthma talking points with a pre and post test, that can assist school nurses and others who will be training school staff on signs and symptoms of asthma. A pre-school brochure has been developed and is in first draft. The schools group also wants to develop an asthma “tool-kit”, with the goal being a resource that nurses can go to, grab some material and inform parents and students. The schools group is also thinking of developing a training DVD in the future.

Nancy Dube reported on the school health survey. There was an 89.7% response rate from the schools across the State. This is a very impressive rate. After seeing the survey results Nancy has some ideas for some follow-up research projects. Ruth will be presenting these findings in the future at the Maine Principals Association. Rhonda Vosmus reported that she recently attended a conference and noted the success of the San Antonio, Texas school system had after implementing a training program. Ruth noted that the schools group will be looking at the work San Antonio did at a future workgroup retreat.

Donna Levi talked about the latest draft asthma action plan. The plan has been reviewed by doctors, school nurses, and parents. Some minor changes will be made and the plan will then go to clinics for field testing. The timing is good in that a new plan should be ready for full scale use next fall. The overall goal of the revision was to have one consistently used form that works for patients, doctors, and school nurses. The literacy level of the plan was mentioned. As of right now the plan is not ready for translation. Sharon Dow noted that along with translation, cultural differences need to be addressed. Rhonda noted that some people are not even literate in their own language. Rhonda uses colored pictures for some of her patients, though tedious, they seem to work well. Donna Levi mentioned that there are some multicultural/language appropriate material on the MaineHealth website.

Workplaces: Peter Doran reported that the workplaces group is appropriately working closely with the Maine Occupational Research Agenda. The group is very data driven and is focusing on three areas 1)employers 2)employees 3)healthcare providers. Literature reviews have been conducted by several of the groups members. The group is working on pinpointing Maine data on the high risk occupations. The top five most common workplace asthmagens have

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been identified as; cleaning chemicals, wood dust, isocyanates, animal dander, grain and flour dust. The group will be developing tools that will serve to inform employers. Stacey Chacker mentioned that ARC has a new business case for asthma coming out soon that tool may be helpful to the group. Rhonda Vosmus also mentioned that she is doing some work around insurance and reimbursement. Ed Miller suggested bringing MEMIC to the table, as they have an effective Risk Management Division.

Outdoor air/Awareness/Clinical: Ruth wanted to make the council aware that there are potentially three other workgroups that will be forming, and anyone interested in serving on the three groups mentioned should be in contact with her.

Harvard Air Quality Project

Ann Backus from Harvard School of Public Health presented some data on an air quality project that was conducted. See the attached presentation slides for project content. Peter Doran remarked on the presentation that to change personal behavior, we need to be aware of the persons environment. Ruth commented that we sometimes feel helpless with it comes to outdoor air quality. Ed Miller expressed his feelings that Maine doesn't have enough outdoor air monitors. There is much work to be done in Maine around wood smoke and outdoor air.

Results of Council Survey

Ruth did not go into great detail and deferred to the summary hand-out.

Evaluation

RuthAnne Spence introduced Carry Buterbaugh to the Council. Carry will be working closely with the Council in the future. The evaluation report has been published and is available electronically, anyone wishing to read the report can request one from Desi-Rae Severson. Overall, people felt positive about the council, and thought it was a good use of their time. People felt involved and felt the work was relevant to them. Some concerns were the future direction and other prospective issues like the environment and clinical issues. The group wanted to spend some time looking at the structure and function of the council. Key informant interviews will be a good idea to get more in-depth comments from council members on why they keep coming back and what they like about the council. The big project for this year is the development of the five year evaluation plan for the Asthma Program, this will include the Asthma Council evaluation as well. Carry indicated that each of the workgroups will be evaluated in the future.

AAP-Maine Chapter Initiative

The American Academy of Pediatrics put a call out to states who were interested in doing a pediatric asthma project. Maine will be working with pediatric practices who want to learn how they can improve their work on asthma. A presentation is scheduled for the next Council meeting to update the council on where the initiative stands at this point. Rhonda Vosmus has been actively

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involved in this initiative and has had the opportunity to network with other States who are undertaking the same project. She is very positive about the initiative.

Upcoming Meetings

March 11, 2010 9am – 12pm location to be determined

June 10, 2010 1pm - 4pm location to be determined

September 9, 2010 9am - 12pm location to be determined

December 9, 2010 1pm - 4pm location to be determined