

Recognizing Collaboration: Welcome and Opening Remarks

By 10:10am, the meeting room at the Hogan Campus Center in the College of Holy Cross was already at 80% capacity. Ralph Fuccillo, President of DentaQuest Foundation, offered opening remarks. He welcomed the attendees and thanked all for making the trip to Worcester and for their contribution to the work of the Coalition so far, on behalf of all the organizations represented on the Coalition.

Tom Wolff, PhD, facilitated the remainder of the meeting, starting with individual introductions from everyone in the room. It was indeed noteworthy to see the diversity in interests and expertise in the room. (See the list of attendees)

Tom reminded us about the ground rules for our Coalition meetings and then reviewed the meeting agenda before introducing the Workgroups and their co-chairs. All the Workgroup members that contributed to the Action Plan goals and objectives over the last few months were acknowledged and applauded.

Co-chairs Reports and Group Session

Beginning with the Assessment & Surveillance Workgroup, the co-chairs gave presentations on the work accomplished so far and outlined the goals and objectives to be reviewed for the day. Each set of co-chairs spent about 7 – 10 minutes. This was followed by an announcement to break into groups to provide feedback to the Workgroups shortly after a scheduled 10 minute break.

The group session was highly interactive and productive, lasting for about an hour. While one or two individuals were able to give their feedback at more than one group, others were deeply engrossed in the discussion in their chosen session and did not get the opportunity to comment at alternative groups.

Moving Forward: Endorsing Our Goals and SMART Objectives

The groups broke for lunch and reconvened in the main meeting room shortly after. The Workgroup co-chairs reported on the feedback received for their section of the draft Action Plan. After a description of the points of agreement and contention and the major changes to be done, it was requested that those that were not able to join a particular group but had comments to share to please take the opportunity and fill out the color-coded index cards made available for each group. These index cards would go to the Workgroup co-chairs for review and inclusion at their next session.

After the co-chairs presented, each workgroup received a full endorsement from the statewide Coalition for the work done and a go-ahead to develop implementation strategies. After the endorsement, the attendees were

urged to take some time to review the goals and objectives and further contribute by sending in suggestions for changes or join the workgroups as we continue through our plan development phase.

Keeping Our Momentum Going: Next Steps

The rest of the meeting focused on planning for our immediate future. The Coalition facilitator outlined the rest of our timeline for the year 2009, which included community meetings in the summer, a few more planning meetings by the workgroups to draft implementation strategies: the part of the plan detailing what is to be done to achieve our goals and objectives. In October, the statewide Coalition would meet again to review the completed draft of goals, objectives and implementation strategies. By December, a well-publicized event launching our completed oral health action plan would take place.

After a discussion on the upcoming community meetings, the following individuals/groups indicated an interest in hosting a community forum with the help of their organization and other members of the Coalition. (see the latest description of the Community Meetings)

1. Rebecca Bialecki, North Quabbin Community Coalition
2. Pamela Smith, Office of Rural Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health (indicated that she would like to connect us with rural health groups)
3. Lisa Renee Holderby, Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers
4. Mary Leary/Shannon Quirk, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
5. Frank Robinson, Partners for a Healthier Community
6. BL Hathaway, Tri-County Collaborative for Oral Health Excellence
7. Elizabeth Perry, Elder Dental Program, Norwood
8. Jonina Schonfeld, Lawrence Oral Health Initiative, Northeast Center for Healthy Communities
9. Hugh Silk, University of Massachusetts Medical School through the Office of Community Programs
10. Gerry Thomas, Boston Public Health Commission.

A description of the process of writing implementation strategies followed, with the facilitator explaining that this was a crucial part of the plan, but one that was possibly easier to undertake since many groups had already come up with some strategies while drafting the goals and objectives. As the hardworking groups were able to draft the goals and objectives in 2 – 3 meetings, it was estimated that draft strategies could be completed in 2 or 3 meetings.

The coordinator gave a quick update on improvements made to the Coalition website. After attendees were again reminded to join a workgroup (sign up sheets had been moved to the exit for the sake of convenience) and the facilitator thanked everybody for the wonderful turn-out and energy in the room, the meeting closed at 1:52pm.