

Douglas Special Action Group Minutes
22 September 2003
First Presbyterian Church
760 10th Street
Douglas, AZ

Introduction

Jenny Hunter began the meeting by passing around the sign-in sheet and giving copies of the agenda and minutes from the last SAG meeting in June 2003. Everyone introduced himself or herself (Name & Organization). Jenny then asked everyone to take a moment and look over the minutes from the meeting in March to see if anything was missing or was misrepresented. Some typos were pointed out and Rosie Stewart will make the appropriate changes.

Retinopathy Education Program

Dr. Dan Twelker from the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Arizona was a guest speaker invited to talk about diabetic retinopathy and other eye diseases. He graduated from the University of California, Berkley and received his public health training through graduate school at UC, Berkley.

Dr. Twelker explained that an optician makes eye glasses while an ophthalmologist performs surgery and is a specialist. He also explained that optometrists are primary care physicians for the eyes. He then explained how diabetes affects the eyes. He passed out a few pamphlets:

- 1) Diabetic Retinopathy: Information for Patients
- 2) Don't Lose Sight of Diabetic Eye Disease: Information for People with Diabetes
- 3) ¡Ojo con su vision! Si tiene diabetes, lea esta historia

He went on to say that a screening exam is important and should be done yearly. He discussed a joint project between John Hopkins University and the University of Arizona called Proyecto Ver. He noted that diabetic retinopathy is very prevalent in Mexican-American individuals. In this project, 20% of the participants had diabetes and of these participants half had diabetic retinopathy.

Dr. Twelker asked the group if they could see a place for this type of education program in the Douglas community. Valerie Titan from the Cochise County Health Department asked if mass screening could be done. Dr. Twelker replied that there are some issues with doing mass screenings since dilating the eyes can be risky. Rhea Morales asked if it would be possible to tag it on to an existing diabetes class. Dr. Twelker replied that yes it would be possible. Carmen Ramirez explained the need for screening as well as follow-up care. She mentioned the Arizona Foundation for the Eyes, which is affiliated with a community health center located in South Phoenix. She also mentioned that people appreciate the education, but really want and need the screening. Lea Dodge offered a point of information stating that there is one optometrist in Douglas and that most people travel to Sierra Vista or to Agua Prieta for services. She mentioned that we need to think about both sides of the border. Yolanda Caruso explained that

Blue Cross/Blue Shield has a van that goes to schools to do screenings; however, you need to be affiliated with the American Optometrist Association. Dr. Twelker explained that the risk of diabetic retinopathy goes up with age and that the length of having diabetes also increases the risk of developing diabetic retinopathy. Yolanda asked how long treatment takes for this disease. Dr. Twelker responded that the focal treatment is quick, but the scatter treatment takes 3-4 session and several hours in total.

Dr. Twelker then gave everyone his email address dtwelker@eyes.arizona.edu and mentioned that he can be contacted at this email.

Jill Guernsey de Zapien explained that one of the purposes of the SAG is to weave together the different resources available in the community. She also mentioned that eye health is really lacking. Dr. Twelker added that education on diabetic retinopathy can be incorporated into the current education classes. Rhea asked if the pamphlets that Dr. Twelker passed out were available in both English and Spanish. Dr. Twelker replied that they were available from the National Eye Institute at no cost. He said that he would order more of the pamphlets to be used for the PTSO presentations that are coming up. He ended by mentioning that he is currently planning some studies and also currently working on a project. Jenny thanked Dr. Twelker for coming down and speaking to the group.

Discussion of Accomplishments/Achievements of SAG

Jenny began by stating that she would like this to be an open discussion. She also explained that we are trying to understand as a group what we have accomplished and how. She then facilitated the discussion. The questions asked as well as the notes taken from the discussion follow.

1a. What have we accomplished as a group?

- Prioritized as a group issues important to the group.
- Subcommittees were created to address issues of physical activity in the schools and vending machines/nutrition in the schools and local health facilities.
- Getting involved in the schools – raising awareness about diabetes.
- Vending machines/inventory of vending machines in the schools and local health facilities.
- Voted to have School Health Index brought to the schools.
- Decided to look at policy issues.
- Gone to meetings – CAB meetings and border health meetings – to share what this group is doing and to learn about other activities.
- Subcommittee members working together around common issues – people from different agencies – “We play together well.”
- Identified strategies for alternative funding for schools – Tax credits and alternative fundraising activities in the schools in place of candy and chocolate.
- Collaboration between Douglas Area Food bank and 21st Century Community Learning Center after-school program, to provide nutrition education to elementary and middle school children. Program is funded by Diamondbacks Charities.

1b. What helped us get there?

- Frequent meetings and communication.
- Every meeting is productive – makes people want to come back.
- Jesus bringing the food from SEAHEC.
- Carol Huddleston.
- The desire to have a healthy community – all the members.
- Dedication of members.
- Issue – seriousness of diabetes in Douglas helped bring people together.
- Having Lourdes in the community and Carol act as glue among members.
- MEZAzCOPH.

1c. What obstacles did we address to get there?

- We've had to make choices to compromise – development of PTSO presentation – shorter or longer – what information to include.
- Political turmoil in the schools.
- Socio-economic status/problems in the community.
- Near closure of the hospital.
- Lack/poor funding for schools.
- Turf issues among health and human services in community – people had to put some of those aside in order to come together.
- Temptations (“sugar and fat taste good”) and lack of motivation – watching television and playing video games are easy.
- “Old habits die hard.”
- “Carrots vs. cupcakes.”
- Medically underserved community.
- Had to overcome low self esteem as a community – had to empower ourselves.

2a. What would we have liked to accomplish?

- More walking groups.
- Getting medical providers to the meetings.
- Have senior citizen center cooks participate in group meetings.
- Filling the vending machines with healthy snacks/drinks.
- Finding fundraising alternatives to candy/chocolate sales in the schools.
- Have more politicians come to the meeting – school board, city council members.
- Presentation to the school board about SAG activities – School Health Index and Physical activity and nutrition.
- School food services personnel to the meetings.
- Having students come to the meeting regularly.
- Have Parks and Recreation involved.
- National Park Service out of Tucson involved.
- Implementing School Health Index in other schools.
- Forming walking groups – formalized groups.

- Fundraiser activities to serve healthier meals – replace Carne Asada – “we need some green on the plate”.

2b. Why didn't we accomplish these things?

- “Only 24 hours in a day” – time.
- Many of the obstacles listed have impeded progress on items listed in the “Would have liked to accomplish but didn't” category above.
- More people – to help deliver/develop/implement SAG activities.

2c. Are these things still worth accomplishing?

- YES!

Wilder Collaboration Survey

Jill refreshed everyone's memory regarding the Wilder Collaboration Survey, which was discussed at the previous meeting. She explained to the group that we need to know what really works in communities and in prevention as well as what's working in this group and what's not working in addition to any needs that should be discussed. Jenny explained that since time was running out that Rosie would give everyone a packet that includes an introductory letter, 2 consent forms, the Wilder Collaboration Survey, and a stamped and addressed return envelope. This way you can take it home with you and fill it out when you have a chance and then just mail it back to us in the stamped and addressed return envelope. It will take about 20 minutes to complete. The questions on the survey are very basic. Once the data is entered and analyzed, SWCCHP staff will come back to the group with the results delineating the group's strengths and weaknesses. Jill emphasized to the group how important this is for the SWCCHP to do. The SWCCHP needs to document why this group is successful and what are and have been some of the challenges faced by the group. It is very important for us to have a broad picture of this group.

Updates:

Steps Program

Jill talked about the Steps Program, which is working toward building healthier communities. She explained that 2 requests for proposals came out: one for urban communities and one for rural communities. Forty-seven states applied and four received funding, one of which was Arizona the only border state. The fiscal agent for Cochise County is the Cochise County Health Department. The first year will be for planning.

Pasos Adelante

Jenny mentioned that Lourdes Fernandez and Blanca Robles now have office space at the Blood Draw Center. Everyone can get more information from them on the Pasos Adelante program. Lourdes and Blanca have been attending a lot of trainings. Lourdes mentioned that we have a lot of needs here in the community. She mentioned that they were not recruiting yet, but would be starting soon. We are waiting for IRB approval. The program entails a 12-week educational curriculum once per week. Issues to be discussed relate to diabetes. In addition, there will be walking clubs. The program is open to anyone in the community who is 18 years of age or older.

Well Arizona

Tammy Vehige from the Arizona Department of Health Services talked about Well Arizona, which is a walking group. The State Department provides training for those interested in leading walking groups. It is a 4-week program. Each participant wears pedometers and the program is similar to Weight Watchers in that group support is provided to individuals. It is a free program. The pedometers can be borrowed and you also get a pamphlet, which is currently being translated into Spanish. For more information on this program you can contact Valerie at 520-432-9487 or vtitan@co.cochise.az.us. The first step program came out of Canada and this Well Arizona program is modeled after it.

Health and Harvest Wellness Festival

Rhea mentioned the Cochise County's 2nd Annual Health and Harvest Wellness Festival on Saturday, October 4th from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm at Bisbee's Vista Park in Warren. A flier was passed out. This festival is being sponsored by Cochise County Health Department, Bisbee Farmers Market, Bisbee Food Coop, and The Women's Transition Project. The festival will include:

- Health & Wellness Information
- Healing Arts Practitioners
- Free Blood Pressure & Blood Sugar Checks
- Free Glaucoma Screening
- Food, Fun, & Entertainment
- Learn about your local Food Co-op
- Fund-raiser walk & raffle for the Women's Transition Project
- Arts, Crafts, Local Produce & Plants
- Kids' Activities & more

It was mentioned that they are still looking for people to have booths at this festival. It was also mentioned that this could be a great event from which to recruit participants for the Pasos Adelante program. Lourdes explained that she has started a list of possible participants, but formal recruitment has not yet begun.

Diabetes Classes and Trainings

Jesus Kataura explained that per Karen Halverson the Rural Health Outreach Grant ended in May, but the Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center (SEAHEC) took it over until the end of September 2003. Forty-eight individuals were contacted and forty-five participated.

Training on teaching the diabetes classes is currently being provided to six individuals and is being sponsored by the Arizona Health Sciences Center (AHSC) and SEAHEC. The individuals are from the Cochise County Health Department, Copper Queen, the Southeastern Arizona Medical Center (SEAMC), Chiricahua Community Health Center, Inc., and the Wilcox Hospital. They are working towards becoming Certified Diabetes Educators. In order to be considered a Certified Diabetes Educator an individual must document 2,000 hours. This training is just to get them started and to strengthen the infrastructure.

Jesus thanked Lourdes and Blanca for their hard work. He also thanked Carol Huddleston for allowing the use of the First Presbyterian Church where the Douglas SAG meetings are held. Jill

thanked SEAHEC for providing the food for the Douglas SAG meetings. She also thanked Jesus for bring the food over from SEAHEC in Nogales.

At the next Douglas SAG meeting, the group will be discussing the diabetes/physical activity/nutrition presentations that have been taking place with PTSOs. We will also be getting updates from:

- Community Nutrition/Walking Groups program (Pasos Adelante)
- Inventory of walking paths in Douglas
- School Health Index
- Other

Action Items:

Complete the Wilder Collaboration Survey and mail it back to the SWCCHP in the stamped and addressed return envelope along with a signed consent form.

Continue PTO presentations in the schools during the fall.

Once the new school year begins, begin working with new officers of student councils and clubs. This is something we need to revisit at the next SAG meeting to come up with a strategic plan.

The next SAG meeting will be held:

Monday, January 12th, 2004
First Presbyterian Church
760 10th Street
Douglas, AZ
6:00-7:30 pm

There will be a subcommittee meeting held before the SAG meeting:

Monday, January 12th, 2004
First Presbyterian Church
760 10th Street
Douglas, AZ
4:30-5:30 pm