

***Special Action Group
Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2002***

Welcome & Introductions

Marilynn Johnson welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mrs. Johnson gave a brief description of her work with Joel Meister in the Community Health Advancement Partnerships (CHAPS). This statewide program recently received the Florence Hall Award from the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Science. Ms. Johnson gave the award to Jill De Zapien to deliver to Joel Meister.

Participants then introduced themselves beginning with Ophthalmologist Dr. Lupita Rodriguez. She and her late husband, Dr. Jorge Rodriguez have their private practice, Ophtalmologos Asociados, in Nogales, Sonora. Dr. Jorge Rodriguez was the local investigator for the Proyecto VER study. Dr. Robert Snyder of the University of Arizona, Department of Ophthalmology, invited Dr. Lupita Rodriguez to participate in this SAG meeting to speak about Proyecto VER. It is her personal feeling that Nogales is a community as one and not two communities separated because of the border.

Dan Twelker, OD, PhD., currently works for the University of Arizona, Department of Ophthalmology. He believes optometry to be the primary care in eye care. When visiting an optometrist, patients receive a general eye exam, contact lenses, and/or glasses. Optometrists can prescribe eye drops, but do not perform surgical procedures. If a patient needs surgery, an optometrist refers the patient to an ophthalmologist for a profound screening and necessary surgery.

Dr. Twelker, worked in the Mission district of San Francisco in a private practice of Optometrist and worked in Oakland, CA for a community based clinic "Clinica de la Raza". He had five years of research training in public health and patient base or clinic base research. He was invited to give the results of the Proyecto VER study.

Rosie Stuart recently graduated in May as an M.P.H. She has been working with the collaboration team at the College of Public Health. She was here to report on the Assessment Survey. The other members of SAG have participated in the past and introduced themselves to the new participants.

Border Health SI – Assessment Survey Results

Jill de Zapien gave some background on the Collaboration Survey. This questionnaire was chosen, because it is user friendly, concise, and would provide great statistical data. The general collective scores between 3.0 and 3.9 are borderline, something of a concern and should be discussed as a group to look at the importance of the issue. Scores of 2.9 or below reveal a great concern and should be open for discussion. Scores higher than 3.9 show strengths and do not need special attention.

Rosie Stuart handed out a copy of the questionnaire for members to review. Ms. Stuart then spoke about the six categories in the survey that influence the collaboration success. The six categories broken down from twenty factors were:

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| 1) Environment | 4) Communication |
| 2) Membership Characteristics | 5) Purpose |
| 3) Process and Structure | 6) Resources |

She reported that two characteristics had scored low in the challenges area, they are: 1) Membership characteristics, with an average score of 2.90. Meaning all organizations needed to be members in the collaborative group have become members of the group. 2) Resources had an average score of 2.81. Meaning the collaborative group does not have adequate funds to continue their goals. (This was not much of a surprise)

The environmental characteristics show that SAG members feel they have come together at the right time. They feel “they were at the right place at the right time”. Issues for discussion that are changeable or need more attention have an average score of 3.0 –3.7. Discussion items are in membership characteristics, process and structure, and resources.

The issues in bringing the right people to participate in the SAG group will always be a challenge. An issue with history of other common collaborative groups coming together in the community is really history and this group should move forward.

Mrs. De Zapien encouraged SAG members to review the questionnaire and have an open discussion at the next SAG meeting.

The SAG group then held some discussion: Mrs. De Zapien reported that there was a news report on channel four, KVOA, on Thursday, October 17, about Mary Welty and the School Health Index. The news report spoke about the Border Health Initiative and the school’s changes after participating in the School Health Index. The principal and four children were interviewed. Mrs. Johnson shared copies of the article written by Megan Blankenship, about Mary Welty removing soda machines and the editorial written by Kathy Vandervoet from the Nogales International newspaper.

Karen Halverson stated that despite all the newsletter articles and broadcasting for Mary Welty’s participation in the School Health Index, other schools are still hesitant in participating. Why are schools hesitant in participating in the School Health Index? Mr. Peterson believes that change is usually hard.

JoJean Elenes spoke about “Free Market” and how companies like Coca Cola promote their product by providing cases of free soda. It would be a good idea if companies like Coca Cola would provide free water to replace soda.

Discussion then took place about sidewalks in our community. Ila Tittelbaugh suggested that SAG members take pictures of areas in our community. Then compile the pictures to get a broader view of the community. Marilynn will check the budget for purchasing disposable cameras. Mrs. Johnson commented that, she has been taking pictures of walking areas and sidewalks in cities she has recently visited. The compiled pictures will be used to create a board and have promotoras present it at a board meeting. This will provide a broader view of the community.

JoJean commented that there is a debate about building a sidewalk on Mastick Way. There is no right of way for sidewalks and there will not be a sidewalk built at this time for Mastick Way. The developers do not want to build a sidewalk because of the cost. The city cannot bring things up to standards because of the lack of funds and the way ordinances are written.

Proyecto VER – Dr. Dan Twelker

Dr. Dan Twelker reported on the Proyecto VER project. Dr. Twelker reported that the 1990 census was used to block potential neighborhoods with a Hispanic population. Neighborhoods with 5% or more of a Hispanic population were blocked as potential participants.

After the sampling, six thousand participants were identified. About forty five hundred or more participated in the study. Seventy two percent of the invited participants filled out a questionnaire and underwent a comprehensive eye exam. Seventy two percent illustrate great participation. One of the requirements was that they be forty and older, because they were looking at causes of blindness and vision impairment.

Results

One of the main results was that one person out of twelve had vitreous correction (wrong pair of glasses), twelve people had bad vision and seventy three percent had the wrong pair of glasses or did not have an updated prescription. People with vision of 20/40 needed a pair of glasses, anything better than 20/40 they would not need a pair of glasses.

Proyecto VER found that two percent of Hispanics have a chance of getting glaucoma. This is intermediate between the Anglo-Caucasian population and African American population. African Americans have a 3.5 % chance of glaucoma and a 1% chance for Anglo-Caucasian population.

Dr. Twelker reported that Medicare reimbursements for eye care and glaucoma screening are available for African Americans. Medicare changed their rules, because of results from a study done in African Americans. Reimbursements to African Americans are available for undiagnosed patients and if a family member is at risk for glaucoma. Dr. Robert Snyder, Head of the Department of Ophthalmology, is speaking with Medicare to possibly reimburse Mexican Americans for glaucoma screening. The Proyecto VER project has made it possible for Medicare to look at possibly changing their rules to reimburse Mexican Americans.

Other issues known to cause blindness are: Open Angle Glaucoma and Cataracts. Open Angle Glaucoma is one of the most common causes of blindness in Mexican Americans. Four people out of fourteen were found to be blind, because of open angle glaucoma. In general, cataracts are more common in women. Generally, they have more severe problems with cataracts and found to have had the most cataract surgery. A cataract is cloudiness in the center of the eye.

Diabetic Retinopathy is a disease of the retina caused by diabetes. This was one main cause of visual impairment. Seven people out of fourteen had Diabetic Retinopathy. Diabetic Retinopathy is a major issue, 22% of the population were showed to have diabetes and half were shown to have some kind of diabetic retinopathy.

Discussion then took place about issues concerning diabetes. It is not a given that a person with diabetes will become visually impaired if they follow a proper diet and exercise. Dr. Lupita Rodriguez believes that there is a great lack of education in the community. Dr. Rodriguez explained how newly diagnosed patients have had diabetes for at least two to four years before being diagnosed with the disease. A patient with diabetes is not aware of the symptoms caused from the disease. Newly diagnosed patients are usually discovered, because they visit their physician due to other symptoms. She believes it is very important to have education available to the public about physical activity and living healthy lifestyle for diabetes prevention.

Discussion took place about the University of Arizona, Department of Ophthalmology, having an eye unit that provides free eye exams for diabetics without insurance. Dr. Twelker was going to do more research on the eye mobile. He believes about one hundred and fifty people can be seen in one day.

This could depend on the way the appointments are set up and the type of exam. Southwestern Eye Center and Vista Optical are the only clinics with an Optometrist and an Ophthalmologist. The Mariposa plan does not have an eye plan to provide patients with eye exams or screening for possible eye diseases.

Rich Polheber, JoJean Elenes, and Karen Halverson formed a committee to bring the eye-screening unit to the Nogales community. This will mostly provide eye screening for non-insured diabetic patients.

Karen Halverson will provide Dr. Twelker a list of physicians located in the Nogales area. Mrs. Halverson will be gathering information on the Proyecto VER project and Dr. Dan Twelker will be providing the information to physicians in Nogales and the community. Mr. Polheber would like Dr. Twelker to give a presentation for the Carondelet staff meeting. Sandra will fax a copy of a one-page report written by the department of ophthalmology. Mrs. Johnson will speak with Kathy Vandervoet about printing a newspaper article about Proyecto VER.

Update – Marilynn Johnson

Marilynn Johnson reported that a CHAPS meeting will be November 8, from 10-11 a.m., at the Rio Rico Resort. She would like SAG members to join the meeting and explain their role as a SAG member. **(This meeting has since been cancelled).**

Mrs. Johnson reported that the Arizona Department of Health Services has funding available for physical activity. The County Health Department from Nogales is not be part of this project called “PLAY”: Physical Activity for Children. Mrs. Johnson will find out the contact name for the funding.

Mrs. Johnson reported that the Rio Rico Water Co. is sending out a survey for a ballpark to be built in Rio Rico and encourages everyone to fill out the survey. It needs to be returned to the County Community Development Department (formerly Planning and Zoning). She had called Mary Dahl to ask, why are they going to build a ballpark when schools already have a ballpark. Ms. Dahl explained there are no facilities in this end of the West side of Rio Rico. She stated that they are building a ballpark and will then slowly add walking trails, bike trails, etc.

Mrs. Johnson reported that she has a touch screen nutrition kiosk located at Holy Cross Hospital. The program is low literacy and in Spanish/English. It will be moved around the county so everyone will have a chance to use it. There is no print option in the program therefore information cannot be printed. The University is investigating adding the print option to the program. There are only two kiosks in the state.

Karen Halverson reported that HERSA – water use teacher-training project would be offering classes this year. Promotoras from Platicamos Salud will be involved. There will be teachers attending and would like to extend the invitation to the public. There are six workshops and it is free. The workshop that would be of interest to teachers only would be February 28, 2003. This is a development day called Integrating your project into the schools. Anyone interested please sign-up or call SEAHEC.

Rich Polheber reported that UMC, TMC and Carondelet have a project for health care in Nogales, Sonora for foreign aid that will help upgrade the hospital general equipment. There will be a press conference November 6, on the foreign aid on border issues. Mr. Polheber will have more information at the next SAG meeting.

Mr. Polheber announced that Dina Sanchez was promoted to an Assistant Administrator for Holy Cross Hospital.

Marilynn Johnson reported that the announcement for the grant writer opening was in the newspaper last week and was announced at the Human Services website. She asked, if anyone would like to volunteer and be part of the search and screen committee to please contact her. Applications are available at the Cooperative Extension office and can be downloaded from the human services website. The grant writer will assist SAG members, organizations, and agencies within the Border Health SI project in identifying grants.

The next SAG meeting will be December 4, 12-2 at the United Church Village.