Minutes

Dukes County Health Council

June 20, 2019

7:30-9:00 AM

Draft 2

**Meeting called to order;**  Minutes of May 18, 2019 Meeting approved.

**Rural Scholars—**Dan Pesch reported on the recommendations of the Rural Scholars Committee. The Committee reviewed two excellent proposals. One submitted by the Island Disability Coalition and another by the Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School (MVRH). The Island Disability Coalition proposed studying barriers to recreation for disabled youth. The MVRH proposed engaging Rural Scholars to help examine the possibility of developing a “school based health center.” The Committee recommended the proposal submitted by the Island Disability Coalition. Committee members noted that the proposal was in an earlier stage of development and consequently could benefit from the type of work that the Rural Scholars are able to do in the short amount of time allocated to the project. The MVRH has already begun to explore the possibility of a school based health center. Committee members noted that it was not feasible for logistical reasons to support two projects. However, U Mass students may be interested and available to assist in the development of the school based health center project, separate from formal designation as a “Rural Scholars Project.” Julie Fay noted that many services exist to support disabled neighbors including youth. She urged that any evaluation of recreational options for disabled youth be sure to include an understanding of existing program.

*A motion was made to support the Island Disability Coalition (IDC) proposal. After being seconded, the motion was unanimously adopted.*

The IDC proposal will now be submitted for consideration by U Mass medical and nursing students.

*The Health Council also voted to voice its support the efforts of the MVRH in their evaluation of a school based health center.*

**Committee Chairs gave a brief update on the activities of the Council’s Committees**

**Oral Health**

Karen Gear, Chair of the Oral Health Committee reported that she had been approached by the State of Mass to consider conducting an “Oral Health Needs Assessment” on the Vineyard. She stated that her colleagues on the Committee were enthused at the possibility. Members of the Health Council noted that efforts such as those described by Karen were an excellent example of the role that Health Council can play in understanding our community through the support of focused data collection.

Health Council members then engaged in a broad ranging discussion concerning the oral health needs of our community. Major points included:

* Martha’s Vineyard is a dental health shortage area.
* The number of dentists who accept Mass Health insurance is limited
* The shortage of dentists will worsen in the next several years as several dentists retire
* There is a need for the development of dental clinic space.

**Nominating Committee—**Terre Young, in the absence of Alan Ganapol, summarized the work of the Committee. The Committee meets several times in the fall to identify potential members of the Health Council. With the relocation of one long standing member of the Committee, the membership of the Committee has now been reduced to 2 people. Additional members are needed for this important work.

**Youth Task Force**—Mike Joyce noted that the YTF has now obtained its own non-profit certification. 40-50 members meet monthly and focus on the prevention of substance use disorders in Vineyard young people. This past year has been one of financial transition. Federal funding has ended and a transition to new funding sources is underway. YTF is particularly focused on the adverse neuropsychiatric developmental effects of marijuana use in young people. YTF also views “vaping” as a risky behavior for youth.

**Communication Committee**—Victoria Hasealbarth gave an update on the work of the Communication Committee. The Committee supports the Health Council’s website. Committee members recommended a more robust social media strategy. Victoria noted that she was working with one of the summer public health graduate student interns Marly Jurgensmeyer,on developing the current website as a health data dashboard and resource. In response to a question, Victoria stated that “social determinants of health” will be included as part of the dashboard.

**Housing Committee**—The Housing Committee is in its early stages of formation. Karen Tewhey briefly described the breadth and depth of the problem—which ranges from acute need for shelter for homeless individuals in the winter months to the ongoing life stress of many children who are forced to move frequently throughout the school year because of insecure housing.

**Healthy Aging Martha’s Vineyard—**Paddy Moore gave a brief overview of the activities of HAMV. HAMV, under the coordination of Holly Bellebuono, has been very active. Major initiatives are in progress. These include: Organizing Advance Care Planning for the Island residents; assisting MV Hospital in its planning for a new sustainable model of long term care (Greenhouse Model); fall prevention activities through the Fall Prevention Coalition (including implementing a pilot home modification program; and, addressing transportation problems of older adults that interfere with their health.

**Public Health Graduate Student Internship update**—The Vineyard is fortunate to have 3 public health graduate student completing summer internships this year. Marley Jurgensmeyer and Elizabeth Brown are jointly sponsored by Island Healthcare and the Health Council. Alex Marino is working with Marina Lent at the Chilmark Board of Health. Marley described her planned work on the development of a health data dashboard and resource page. Elizabeth stated she will focus on acquiring qualitative data that will engage members of the community. Elizabeth’s work is intended to further the development of the Integrated Island Health Policy Collaborative (i2PHC) which is being coordinated by Island Healthcare. Alex stated she is assisting Marina with her work as a town Health Agent.

**Other**—Mark Solaio, the Tisbury Chief of Police, noted that the emergency response personnel of the Island will engage in a “tabletop” simulation of a natural disaster on July 25. He stated that this type of exercise tests the ability of agencies to communicate, prioritize and collaborate in a time of emergency.

**Meeting Adjourned**

 rjl July 17, 2019