

# Vermont Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Council

DLC, Montpelier, VT

Minutes of Wednesday, May 25

Attending: David O'Brien, Patty McCarthy, Steve Waldo, Debby Haskins, Mitch Barron, Pat Martin, Andy Snyder, Sarah Scrodin, Christine Peterson, Barbara Cimaglio, Lisa Anne Atwood, Scott Warner, Mark Ames, Pat Martin

Regrets: Trudee Ettlinger, John Flanagan, Chauncy Leise, Willa Farrell

Guest: Tony Folland

## 1. Minutes

Minutes of the April meeting were approved. The heading on future agendas needs to be changed to reflect the change in venue back to the Dept of Liquor Control.

## 2. Update from ADAP

Barbara gave the update from ADAP. The recipients of the Community Prevention Grant have been chosen and notified. There are 16 grantees this year. Unfortunately the reduction in funds due to the end of the SPF grants and reductions in funding overall meant there was less money available and coalitions doing good were not funded. ADAP is partnering with Health Promotion and Disease Control on these grants to incorporate Fit and Healthy and drug and alcohol prevention into one funding course. All grantees are required to work on the Healthy Retailer project which seeks to reduce advertising for alcohol and tobacco and make healthy food choices available and prominent in Mom and Pop stores around the state. Pat mentioned that he has seen more of a separation between alcohol and soft drinks in stores which is encouraging.

The 2011 legislative session yielded a small increase in methadone services in Chittenden County where there is a great need. Rutland is exploring offering methadone services. The Shumlin administration convened a Treatment System Planning Meeting earlier in the month. Represented in the discussion were designated agencies, treatment, recovery, law enforcement and representatives of the court system. This process is just getting started and Barbara will update the Council as it proceeds. ADAP is considering a similar approach to Prevention. The new rules for physicians prescribing bupe mentioned in the previous meeting are being worked on by Tony Folland. The DUI bill was passed through the legislative process and concentrates on changes in penalties. The Governors Highway Safety Program will do a study on how to reduce repeat DUI offenders. Some capital money was awarded to public inebriate programs to support one to two beds in designated areas. Mark asked about the process to replace Dick Keene, the outgoing Treatment Coordinator. Barbara replied that this position will be posted.

## 3. SAPs

Barbara reported that the SAP funding was restored to a full 50% of what it was in 2010. Letters have gone out to all schools that currently have an SAP on staff asking them to indicate interest in continuing the program by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Schools who would like to receive continued funding will be able to apply for up to \$9,000 depending on how many schools want funding. The legislature authorized ADAP to use the same process they have in years past to fund schools and develop a new process for FY 13 that incorporated evidence based practice and evaluation. The Legislature wants to see if the money invested makes a difference and how SAPs fit in to a wider focus on school health.

The program will not require a match from supervisory unions this year but will in future years. Lisa said that the current timeline doesn't fit well with the schedule for creating school budgets. David asked about the decision to remove the option to go through the designated agency. Barbara replied that the Legislature wanted schools to be responsible for their own programs. Barbara said that ADAP is soliciting feedback from the

DOE, SAPs and other health partners on the best way to run the program going forward. The Legislature mandated that ADAP oversee the SAP program going forward. Debby's position as Executive Director was eliminated. Debby will close her office as of June 30<sup>th</sup>. She is resigning from the Council effective immediately. She encouraged the Council to be in touch with the President of their Board, Dawn Poitras. Debby believes that the SAP program helped a lot of youth which was always the priority of the program. She took a moment to give a special thanks to Pat and Kathy Martin for being advocates for their daughter. David expressed great appreciation on behalf of the Council for Debby's work and role on the Council.

#### **4. Guest of the Council-Scott Warner**

Pat Martin brought a fellow parent, Scott Warner, to speak to the Council about his experience as a parent of a child in recovery. His daughter got involved with substances at the age of 13. Scott and his wife did not discover her problem until she was 17. She went through Valley Vista for treatment. The Warners had a lot of trouble with insurance, but Valley Vista committed to keeping their daughter in treatment until she was ready to be released. She stayed at Valley Vista for a longer period than is typical, but she is clean to this day. She graduated high school and has a job. Scott said that Wits End was a very helpful resource. Andy asked if there was anything in the school or community that Scott wishes had been there to support his daughter. Scott replied that the school was supportive. He feels that acceptance is key for teens and that it is important to keep them occupied with positive things.

#### **5. New Business**

##### Medical Marijuana

Tony Folland attended the meeting to report on a two day conference he attended with other states that allow medical marijuana use. The goal was to find out what's working and what could be improved in delivering medical marijuana safely and securely and not opening it up for abuse. Fifteen states in the US have active medical marijuana programs. A bill was recently passed to authorize up to 4 dispensaries in the state. Nurses and physicians assistants can prescribe medical marijuana under the new bill as well. The dispensaries will be like a pharmacies and the Dept. of Public Safety will provide oversight. The bill does not change the eligibility requirements for patients to get medical marijuana.

Currently, there are 339 people in Vermont registered for medical marijuana. Tony said that we have the smallest number of any of the states with medical marijuana programs and the smallest number per capita. Patty asked if there are more people who will seek services, she also wondered about the demographics. Tony replied that 25% of people in the program are 50 years of age or older and 25% deny prior use. Barbara suggested the Council ask a representative from the VCIC division of Public Safety to provide data to the council.

Tony reported that there are 5 delivery methods of medical marijuana: smokable, edible, topical, liquid and vaporized. It is available in pill form. Compared to other states, Vermont is restrictive about who can be prescribed marijuana. A person has to have a debilitating illness or chronic pain and he or she must have tried other reasonable treatments for the condition with failure. Other states will prescribe marijuana for PTSD. Marijuana cannot be prescribed to anyone under 21 years old in Vermont and Vermont capped the number of dispensaries allowed in the state. There are many questions about the level of impairment (in terms of driving) and other questions that substance abuse treatment providers are wrestling with. Barbara said that the position at ADAP on medical marijuana is that marijuana is not recognized as medicine until it goes through the AMA process. It is an illicit substance with abuse potential. The states decision to authorize dispensaries will not jeopardize our SAMHSA block grant. The decriminalization bill was not passed this year but it will be back next year.

#### **6. Constituency updates**

Steve reported that Anheuser-Busch is voluntarily dropping the alcohol content in their "Tilt" beverage from 12% to 8% . Another piece of news is that the EUDL (enforcement of underage drinking laws) federal funds

have been reduced 60k to \$300,000. Barbara said that we are a couple years behind in spending so we shouldn't see much impact from that.

Joy reported that all scholarships to the National Gambling Conference in Boston have been filled. Mitchell shared that Micheal Nerney will speak in Williston on May 26<sup>th</sup> at the Majestic 10 theatre.

Andy reported that a Ditmas house opened in Hartford.

Barbara said that ADAP anticipates a reduction to the substance abuse block grant and the state is applying to a Community Transformation grant from the CDC.

David announced that he is inviting the Governor to the June meeting. Some members cannot attend and asked if he could be invited in the fall. David replied that he would rather have the Governor come early and often so he will invite him to the next meeting and have him back in late fall.

The next meeting is June 22 at the DLC.