

VERMONT TOBACCO EVALUATION AND REVIEW BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Department of Liquor Control, 13 Green Mountain Drive, Montpelier

Minutes

Members Attending: Alexandra Potter, Rhonda Williams, Amy Tucker, Bob Uerz, Rebecca Thompson, Matt Shear, Scott Connolly (by phone), Sruthi Sakamuri (by phone), Helen Wagner (by phone)

Guests Attending: Rebecca Ryan

Meeting began at: 3:05pm

Approval of February 3, 2016 Minutes

Rebecca moved to approve February 3, 2016 minutes. Matt seconded. Voting in favor: Amy T, Rhonda, Alexi, Bob, Rebecca T, Matt, Scott, Sruthi. Abstaining: Helen. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

Public Comment: none

Announcements:

Rebecca Ryan from the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Vermont provided an update on the progress of H. 171, the bill proposing restrictions on the use of electronic cigarettes. There is a lot of support for this bill. Exemption for vape shops may be proposed. The coalition is concerned about the impact such an exemption may have on clean indoor air laws. It also brings into question enforcement capacity. Rebecca asked the Board to make a statement to reinforce a message of support for this bill as written, without exemptions. Helen asked for VDH's position on this bill. Rhonda said that e-cigarette restriction is a VDH priority; she will find out their position on a possible vape shop exemption.

Alexi moved to authorize Kate to pursue public and/or written testimony regarding this bill, supporting restrictions of e-cigarettes as a priority. Matt seconded. All voted in favor. Motion passed.

Rhonda announced that CDC finalized plan for an across the board cut of 3.85% to tobacco control programs across the U.S. This is due to reductions in funding to the Office of Smoking and Health. This will result in a reduction of approximately \$35,000 in VDH's CDC tobacco control funding.

Alexi shared that on Friday March 18th from 10:30-11:45, UVM will hold a Psychiatry Grand Rounds presentation in the Davis Auditorium on marijuana health risk and

consequences. Dr. John Hughes and Dr. David Rettew are presenting. Link to the grand rounds: <https://www.uvm.edu/medicine/psychiatry/?Page=conferences.html>

Committee Updates

Cessation committee

Cessation services vendor selection (VOTE)

Rhonda shared the overview of the vendor selection process and the review of applications completed by the cessation services committee. Two vendors competing for the Vermont bid: Alere and National Jewish Health. The committee recommends that VDH contract with National Jewish Health as the vendor for cessation services in Vermont.

Rhonda made a motion that the board accept the committee's recommendation to contract with National Jewish Health, contingent upon successful budget negotiations. Rebecca seconded. All voted in favor. Motion passed.

Evaluation Committee and Media Committee

These two committees met jointly on February 22, 2016 and heard presentations by VDH and their partners on the Counter Balance mid-fiscal report, the Down & Dirty mid-fiscal report, a review of 2015 for 802Quits reach, engagement, and outcomes, and the 2015 cessation report. These reports and presentation slides are located on the VTERB website.

Draft of updated tobacco control work plan 2015-2020

VDH will submit final draft to CDC as well as VDH legal review for input before finalization. Scott asked if we could get the Governor to write a brief letter to include in the forward section of the work plan. Rhonda will consider this as a possibility. The board discussed concerns over the goal percentage of reducing youth e-cigarette use to 10%. That may be too ambitious with a lack of data as to trends, abundant misinformation among the populous, and enforcement activities just getting underway.

Current proposed Governors budget

No updates at this time. The coalition sent an open letter to the Governor and lawmakers signed by current and former VTERB chairs, which was published in VT Digger. [Amy Brewer et al.: Independent evaluation a worthwhile cost](#)

Current legislation

The house judiciary committee is working on H.571 and a major part of the bill is to remove license suspension for non-driving offenses. This includes a person under 18 from possessing, purchasing or attempting to purchase tobacco or tobacco substitutes.

The e-cigarette bill (H. 171 - An act relating to restrictions on the use of electronic cigarettes) looks like it will make it out of Human Services committee and some legislators would like to add a tax to the bill and/or to raise the minimum age to buy tobacco products and e-cigarettes to 21. Bill thinks they could get one of them to pass but more doubtful for both. Bill asked the Board to discuss their preference and position

on both. Board members discussed that there are a number of other states with e-cig taxes now, and many more considering it in the legislative process. Raising the minimum age to purchase is also gaining traction among states and municipalities, although to date only one state and only a few municipalities have been successful in enacting this change. Board members are concerned about H.171 getting rejected entirely because of either amendment, but they support any configuration of a bill (no amendment, or one or the other) as that is consistent with the board's priorities for tobacco control. It was challenging for the board to prioritize one amendment over the other not knowing which would be more likely to get through. Both amendments would do so much good in terms of reducing tobacco prevalence. The board wondered whether raising the minimum purchase age would bog H.171 down, concluding that given our historical precedents it would be easier to do taxation. There is a strong Vermont history of supporting legislation that improves parity among tobacco products. This leans the board toward prioritizing increasing tax on e-cigarettes over an amendment to raise the minimum purchase age.

Adult Tobacco Survey Presentation

Rhonda introduced the Adult Tobacco Survey which is fielded over an eight-week period in the fall. VDH started this data collection in 2001. The most recent survey was in 2014 and is now conducted biennially. Due to a reduction in funding to \$100,000 maximum, VDH will either have to reduce the sample size or reduce the number of questions. Board members provided comments and suggestions for potentially reducing questions. They provided notes to Rhonda for consideration in terms of reducing the length of the questionnaire.

Other Business/Information: none

Meeting adjourned at 5:01pm.