

# **VERMONT TOBACCO EVALUATION AND REVIEW BOARD MEETING**

**Wednesday, June 1, 2016**

**3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Agency of Human Services, 280 State Drive, Waterbury Vermont**

## **Minutes**

Members attending: Amy Brewer, Greg MacDonald, Rebecca Thompson, Bob Uerz, Helen Wagner, Barbara Cimaglio (phone) Scott Connolly (phone), Alexandra Potter (phone)  
Guests attending: Rhonda Williams, Rebecca Ryan, Alex Crimmin

### Approval of Board Minutes

Rebecca moved to approve board minutes from April 6, 2016. Greg seconded. All voted in favor. Minutes approved.

Barbara moved to approved board minutes May 4, 2016. Greg seconded. Voting in favor: Amy B, Amy T, Greg, Bob, Helen, Barbara, Scott, Alexi.

Abstaining: Rebecca Thompson

Minutes approved

### Public Comment:

Rebecca Ryan shared her disappointment in the FY17 funding cut. Rebecca thanked Kate for her service as board administrator on behalf of the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Vermont.

### Announcements:

This is Sruthi's last meeting. Bill Frank will end his term on the board at the end of the year. New appointment process is underway.

AOE grant program: Bob shared the 2017 AOE Comprehensive School-Based Tobacco Use Prevention Grant Applicant Ranking chart. Ranking was determined based on youth smoking rate, adult smoking rate, poverty, infrastructure. (For specifics see the 6/1/2016 meeting minutes folder on the VTERB website.)

### Adult Tobacco Survey Update

Rhonda shared that the selection committee decided to go with lowest bidder which can offer the same analytic power to conduct 2016 ATS. The selection is Clearwater, contingent upon successful budget negotiations. The ATS will utilize a shorter survey (15 minutes) but maintain the level of respondents of 2,000 with a 50/50 split of smokers to non-smokers. Future conversations will take place in determining state capacity to continue to conduct ATS.

### Final draft VDH FY17 budget

Rhonda shared the final proposed budget. Greg asked about the tobacco Quitline capacity grant. Rhonda shared that this is funding from CDC. Greg moved to approve the FY17 VDH budget as presented. Scott seconded. All voted in favor. Motions passed unanimously. Budget approved.

### Final State Plan

Helen provided comments to VDH and shared in the meeting the following:

- Since Act 108 (H.171 an act relating to restrictions on the use of electronic cigarettes), has been enacted, activities in the state plan pertaining to this should be removed or a reference to the accomplishment in law should be made.
- There is concern about the "other tobacco products" definition which is different than Vermont's legal definition.
- The description of the AGO needs updating. Helen will work with Rhonda on this.

Greg asked about charging insurance for cessation services. Essential health benefit is an area VDH is still working on since it can require across all insurers in the state to provide comprehensive tobacco services per the Affordable Care Act. VDH has been in contact with BCBS, which appears to have a comprehensive tobacco benefit, but they declined to cover NRT for the Quitline because they already pay into the Blueprint for Health and its Quit Partner cessation program.

Greg moved to accept the tobacco control state plan as presented with suggested changes, Rebecca seconded. All voted in favor. State plan is approved.

#### H.875 (FY17 appropriations)

The final FY17 budget reduces the VTERB (AHS) budget to \$67,500. It also establishes the development of sustainability plan that includes the following partners: AHS, AOA, VTERB, and participating stakeholders. Amy will represent the board in the discussions. Alexi and Rebecca Thompson are willing to also be included in discussions.

Suggestions from board members for consideration:

- consider proposing a realistic and reasonable funding request, outlining where we were, what happened, where we are now, and reasonable steps to build back up for future sustainability.
- look at states that have made reductions in youth initiation to below 10% to inform VTERB recommendations
- include concrete suggestions around a dedicated tax revenue stream for general administration of the tobacco control program, such as excise tax.
- consider whether it may be easier for VDH to ask for additional funding to pay for evaluation (see statute language) while VTERB still oversees independent evaluation.
- articulate the key priorities for the tobacco control program.
- there is worry that if the proposal looks too much like funding recommendations as funds have continued to diminish in recent years, the board might not be heard. On the other hand, if we don't advocate for full funding in order to accomplish the goals of our state plan, we won't achieve our goals. Do we ask for the full amount? Have a tiered back-up plan?
- consider scaling back VTERB administration as a sacrificial offer when asking for funds for the program.
- frame recommendations in national evidence. Where does Vermont fall in comparison to the gold standard for tobacco control?
- Consider suggesting the most important program elements to address, considering time, effort and capacity.
- is there a way to address priorities and ask for additional revenue that is overseen by VTERB to allocate based on priorities? It may give the board more independence.
- consider that 2020 is a reference point when thinking about funding toward achieving goals for tobacco control.

Amy and Kate will draft a proposal for covering the work over the next year to be shared and discussed at the July 2016 meeting.

#### Committee Updates

Evaluation committee had a great conversation about the role of the committee, diminished budget, unknown administrative structure, and about how to proceed in a new capacity. Also discussed updates on RTI Local Opinion Leader Survey manuscript and topic briefs.

School and community committee also looked at the LOLS manuscript. The committee discussed the new FDA regulations, talked through the need to establish priorities for strategic planning toward state goals.

#### Other Business/Information

The board decided to meet in July (July 6) but take August off.

Board members thanked Kate for her service to the board as its administrator. This is Kate's last meeting. Kate thanked all for the experience and the opportunity to serve!