Vermont Tobacco Evaluation and Review Board
Board Meeting MINUTES
September 7, 2016

Attendees: Rhonda Williams, Amy Brewer, Rebecca Thompson, Megan Sault, Helen Wagner, Greg MacDonald, Amy Tucker, Kate Larose, Bob Uerz, Alexi Potter

Guests: Rebecca Brookes

Meeting called to order at 3:08pm

Approval of Board Minutes: Rebecca made a motion to approve the July 6, 2016 minutes, seconded by Greg. Voting in favor: Rhonda Williams, Amy Brewer, Rebecca Thompson, Helen Wagner, Greg MacDonald, Amy Tucker, Kate Larose
Abstaining: Bob and Helen

Public Comment: no member of the public present

Announcements:
Administrator Hiring Process: $20 per hour is not enough to hire the candidate we wanted. Would like to negotiate for a $30. Taking into consideration that we've had a 6 week gap in $ spent in adnm, so there's some savings there.
Alexi – she has strong evaluation skills and could complement our work – she could help with compiling data determined by eval committee and then we hire someone to analyze the data. Could feasibly hire a high level evaluator for a day to weigh in on evaluation ideas.

Helen – Would there be a precedent set in changing the pay rate so? No, there is not – this remains lower than previous administrators.

Kate – What are the numbers with taxes etc? Other fees that come out of budget? Amy needs to ask HR. In terms of exempt employee, is there a probationary period?

With a budget of $67,500 and approximately $7000 for operational expenses, Alexi recommends a minimum of $30,000 goes to evaluation and a maximum of $30,000 for administrator.

Kate – can we do this as a contractor vs. employee?

Motion (Rhonda): Maximum $35,000 for administrator and a minimum of $25,000 for evaluation. Greg seconds. Discussion – Helen has concerns about putting more weight on administrator vs. evaluation but defers to Alexi. Alexi agrees, but with our situation and with this person, this is still ok.
Does VDH still offer admn. support to this? Yes, but a bit. If we pursued a contract administrator, would VDH or AHS offer support for contract development and management? Rhonda – I don’t think we could.

In favor: Bob, Amy, Rebecca, Kate, Alexi, Greg, Rhonda, Helen
Abstain: Megan

Board Member Vacancies: Submitted Alex Crimmin’s name for approval to board, but they requested a 2nd under 30 application to compare it to. Alexi will work with Eli from Eval Committee to submit his resume to Amy.

Rhonda: Quit Line Consortium to understand the context for the decrease in QL usage – VT is the same as the national trends. Maybe CDC Quit Tips ads didn’t resonate as well? 2016 rebound may be due to e-cig ad? Call volume increase by 100 in 2016. Saw a boost in May and June when we ran the new “faces” ad and e-cig ad then too.

Rhonda: Evaluation – Susan Dolina (RTI) contacted Rhonda today about the Local Opinion Leaders Survey Paper and we were rejected by first journal. It will be submitted to another journal.

Bob- AOE Grant is underway to 19 SUs/Districts. AOE/VDH are collaborating on the 6th strategy (around community engagement) and working out “bumps” to keep it clearer for grantees. Site visits are all scheduled. Shared a TFK piece “How schools can help kids stay tobacco free.” (handout)

CounterBalance :30 Script Review

Rethinking pharmacy work so, in working with commissioner’s office looking at data and policy platform internally, flavors stood out. The campaign will work to raise awareness of the role of flavors in youth use. Research shows that more exposure to flavors increase likelihood to become adult smokers.
Talked with Barbara, legal, communications...got approval in June for flavor campaign. 25% tobacco use rate among youth (incl e-cig), 24% have used e-cigs.

Plans include community coalitions and youth and broadcast will be small part of this work. What you’re looking at is the core messaging. Script has run by VDH legal. Demographic is parents and up to about age 40-45. Using Rescue Social Change. Children will be filmed in studio. Age of child for script is younger children – around 8-10.

Rebecca Brookes – Counter Balance research showed 62% of respondents didn’t think it was appropriate for flavored products. Research has demonstrated the challenge. Increase understanding how flavors attract youth and contribute to low perception of danger of harm. What really do youth call them? (little cigars? Cigarillos?) A bit of research on what kids actually call these products revealed there is no consistent term. Retailers locally said to call them “little cigars”. A visual of the product will help identify clearly what we’re talking about.

This ad is an element of a suite of materials that will live online.
Fact question - Helen – if you smell the product, would it actually smell that way? Yep, they do. Bob – there is no reference to e-cig in the script, but this is an area that schools are bringing to our attention as important. Rebecca B – we will address e-cig, but we want to focus on it separately because it is such a growing part of the industry. We’re not ignoring them, just starting with these products.

Would you get more bang for the buck if you include e-cig? Language of e-cig is more complicated and might not be able to simply add them in. Rebecca B believes it should be its own topic. Is there wiggle room (Rhonda) if we remove the watermelon dress example and add in specifics? OVX component will be kids educating other kids about flavors. We have limited time to get the message across…what would we call them? Helen suggests “vaping products.” Amy T – it seems that somehow e-products and combustibles are being looked at differently.

Kids often refer to the products by their brand names, ex. Swisher Sweets. If we add specific brand names, we could get sued.

Greg – why are we targeting little cigars? Prevalence is 9% for little cigars, however, they’re cheap and available singly and near schools. Helen – if the focus is flavored products, why not include e-cig? Alexi – gets distracted when “research shows” isn’t included. We will have research to complement this online.

Kate - Website is really cigarillo focused, could we broaden to include other flavored products?

Summary: Board’s input is if at all possible without muddying the message, include, but not focus on, e-cigs in ad. If it’s not possible, we get it, but the Board thinks it’s important. And consider adding in “research shows.” We can outline a process to get this finalized for a vote in October.

**Tobacco Control Program Budget Recommendations**

Each October, the Board is required to submit a Budget Recommendation. Departments/Agencies have their own budget recommendation processes and may or may not match what the Board recommends. Generally speaking, budget levels are prescribed to the departments with some amount of input. Ultimately, that is what gets funneled up through into the Governor’s proposal. Rhonda/Helen - Can budget rec’s and sustainability conversation happen at same time? Alexi – this is so much lower than what we need. Bob – How do we demonstrate what will this accomplish? What is the result? Numbers mean something. $ translate into initiatives. Quantify.

*We will address this once again at October meeting.*

**Sustainability Discussion**

See handout outline of draft presentation to guide conversation during sustainability meeting which is set for Sept. 22nd and is so far going to be attended by us, VDH represented by Barbara, the Coalition for a Tobacco Free VT, and I’m not sure who from the Administration’s office. Recommendations for funding sustainability include excise tax increases and dedicating a portion of them to the program. Helen - Separate out e-cig tax issue because that could happen separately than cigarette and OTP.
Kate – highlight, include, shine a spotlight on return on investments. It will be the #1 selling point.

Could this year be the right year to make changes in budgeting – with all the political changes happening? VTERB could use its independence during the sustainability process.

Kate – could Karen Lafayette from VLIAC be there too? Nothing in the legislations defines that – she could. It would be great to have that connection to the Low Income community again.

Rhonda – use the state plan to highlight that we’re working towards a “tobacco free generation.”

CDC recommendations? Should we or shouldn’t we include them in the presentation. It never seems to resonate, even if it gives folks a context. How do we demonstrate an estimate of how this would impact Medicaid? This level vs. that level – what happens to Medicaid expenses? A graph? Cost? Lives? Amy requests help on this piece – it’s a great idea, but she doesn’t have ability to do it. Would TFK or CDC be able to help? Rhonda will connect with project officer at CDC and Amy can reach out to TFK.

Any information, details, supportive data can be sent to Amy.

Other Business/Information
None

Meeting adjourned at 4:57