

VERMONT TOBACCO EVALUATION AND REVIEW BOARD
BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, January 7, 2015
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Department of Liquor Control
Montpelier, VT

Minutes

Present: Scott Connolly, Darlene Peterson, Amy Brewer, Mike Hogan, Helen Wagner (phone), Rhonda Williams

Guests present: Matt Shear, Rebecca Ryan, Eoana Sturges

Public Comment

Rebecca Ryan talked about ALA report which rates states on state of tobacco control report grades each state on tobacco control program funding, smoke free air, tobacco taxes and access to cessation services. Vermont is getting C in funding, A in smoke free air, B in tobacco tax, B in cessation services (methodology has changed a bit on this one, but thanks to VDH to Medicaid coverage and expansion and the state health care plan, we are receiving a better grade in this area). ALA will send a press release on the 21st of January where we will see these grades, descriptions, state comparisons, etc.

Rhonda shared that VDH staff will be meeting with the new commissioner of Human Resources to talk about state benefit plan, to explore data sharing and how to work together on how to support state employees, to know about benefits, look at environmental supports for behavior change and to track outcomes.

Rebecca shared that Coalition For Tobacco Free Vermont was defunded. No coordinator but the ALA, ACS and AHA will remain united as leaders of the coalition. They will be adding citations to the Coalition document and updating it with current numbers.

Helen asked if Coalition has data on how much revenue would be raised if tax were raised. Rebecca responded that the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids is running new numbers and will be sending them in the next week or two. The Coalition has some recommendations as to where increased revenue could go to support tobacco control.

December Meeting Minutes

Mike moved to approve, Scott seconded. All present voted in favor, but will need two more votes to make quorum and pass this motion.

Update: Alexi Potter and Bill Frank also voted in favor of approving December minutes (via email post meeting).

Announcements

Amy provided a new members update. Current applications are currently being reviewed by appointing committees of the Legislature and the Governor's office. Bill Frank has been moved from the Health Care Committee to the Judiciary Committee. We still need someone to represent the low income community. Kate spoke with and emailed the new Secretary of AHS with information about VTERB and to ask for any recommendations he might have that Kate can follow-up with in order to secure a low income representative member.

Amy recognized that losing the Coalition director is a big change, asked members for input into what they think this may mean, what impact this may have. This is likely to be a permanent change; unlikely that the Coalition will regain a Coordinator position in the future.

Rhonda wondered if there are ways that VTERB or VDH could offer administrative support in some way and/or at some times.

Rhonda suggested we think about our Medicaid office and health care insurers in terms of representing the low income community on VTERB. Rhonda would like to see health care represented on VTERB. We have a shared objective which is to reduce tobacco's harm and reduce expenditures. VTERB make good strides in creating the three year plan and Blueprint was a part of that. Blueprint is still a major component for health care in our state.

Commissioner Hogan noted that there may be an issue with Senate representation because the Senate committees meet Wednesday afternoons. Getting away might be difficult during the legislative session. We understand that it can be difficult for legislators to get away from the statehouse during the session, but there are ways to be engaged even if they can't be at the table.

Public Meetings Process

We have tried a variety of ways to engage the public in the past, and we want to consider possibilities for engagement in new ways in the future. We want to encourage voices at the table. Past strategies have included Vermont Interactive Television, the annual meeting with RTI, etc.

Amy wonders if there a way to bring the public comment process to another already established meeting, such as stakeholders in local coalitions or in the education community. Do we want these public meetings to be topic specific?

Rhonda likes the idea of topic-based because it gives public idea of what we are looking for and they can provide a voice around something specific. Mike agrees that topics will drive the comments.

Darlene said UVM tobacco-free organization could be a springboard for gathering input from the campus crowd. Associating with and existing group can be worthwhile.

Darlene suggested that any public comment should include a presentation about VTERB, what it is and what it does.

Three potential elements of the public comment:

1. Target populations (such as: students on campus, local coalitions, etc)

Rhonda will provide a summary of year one of the point of sale initiative later this spring. This is an opportunity to share about year one and gain input into what year two might look like from the public.

Rhonda shared information about how ACA and access to quit resources work for low-income uninsured/under-insured and working poor. There is lower awareness around what is available and how to access than we'd like. She would like to ask the public about cessation services access, what could be done better, and what obstacles they are seeing around this. Asking the public: are you able to access what you need when you want to quit?

2. Targeted topics

- E-cigarettes, smoking bans, retail environment/Point of Sale

3. Who we are and what we do

Ideas for public comment locations:

- McLure Center in the North End of Burlington
- Rutland
- East Montpelier (Elks)
- Davis Center
- Are there events around the state that we could join in on?
- Community Medical School

Action: Send emails to Kate about where events are taking place where we could see about including public comment.

Mike suggested that VTERB put together a brief set slides on who/what VTERB is, does, and its purpose. Include a one-page fact sheet to go along with it.

Action: Kate will draft a set of slides and accompanying one-page description of VTERB that can be used as a marketing and educational tool.

Committee Chair Reports

none

Annual Report to the Legislature

We are trying to make it an actual valuable resource beyond the statutory requirement. Board members provided comments and edits. Some grammatical edits, some edits pertaining to language in sections. The board discussed whether we are supporting legislative action or recommending legislative action. In past annual reports the language was "recommend." There were suggestions about layout and the order of items. There was a request to include a green box brief about how VTERB supported the passage of Act 135. In the youth section changed reference to snus usage to cigars/little cigars/cigarellos.

As to the legislative action section (page 4): we need to vote to agree to the recommendations. Helen and Rhonda will need to run the legislative action by their leadership before they can vote.

Action: Kate will send out final draft of legislative action section for member vote.

1/15/2015 update: final legislative action section language (page 4 of annual report) as stated below received the following votes: five votes in favor (Scott, Darlene, Bill, Alexi, Amy), and three abstentions (VDH, DLC, AOE).

VTERB recommends legislative action to implement evidence-based strategies to advance the Tobacco Control Program's long-term goals and support the health and well-being of Vermonters:

- 1. Fund the statewide Tobacco Control Program at a level necessary to achieve its long-term goals.*
- 2. Implement effective tobacco product price policies that reduce and prevent tobacco use.*
- 3. Adopt clean air laws that protect Vermonters against secondhand smoke from tobacco products and aerosol from tobacco substitutes such as e-cigarettes.*
- 4. Increase and preserve the Tobacco Trust Fund (18 V.S.A. § 9502) per the original intent of the legislation "creating a self-sustaining, perpetual fund for tobacco cessation and prevention" in order to ensure long-term Tobacco Control Program sustainability and attainment of long-term goals.*
- 5. Plan for fiscal stability for when Strategic Contribution Payments* to Vermont cease in 2017. *see page 6 for definition of Strategic Contribution Payments*

Administrator Performance Indicators

Tabled until next meeting

VDH Budget Draft #1 Discussion and Timeline for FY16

Rhonda submitted and presented first proposed draft for the VDH tobacco control program. Changes presented include: elimination of Commune media campaign (targeting 18-24 year olds), JSI evaluation dollars included, elimination of VKAT/OVX grants, transfer of youth funding community coalitions for youth engagement and one statewide technical assistant (funding to a model similar to the smoke-free college campus initiative).

Final vote is typically between May and September. We will aim to take a final vote on the VDH budget by June 2015.

Process: VDH budget will next be presented and discussed at upcoming committee meetings and will be back before the full board in March.

Other Business/Information

Action: Kate will provide board members with the annual calendar of all committee and board meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05pm