



RHODE ISLAND COMMISSION ON WOMEN

FULL COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, December 11, 2006

5:00 PM

One Capitol Hill

2nd Floor, Conference Room B

Providence, RI 02908

Commissioners

Linda H. Newton, *Chair*

Corinne Calise Russo, *1st Vice Chair*

Carol Gibbons, Ph.D., *2nd Vice Chair*

Joanne M. Hill, *Treasurer*

Jan Torres, *Secretary*

Jane M. Anthony

Denise A. Barge

Carrie Bridges, MPH

Representative Joanne Giannini

Catherine Graziano, Ph.D.

Victoria Johnson

Jacqueline B. Laguerre

Helene Martin, RNC, CAGS, NCC

Lela Morgan, M.A.

Representative Carol A. Mumford

Representative Eileen S. Naughton

Adelita Orefice

Sarah H. Rockett, M.A.

Neena Savage, Esquire

Marilyn Coccozza Trillo

Beverly Turner

Tracy E. Williams

Staff

Shanna Wells, M.Ed., *Director*

MINUTES

Present: Jane M. Anthony, Denise Barge, Carrie Bridges, Carol Gibbons, Victoria Johnson, Helene Martin, Linda Newton, Sarah Rockett, Jan Torres, Marilyn Coccozza Trillo.

Absent, Excused: Catherine Graziano, Joanne Hill, Corinne Calise Russo, Beverly Turner, Tracy Williams.

Absent, Unexcused: Rep. Joanne Giannini, Jacqueline Laguerre, Lela Morgan, Rep. Carol Mumford, Rep. Eileen Naughton, Neena Savage.

Call to Order

Chair Linda Newton called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Consent Agenda

Sarah Rockett made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Denise Barge seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Director's Report

Women's Studies Program at URI: Attended a reception for the Friends of the Women's Studies Program on November 14th. See attached handout and information on the Dana Shugar Spring Colloquium Series.

City Year RI: The Project HEROES Program of City Year RI, located at the Gilbert Stuart Middle School in Providence, asked me to do a presentation to the middle schoolers as part of their module on Discrimination and Stereotyping. See attached thank you email.

Public Forum on Human Trafficking: On November 28th I attended the Public Forum in Human Trafficking hosted by the City of Providence Mayor's Office and the National Council of Jewish Women. Please see attached Providence Journal article which presents highlighted data from the forum. The Commissioners agreed by consensus that this is a priority issue for the RICW.

National Association of Women In Construction (NAWIC) Luncheon: On December 1st I attended this luncheon in order to network around the RICW Education Committee's "Women in Non-Traditional Trades" project.

Other Meetings Attended: Note: these are on-going committees. No pressing data to report at this time.

Women Ending Hunger
Emerging Women in Business
Civil Rights Roundtable
Permanent Legislative Committee on Childcare
Office of Women's Health Advisory Committee

Women's Prison Learning Lab

Civil Rights Roundtable Information: Per your request, see attached information regarding the purpose and principles of the Roundtable.

Director Job Description: Per your request, I contacted Human Resources (HR) to obtain the job description and information regarding performance reviews. According to Elaine Field, unclassified positions such as the Director position, do not have detailed job descriptions codified. Attached, however, is the original job posting for the position which includes a general statement of duties. Also, per Elaine Field, the state does not have a formal evaluative process for employees past the probationary reports (see attached). The probationary reports are complete at two-month intervals for the first six months of employment. Many agencies create their own evaluations, but they are neither official nor sanctioned by HR.

Committee Reports

Bylaws: The marked-up amended bylaws were distributed for review. A lengthy discussion was held regarding Article 3, Section 1B4, describing the terms of membership. The discussion centered on wording the bylaws to reflect compliance with the legislative regulations which created RICW. Chair Linda Newton stated she would review the statute with an eye toward ensuring the bylaws represent the statutory requirements accurately. The bylaws were tabled until then.

Education: Education Committee Chair Sarah Rockett reported that the DCYF Mentoring Program is on hold due to the ongoing confidentiality issues.

The Women in Non-Traditional Trades (WNTT) project is now taking a two-prong approach. The URI Center for Urban Studies Urban Field Center is developing a research project to determine the state of WNTT in RI. Funding will be sought to offset the cost of the research. RICW is partnering with Big Sisters of RI on a Girl's Expo on NTT, scheduled to occur in March 2008.

The Freda Goldman Education Award Event will be held on January 17, 3 PM at the State House State Room. All Commissioners are encouraged to attend and show their support.

Health: The Health Committee met on December 1st, and prioritized the following issues:

NOTE: *Prioritize based on the needs of the underserved and vulnerable populations of women, whether that be by race/ethnicity, age, geography, etc.*

Wellness

"Healthy People 2010" is a national initiative to improve the health of the nation. The Rhode Island Healthy People 2010 Program has adopted the national overarching goals to:

- Increase quality and years of healthy life
- Eliminate health disparities

The Leading Health Indicators upon which the Healthy People objectives are organized are:

- Physical Activity
- Overweight and Obesity
- Tobacco Use
- Substance Abuse
- Responsible Sexual Behavior
- Mental Health
- Injury and Violence
- Environmental Quality
- Immunization
- Access to Health Care

In addition, the Governor of Rhode Island wants to make Rhode Island the first “well state”. To this end, the Governor’s Wellness Initiative outlines five goals. By the year 2010, the Governor’s Wellness Goals are to cut in half the:

- % of adult Rhode Islanders who are overweight or obese
- % of adults who smoke
- % of adults who do not eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day
- % of adults who do not exercise regularly
- % of adults who do not wear a seatbelt regularly

NOTE: As this is not exclusively a women’s issue, and because DOH has this as a priority issue, The Health Committee feels this should not be a priority for RICW.

Elder Care

The majority of elders in Rhode Island are female. The majority of primary caregivers to both children and elders are female. As parents live longer and people have children later in life, women become more deeply ensconced in the Sandwich Generation. According to the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, the typical family caregiver is a 46-year-old woman caring for her widowed mother who does not live with her. She is married and employed. Approximately 60% of family caregivers are women. Women who are family caregivers are 2.5 times more likely than non-caregivers to live in poverty and five times more likely to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Women average 14 years out of the paid labor force, primarily because of caregiving responsibilities

NOTE: The committee recommends supporting other lead agencies on these issues.

Legislative Advocacy

Historically, this is the area where the RICW Health Committee has focused the bulk of its work. Position papers were created on such topics as: Access to Health Care, Ethical, Legal and Social Implications of Genetic Testing, Genetics, Health Care Response to Domestic Violence, Health of Women Elders, Osteoporosis, Quality of Health Care, Women and Cancer, Women’s Health.

NOTE: The Committee sees this as their highest priority.

Mental Health

Mental Health services still lag behind other medical treatments in coverage by insurers. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “Overall rates of psychiatric disorder are almost identical for men and women but striking gender differences are found in the patterns of mental illness.” In addition to gender specific risk factors, such as gender-based violence, socioeconomic disadvantage, low income and income inequality and unremitting responsibility for the care of others, gender bias occurs in treatment, with women being more likely than men to be prescribed psychotropic drugs.

Gaps in Re-Entry Services for Incarcerated Women

Currently, aftercare and discharge planning occurs for women exiting prison. The Department of Corrections Transitional Services/Discharge Planners work with inmates within six months of release. Transitional Services contracts with 20 community agencies who begin their work with inmates while still incarcerated in order to increase the number of services accessed upon release. However, there seems to be a disconnect between medical discharge planning and general discharge planning. Once released, former inmates have no health insurance and so may not be able to access health and behavioral health services in the community. The

gap in urgent care access and possible lack of knowledge on the part of health centers about reimbursements applicable to uninsured females create systems delay access by vulnerable population to the medical and psychiatric/behavioral care they need.

NOTE: The Committee sees these issues as their second highest priority.

Other

Coverage for HPV vaccine

Health Care ramifications of Human Trafficking

NOTE: Both issues should be researched for more information about gaps in service and possible advocacy.

Linda Newton informed the Commissioners that the previously proposed federal legislation regarding maximizing hospital stays after a mastectomy does not appear to be gaining momentum in Congress.. She feels we should not support the legislation, as recent research has not shown that longer hospital stays contribute to better outcomes. Rather, longer hospital stays may indicate greater levels of infection.

Old Business

Annual Report and Fiscal Integrity and Accountability Report (FIA): Denise Barge made a motion to accept the FY 2006 Annual Report and FIA Report, as amended. Carol Gibbons seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Department of Health Re-Organization and Update: Carrie Bridges reported on the re-organization of the Department of Health in early 2006. The Department of Health and Equity was restructured into four main divisions:

- Access to Care
- Health Promotion and Wellness
- Chronic Disease Control
- Community Health and Equity

Under the Community Health and Equity Division is included the issue of Health Disparities. Within that team is included:

- Office of Women's Health (OWH)
- Minority Health
- Refugee Health
- Healthy People 2010

Carrie Bridges is the head of the Health Disparities team. Former OWH medical advisor, Dr. Sharon Marable is no longer associated with the OWH, and staffer Nancy Libby-Fisher splits her time between OWH (20%) and the Cancer Control Program (80%).

The OWH Advisory Committee has been working with Carrie, Division Chief Ana Novais and DOH Director Gifford on an action plan for the OWH. Priorities are:

- Internal resources
- Funding and staffing
- Maintaining the OWH as a resource for women's health
- Enforcing universal data collection by gender

Announcements

RICW Legislative Committee Chair Tracy Williams has resigned her post as CIO for the Department of Administration.

Linda Newton spoke with House Majority Leader Gordon Fox's office regarding a legislative grant for \$5,000 to the Goldman Education Award. No response has been received as yet.

Adjournment

Sarah Rockett made a motion to adjourn. Carol Gibbons seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Next Meeting: January 8, 2007, 5:00 PM, One Capitol Hill, Second Floor, Conference Room B.

Minutes approved on January 8, 2007.

Jan Torres, Secretary