

**Rhode Island Department of Health
Women's Health Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – April 2, 2008**

Members Present: Katie Albert, Danielle Denis, Kristina Diamond, Melanie Duhamel, Yvonne Freeman, Marie Ghazal, Catherine Graziano, Margaret Koch, Jessica Marfeo, Cynthia Rosengard, Christine Ryan, Iris Tong Members Excused Absent: Janae Ashley, Wendy Fox, Lisa Jones, Marlene McCarthy, Marian Mehegan, , Janet Searles Lisa Shea Members Unexcused Absent: Chasity Hernandez, , Janet Searles HEALTH Staff Present: Carrie Bridges, Kate McCarthy-Barnett

Welcome & Introductions

Iris Tong called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

Approval of Minutes (February 6, 2008)

Marie Ghazal led the WHAC in review of the minutes. Minutes were accepted without any corrections.

Update on Legislative Issues

Helen Drew presented a detailed overview of the role of the Department of Health in the legislative process including identification of priority areas; providing advice and suggestions to the Governor on the impact of potential legislation; and providing information to the General Assembly to assist in the decision making

process. Two areas of focus for the Department of Health include prevention at the policy level and professional authorities (e.g., license). Helen emphasized the important role the Women's Health Advisory Committee plays in taking a position on legislation and advising Dr. Gifford, however, it is important to remember that the members of the Advisory Committee cannot speak on behalf of the Department without the approval/support of Dr. Gifford. Helen commended and thanked the Advisory Committee for their commitment to the Department of Health.

Project Updates

Response to Pharmacy Letter: Catherine Cordy was contacted to provide a written response reflecting the verbal message highlighting the Pharmacy Board response to the WHAC letter. The official written response is still pending. **Action Items:** Kate will follow-up with Catherine Cordy.

Letter to Dr. Gifford: Carrie sent the letter to Dr. Gifford but his response is still pending. **Action Items:** Carrie will follow-up with Dr. Gifford on the status of his response.

Healthy relationships for Teenage Girls: The discussion focused on the fact that education does not seem to be working (based on CDC statistics). It was felt among members that a better understanding of how the Dept. of Health is addressing this issue was needed. **Action Items:** Carrie/Kate will review Dept. of Health initiatives including the

Youth Action Research; Adolescent Health and collaborations with Dept. of Health. The teen ambassadors will brainstorm ideas on outreach strategies.

Perry-Sullivan Bill: The discussion focused on the need for the Advisory Committee to advise Dr. Gifford to the importance of this legislation. Action Items: Catherine with the assistance of Missy will draft a letter to Dr. Gifford for review at the next meeting.

Sexual Abuse Awareness: The discussion focused on the work of Dr. Hughes from URI. Possible next steps may include a presentation by Dr. Hughes. Action Items: This topic will be further discussed at a future meeting.

Breast Cancer Screening Among Senior Women: The discussion focused on making this a priority issue based on the fact that women age 65 and older are not scheduling mammograms based on several possible reasons including economics, not wanting to know if they have something wrong, fear of pain from the compression, and not going to doctors who would recommend mammograms. Action Items: Marlene will look into Inviting representatives from the RI Cancer Council and Quality Partners to attend a future meeting.

Breast/Cervical Cancer Screening Among Incarcerated Women: Based on a discussion Iris had with Jennifer Clark, the discussion focused on the barriers including obtaining exams at intake but

availability for follow-up is based on next available appointment; and the lack of follow-up/awareness to obtaining screening upon release. Action Items: This topic will be discussed in more detail as the committee to address incarcerated women (chaired by Carrie) sets its priorities.

Access to Healthcare for Uninsured Women: This discussion was tabled.

Teen Ambassador Projects

Marie Ghazal led review and finalization of teen ambassador projects.

- o Katie Albert: Environment and its impact on breast cancer (Mentor- Marlene McCarthy). Katie provided a detailed review of her project and will continue to move forward with her research paper.

- o Melanie Duhamel: Mixed martial arts and basic self-defense class for WHAC and school (Mentor- Danielle Denis). Melanie hosted a class for the WHAC on March 22 at 2 pm at the studio in Smithfield.

- o Jessica Marfeo: Fundraiser to raise awareness of the need to educate teen girls on the importance of STD and pregnancy prevention (Mentor- Yvonne Freeman). It's All About Me: Girl's Night Out will be held on May 8th at Women & Infants Hospital Auditorium A at 6:30pm. Proceeds will go to S-Star Birth in Cranston.

Regional Report: No regional report.

Staff Report: Carrie provided an update on the following events

- **Women's Health Month: Send any activities to be posted on website**
- **Small grants are available to assist with Women's Health Events**
- **Women's Health Conference, May 1, 2008**

Announcements

**Women's Health Conference, May 1, 2008; Women's Health Week,
May 11 - 17**

Next Meeting is May 7, 2008.