

**Rhode Island Department of Health Women's Health Advisory  
Committee**

**Meeting Minutes – March 4, 2009**

**Members Present: Katie Albert , Lisa Shea, Danielle Denis, Jessica Marfeo, Aldavina Dos Santos Yvonne Freeman, Catherine Graziano, Vivian Lima, Iris Tong, Members Excused Absent: Janet Searles, Marie Ghazal, Wendy Fox, Cynthia Rosengard, Angelique Higgins, Margaret Koch, Marlene McCarthy, Lisa Jones, Marian Mehegan, Christine Ryan HEALTH Staff Present: Carrie Bridges Guests: Catherine Cordy, Jonathan Murray**

**Welcome & Introductions:**

**Iris Tong called the meeting to order at 3:42 pm.**

**Approval of Minutes (February, 2009):**

**Minutes were accepted.**

**Project Updates:**

**Catherine Cordy and Jonathan Murray from the Pharmacy Board attended the meeting. The Pharmacy Board meets on a monthly basis (8:30am-10:00am) at HEALTH. The Ethics Subcommittee follows the Code of Ethics Template from American Pharmacists Association. The Board of Pharmacy believes that pharmacists should have the right to refuse providing women with Plan B but does recommend that a handoff to another pharmacist should be established for a**

seamless transition. Catherine Cordy summarized the complaint and investigation process used by the Board of Pharmacy, which is working on appropriate policy to manage the balance between a pharmacist's right to refuse and a patient's right to access services (looking for guidance from WHAC on this issue). In addition, the following issues were reviewed: no existing laws require pharmacists to stock any particular medications, therefore, if a refusal policy is developed for a specific drug then discussions need to expand to review if pharmacists should be required to carry the medication. Potential options reviewed included posting signage saying the pharmacy does not stock the medication; have a back up pharmacist on call or in the pharmacy; require medicine be provided within a certain amount of time. The Pharmacy Board will issue a statement saying that the pharmacy has to do something to address this problem, however, will not state what the solution should be. Iris will continue to provide updates to the WHAC.

#### **Subcommittee Reports:**

- Breast Cancer among Elderly Women Subcommittee: Marlene McCarthy (excused):** The next step for the subcommittee includes drafting the letter to Dr. Gifford. Updates will be provided at the April meeting.
- Healthy Relationships among Teenage Girls:** The subcommittee will be sending follow-up question to Carrie to send to appropriate HEALTH personnel.
- Sexual Abuse Awareness:** The flyer will be distributed (Carrie'/Kate)

**will work on the distribution plan.**

**Teen Ambassador Projects:**

**Katie: Mary Flynn, a nutritionist from the Medical School has agreed to do a talk on general nutrition for teens (May evening: pending date) and a community talk on nutrition and breast cancer.**

**Jessica: The fashion show has been rescheduled and the seminar with Women & Infants will be held on May 19th at 7pm.**

**Aldavina: Planning a seminar on HIV awareness**

**Vivian: Completed research on bulimia and anorexia and health way to lose weight and will be working on a podcast.**

**Regional Report: USDHHS Region I Office on Women's Health**

**v Kathleen Sibelius, Governor of Kansas, named as incoming HHS Secretary by President Obama**

**In a brief story available early on its web site the New York Times (2/19, Baker, 1.12M) reported, "President Obama has settled on Gov. Kathleen Sebelius of Kansas, a key ally with a record of working across party lines, as his top choice for secretary of health and human services, advisers said Wednesday." In addition to her experience as Kansas insurance commissioner and managing the state's Medicaid program, "with Mr. Obama about to begin a drive to expand health coverage -- an issue on which the parties have deep ideological divisions -- her strongest asset in the White House view may be her record of navigating partisan politics as a Democrat in one of the country's most Republican states."**

In a subsequent story with more details on its front page the New York Times (2/19, A1, Baker, Pear, 1.12M) described Sebelius as "emerging as the president's top choice" for HHS Secretary." But Sebelius "is unlikely to" named White House health czar because "officials said that was a special arrangement for" former HHS nominee Tom Daschle, "adding that they were still considering what to do about that job." The Times notes, "One issue that could draw attention is her stance on abortion. A Roman Catholic who says abortion is wrong, Ms. Sebelius vetoed a bill requiring clinics to report information on why a late-term abortion was performed, drawing the condemnation of the archbishop of Kansas City, Kan." Meanwhile, "Health advocates welcomed her candidacy." House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee chairman Pete Stark said, "All signs indicate that she would be a terrific choice." Families USA executive director Ron Pollack said Sebelius "knows health care as well as any governor in the United States." And AHIP president Karen Ignani "said Ms. Sebelius would be 'a very smart choice' for health secretary." Major regional media outlets like the Austin American Statesman, the Houston Chronicle, the Contra Costa Times, the St Paul Pioneer Press and the San Jose Mercury News also publish the New York Times story.

v Region I FY 2009 Funding Applications – Regional women's health programs have been working with JSI Denver to coordinate funding applications for FY 2009. JSI Denver has released information regarding funding opportunities in "waves." Currently, opportunities for funding activities for reducing health disparities, violence against

women, BodyWorks, National Women and Girls' HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and general women's health projects have been released. Organizations are notified of decisions within 3 weeks of submission and activities must be completed by August 30, 2009.

v Region I OWH collaboration with U.S. Department of Labor – Healthy, Wealthy and Wise? Conference in Maine scheduled for TBD dates in September 2009 at two locations in Lewiston and Machias, Maine

v Regional programs meeting with OWH in Washington, D.C. - office retreat March 16-18, 2009; discussion of strategic plan and budget planning

v Regions I, II and III Regional Summit – USDHHS OWH is hosting several regional summits across the Nation in lieu of a biennial National State Women's Health Coordinators' Conference. Looks likely that New England state budget cuts will impact attendance at regional summit, which is tentatively scheduled for August 31-September 1, 2009, in Philadelphia, PA. travel and transportation will be provided to state coordinators to attend.

v Region I OWH currently working with an intern in her senior year at University of Massachusetts, Lowell on National Women's Health Week project for May 2009. Ashley Sheehan is a community health education major and is working to engage the city of Lowell and community-based organizations, health centers on the following:

- City Mayor's Office issuing proclamation for May NWHW event for 2009

- **NWHW in Lowell is being hosted by**
  - o **Lowell city manager: Bernard F. Lynch**
  - o **Greater Lowell Health Alliance which includes representatives from the University of Massachusetts-Lowell, Middlesex Community College, Lowell General Hospital, Saints Medical Center, Lowell Public School System, Lowell's city manager, Lowell Community Health Center and more.**
  - o **Ashley M. Sheehan, Student Intern (from UML) for OPHS, OWH region 1**
- **Ashley notes that there is great enthusiasm about this event. Many organizations from the city are said to be involved such as local restaurants, all the organizations from the Great Lowell Health Alliance, the media, and the community.**
- v **USDHHS OWH and US DHHS Coordinating Committee on Women's Health Action Agenda for Women's Health and Beyond 2010 - a national effort to get feedback from representatives identified through regional and states offices to develop a common, prioritized action agenda for women's health. Use of the concept mapping process to identify priorities and key action targets for the coming years. Have used several methods to ensure that key voices, opinions and values are recognized, including an annotated bibliography, leadership interviews and facilitated discussions via Web meetings. Currently ongoing and will update status as more information is provided from the national office. Anyone interested in the regional representatives, please contact Marian for more information.**
- v **Region I National Women's Health Week events – There is very little**

activity for New England on the [www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov) website. With only 66 more days until Mother's Day (the launch of NWHW), there is one event scheduled, located in Holyoke, Massachusetts. The 10th annual National Women's Health Week will kick off on Mother's Day, May 10, 2009 and will be celebrated until May 16, 2009. National Women's Checkup Day will be Monday, May 11, 2009. The eight-week Women and Girls Out Moving Across the Nation (WOMAN) Challenge, an online physical activity program, runs from May 10–July 4, 2009. National Women's Health Week is a weeklong health observance coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health (OWH). National Women's Health Week empowers women to make their health a top priority. With the theme "It's Your Time," the nationwide initiative encourages women to take simple steps for a longer, healthier, and happier life. During National Women's Health Week, communities, businesses, government, health organizations, and other groups work together to educate women about steps they can take to improve their physical and mental health and lower their risks of certain diseases. Important steps include:

- Getting at least 2 ½ hours of moderate physical activity, 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or a combination of both each week
- Eating a nutritious diet.
- Visiting a health care professional for regular checkups and preventive screenings.
- Avoiding risky behaviors, like smoking and not wearing a seatbelt.

**· Paying attention to mental health, including getting enough sleep and managing stress.**

**For more information, link to: <http://www.womenshealth.gov/whw/>  
v Region I Office of the Regional Health Administrator is in process of hiring another HIV/AIDS Regional Resource Consultant to take the place of former RRC Sonali Patel, who departed Region I for a new career development opportunity. No additional information at this time on whether a final selection has been made**

**Staff Report: Carrie provided an update on the conference (more details to follow next month).**

**Announcements: Request was made to ask Dr. Gifford to attend the June meeting and to ask Ana Novais to attend a future meeting regarding the stimulus.**

**Next Meeting is April 1, 2009**