

Health and Human Services Advisory Council

June 13, 2019

Room 205

In attendance: Matt Stafford, Michelle Freshman, Brenda Pring, Lisa Terrizzi, Asa Fanelli, Teresa Kett

- I) Introductions
- II) Youth substances prevention efforts
  - a. Work group HHS and Schools
    - i. New diversion program proposed – likely this will start in the fall. Students who are caught vaping nicotine products will be offered the opportunity to participate in the education program in lieu of suspension for their first offense. The program will consist of approximately four classes and include education on the physical and mental health issues related to nicotine addiction, marketing strategies of vape companies, cessation resources and more.
  - b. Tobacco regulation and enforcement
    - i. Discussed potential new tobacco regulations that are in various stages of development and implementation throughout the region. Discussed possible new regulations being considered for Newton including removing all e-cigarette products to 21+ stores, unexempting menthol, mint and wintergreen, and enacting a smoking/vaping ban in public parks and some other public lands (athletic fields, beaches etc). The group discussed these possible regulations at length and determined that they were in favor in Newton pursuing all three of these new regulations. The commissioner will be following up with the Mayor on this matter.
  - c. Additional staff member in schools
    - i. The Newton high schools will be adding a new prevention/intervention counselor, one FTE to be split between the two schools. There is some possibility of the new position being able to teach the vaping health curriculum above.
  - d. Prevention programs for next school year – brainstorm
    - i. Discussed possible programming on the relationship between student stress and negative coping mechanisms such as substance use. HHS staff will look into possible speakers and approaches on how to address this topic and bring information back in the fall.
- III) YRBS data
  - a. The group did not have time to review the data in detail but it was handed out and we determined that members would think about possible programming and interventions to work on these topics:
    - Student stress increasing

## Condom use decreasing

- IV) New young adult initiative – shared information about a new initiative designed to support young adults who are having a difficult time finding their way to productive, self-sufficient lives. Our social services staff began by meeting with guidance counselors and encouraging them to refer any graduating seniors who they are concerned may not have a strong post-graduation plan to our department so we can continue to support them and help them identify strategies and supports. The department is also exploring further outreach strategies including to parents of young adults who may be having a hard time. We are tentatively exploring a parent support group for the fall and further outreach strategies to be employed throughout the next year.
  
- V) Programs re-cap – we were not able to discuss these programs at length due to time constraints.
  - a. Community Mosaic for Mental health awareness and suicide prevention
  - b. Survival Guide to parenting teens
  - c. Newton Pride
  - d. Improbable Players

Next meeting will be held in the fall, likely October. Date TBD