

Minutes



The Grand Forks Tobacco Free Coalition is a group of citizens working together to create and promote a healthier, tobacco-free community through education, legislation, and enforcement of policies.

Grand Forks Tobacco-Free Coalition Meeting

Tuesday, April 11, 2017

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Members Present: Haley Thorson, Kailee Dvorak, Denae Grove, Bethany Satrom, LeAnne Kilzer, Robin Landwehr, Erin Dionne, and Keith Westerfield.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Haley opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Members introduced themselves.

II. Legislative Updates

The legislature has voted to defund the Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control Policy (CFTPCP), effective June 30, 2017; and transition the tobacco prevention program back to the ND Department of Health (NDDoH).

Yesterday, the NDDoH Budget Bill (SB2004) passed the House with amendments, with \$6.5 million for tobacco prevention and control at local public health (LPH) units. They also included \$1 million in tobacco state aid. This is significantly more than was initially proposed by the Governors Executive Budget which was \$3 million. Federal cuts are still unknown with the new administration and new ideas.

III. Updates from the National Conference on Tobacco or Health

There is continued testing and researching on e-cigarettes. They were previously unregulated, but the FDA has placed deeming regulations on them. Until we know more about the long term health effects of e-cigs, they will be treated as tobacco products. They are defined in our state-laws as a tobacco product and you cannot use e-cigs anywhere you cannot smoke a traditional cigarette. With the new administration, there are now a couple of pieces of legislature floating around regarding e-cigs that would reduce the FDA authority to regulate tobacco products. Tobacco prevention advocates though are good at reminding policy makers why the population, especially youth, need to be protected from these products.

Haley noted that it was inspiring to be around the top-level people in the country that do the same work we do. They heard from Matt Myers, who is the head of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. He shared that Austin, Texas is a very progressive city that had passed their restaurant smoke-free law in 1999; Grand Forks did not pass theirs until 2005. He also mentioned that New York, Rhode Island and Florida's youth usage rates were at five percent, so it can be done

The opening message at the conference was that since the change in administration, this is a new battle, it is political and is a threat to tobacco prevention. Dr. Andy Hyghland from Roswell Park Cancer Institute shared four take-home messages: 1.) The more things change, the more they stay the same. 2.) Focus on what we know. 3.) Data makes the difference-stick to the data. 4.) We need 'old school,' boots-on-the-ground advocacy for tobacco control efforts more than ever.

Tobacco21 (where the minimum age to purchase tobacco is 21) is still very much a movement, and is happening in a lot of places. Two states, California and Hawaii, plus 300 or so municipalities across the nation have adopted Tobacco21. Sixty-three million people are already protected now by this legislation; however, in ND the proposed legislation went nowhere.

Several times throughout the testimony and comments from legislature, it was heard that “we just need to raise the tax.” At least they are talking about it. The NDDoH usually has to go along with what the governor supports, since they work under him; so, it is unknown if they will continue to work on raising tobacco tax. It was mentioned that the only time a higher tobacco tax does not work, is when you do not implement one.

GFTEC members talked about behavioral health and substance abuse treatment; how when treating someone for addiction, you should treat for all substances including nicotine. Why work so hard to treat someone with substance abuse or mental illness, only to have them die of a tobacco-related disease? Members also talked about the dangers of e-cigs and their batteries that have been known to explode.

IV. Member Sharing

Danae – At the last meeting she shared that the DoD’s new policy would start taxing tobacco products at base exchanges, effective April 1st. Haley was wondering if they were or will be collecting data. Danae also mentioned about the Spirit Lake Casino going smoke-free. NDDoH worked directly with the casino on that incentive. It was interesting that the proposed state casinos wanted to have tobacco, but the tribal casino choose to go smoke-free. Lake Region’s LPH coordinator is a tribal member.

LeAnn – They are doing a tele-medicine for tobacco cessation today in Ruso, ND (which is a billable service.).

Robin – Handed out a flyer on “Rethinking Behavioral Change.” She does behavioral healthcare work at VCHC, and also does smoking cessations for patients, but was worried about what kind of resources would be able to offer them with the way things were going with the new government administration. She worked with a company called 2Morrow, Inc. that has a phone app for smoking cessation, which has a good success rate. After talking to them about underinsured or non-insured clients she works with who may not be able to afford it, they allowed her to use 100 licenses for their products for six months (worth \$15,000 total). This app also has weight and stress management, so clients can choose one, two, or all three programs. Washington uses this as their state’s smoke-free program.

Bethany – The LPH in EGF went to their Capitol in March, and had some good interaction with their legislature. The MN Senate proposed to maintain full funding, with a policy provision to require at least two grants to be used for opioid prevention. The MN House also suggested full funding, except for \$3 million a year to be used for state-wide tobacco prevention.

Kailee – They were able to obtain more multi-unit housing smoke-free policies, so work continues on that. Also, GF School for the Blind and St. Michaels Catholic School have a comprehensive tobacco free school policy now.

IV. Next Meeting – May 9, 2017

V. Upcoming Events/Observances

- ~~Tobacco Prevention Coordinators Meeting, April 19-20, 2017, Bismarek Cancelled~~
- Final Day of the Legislative Session – April 29, 2017
- World ‘No Tobacco Day’ – May 31, 2017 <http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/en/>