

Health and Human Services Advisory Council

Minutes

January 30, 2018

7 – 8:30 pm Room 211 City Hall

Attendance: Commissioner Deborah Youngblood, Bradley Barnes, Michelle Freshman, Asa Fanelli, Aric Parnes, Brenda Pring

Non-members who are pending potential appointment: Michelle Drolsbaugh, Murali Vemula

1) Current Efforts

- a. High School Substance use prevention programming – discussed program of Kathi and Chris Sullivan at Newton North High School. And the way that the SBIRT screening is also an additional layer of screening/support for students who may be at risk.
    - i. Talked at length about the various types of addiction that are risks for this age group (marijuana, tobacco, technology) and strategies for developing an umbrella campaign around addiction that might encompass commonalities of all of these and offer students protective strategies. Specific messaging ideas included:
      - a. Developing brain
      - b. Driving impairment (do students underestimate the risks of marijuana impairment vs alcohol?)
      - c. Using the hallway monitor screens in the high schools
      - d. Developing peer to peer messaging
      - e. Providing parents with facts to utilize with these discussions with their children
      - f. Holding a community forum bringing in research experts to share the evidence
      - g. Creating space on the web with fact sheets (could there be a crowd sourcing of information somewhere that could be more interactive for community members?)
  - b. Pharmacist Training – Commissioner shared an overview of January 2018 training for pharmacists on how to identify someone potentially misusing RX and what to do if you are concerned. Hosted at Newton Wellesley Hospital, NWH physician and BMC pharmacist presenting, approx. 30 pharmacists attended, excellent feedback received.
- 2) Council members asked for an update on the transition in Mayoral leadership and any potential changes in the HHS department that have been indicated. Commissioner reported that the transition has been exceedingly smooth to date and no major changes have been suggested in the organization or priorities of the HHS department to date.

- 3) Council members suggested a couple of topics that could be considered for HHS priorities in the future.
  - a. Dating violence and sexual harassment
  - b. Potential connection between technology use and attention deficit disorders
  - c. Additional focus on marijuana, particularly around youth and prevention (already in the works in HHS)
- 4) Brief review of Fall programs and initiatives provided by the commissioner
  - a. Flu Vaccinations
  - b. Gather for Hope – event for family/friends of people struggling with addiction including speakers, food, recovery resource tables, Narcan training/distribution, raffle. Approx 60 people attended, strong feedback. Planning a second one for late winter/early spring.
  - c. Drop in Recovery Resource Night
  - d. Discussion of keeping tabs on programs, events and priorities via HHS newsletter and social media
- 5) Discussion on explaining to residents what the HHS department does (and does not) do.

Commissioner gave some de-identified examples of concerns that residents have brought forward that are outside of the jurisdiction of what the HHS department can get involved in and asked for feedback on ways to explain those limitations in manners that would help residents feel heard and supported even while not being able to solve their problem. Council members provided excellent suggestions including delineating the difference between a private concern and a public concern, helping people find their own agency to resolve issues and using clear documentation to demonstrate what steps have been taken.

- 6) Brief information was provided about programs that took place in the fall including:
  - Flu vaccine programs
  - Drop in recovery resource night
  - Executive functioning workshops
  - Preschool fair