

HHS Advisory Council Winter Minutes

January 29, 2020

8:00 AM

Room 205

In attendance: Lisa Terrizi, Asa Fanelli, Matt Stafford, Rebecca Mozzafarian, Michael Flaherty (prospective member), Murali Vemuli (prospective member).

- 1) Food for Families: discussed our program to distribute non-perishable items to families in Newton to reduce food insecurity and help families in need have additional food items particularly for days when there is no school lunch available (weekends, holidays).
 - a. Described new possible partnership with Zervas Elementary to support this program, at the request of a social action committee from Zerva's PTO. They want to both provide concrete support and teach students about social action.
- 2) Human Services grant funding – Community Development Block Grants. Brief discussion on the annual funding process that Newton based nonprofits are able to apply for funding to support vulnerable residents across the life span. The priorities for this funding are:
 - a. **Priority One: Enrichment and Care for Vulnerable Youth Ages 0-18 years**
 - b. **Priority Two: Stability and Self-Sufficiency for Vulnerable Adults Ages 17-60 years**
 - c. **Priority Three: Promoting Economic Security and Vitality for Older Adults, Aged 50+**
- 3) Discussion of the supports that the new Substance Use disorder focused non-profit Gavin Foundation is offering to Newton residents. They now have a PT peer to peer coach for residents able to provide individually tailored support to residents at any stage of recovery.
- 4) Drug deactivation pouches – brief discussion of a pilot that HHS did, distributing Deterra packets which one can use to render prescription drugs inert and reduce diversion. We distributed 200 at the library and senior center locations. We will await data from the program (being gathered by the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences before determining whether we want to further invest in this program (it was free to date)
- 5) Mindfulness programming : Committee member Asa Fanelli described a new initiative Mindful Newton that is a group of Newton employees and resident experts working to build momentum to create Newton as a Mindful City.
- 6) Plastic Bag and Polystyrene new regulations: Commissioner passed out the informational pamphlets describing these two new regulations that recently went into effect.

- 7) Commissioner did a quick review of recent programs that the health department has held or is planning. These included:
 - a. You are the Help, a training for bystanders to help in emergencies until first responders arrive on the scene.
 - b. Housing Forum: a panel event designed to inform residents of the different types of subsidized housing and how to apply for it.
 - c. Gun Safety: a program that is currently under review for possibly being held in the future teaching parents how to ask whether there is a firearm in a house where there child is going and teaching everyone about red flag laws.
 - d. High School and Middle School Prevention Programs: description of upcoming substance use prevention programs that include: Speakers at the high schools, a relevant play at the high schools, and the showing of a documentary at the library and Newton Wellesley Hospital.
 - e. Just Think: a program at the Newton North forum for making good decisions, the HHS table was on condom use for sexually active teens, a topic chosen based on Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data demonstrating the condom use among sexually active teens is declining.
- 8) At the request of Council members the Commissioner provided a brief update on the Novel Corona virus and encouraged members to use the CDC to track accurate information on an ongoing basis.