

TAYLOR COUNTY PREVENTION COUNCIL

Wednesday, March 28, 2012 - 9:00 A.M.
Medford Area Public School District Office

Members Present: Peggy Nordgren, UW-Extension; Sharon Ludwig, Stepping Stones; Krista Blomberg and Rachael Loucks, Parent Resource Center; Vi Marie Nelson, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Northwoods; Amber Fallos, Taylor County Human Services; Patty Krug, Taylor County Health Department; Amy Merrill, Taylor County Victim Witness Coordinator; Catherine Doucette, Memorial Health Center; Harry Sweda, United Way; Mary Bix, Aging & Disability Resource Center; Teri Rostberg, Hope Hospice; Kathy Danen, NW-CEP; Jean Nuernberger, Taylor County Circuit Court.

Call to Order: Chair Nordgren called the meeting to order at 9:05 A.M.

Review Minutes of Last Meeting: Fallos objected to the following statement in the January meeting minutes: "There is a growing problem with young people hitting 18 and being forced out of foster homes; Indianhead is working with Human Services to address this problem." Fallos stated that this was not the case, that 18-year-olds were not being forced out of foster homes but were being worked with by people at Human Services and Indianhead for smoother transitions. Fallos would like the minutes amended to reflect this. Sweda moved to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2012 meeting as amended; Ludwig seconded. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Introductions/Round Table Announcements/Discussions: Nordgren announced that she is still presenting the "Managing Your Money" seminars. Bix reported that the Aging & Disability Resource Center is planning "soft" openings of all its satellite offices this spring with "grand" openings to follow this summer. Ludwig stated there was nothing new to report from Stepping Stones. Loucks and the Parent Resource Center Home Visitor recently attended a Home Visitor conference. The Play Group and the Cooking Group have been moved back to Tuesdays. Nelson is planning fundraisers for Big Brothers/Big Sisters for this fall. They currently have fourteen matches.

Fallos stated that suicide is the big issue now for mental health. This is especially true of teens dealing with bullying and parenting issues. The suicide rate in Taylor County puts it in the top 17% of all counties in the country. The QPR suicide prevention program has been presented to the foster parents group, the Medford Kiwanis Club, and the Prevention Council. They would like to make presentations to more organizations. Bullying is taking place on cell phones and on Facebook and is no longer just in the schools. There is no safe place anymore. Fallos is working on writing grants to help deal with these issues. She, Danen, and Rostberg will form the nucleus of a Suicide Prevention Sub-Committee.

Krug announced that the County Health Rankings are coming out soon. She suggested that to see the future of Taylor County health one should review the "Health Outcomes" rather than just the rankings. On April 24 a group of students from Madison is coming to Taylor County to talk with local students about health issues and how to talk with physicians about those issues. They will also talk with physicians on how to talk with students about those same issues. This year Behavioral Health Risk study will include sixth graders. A conference on infant and early childhood mental health will be held June 11-13 in Milwaukee. If Krug can get a group to attend, the registration fee of \$215 per person will be waived. Contact Krug (715.748.1410) if you are interested.

Merrill is looking for volunteers to escort victims to court as part of a "Victims of Crime Act" grant. Sweda reported that United Way just awarded \$65,000 to ten agencies. They are currently looking for more agencies that need funds. Requesting agencies must be tax-exempt.

Doucette stated that Memorial Health Center is putting together a social networking policy. The area's first ever woman's specialist, Susan Young, M.D., is now accepting appointments. Memorial Health Center will be celebrating its fiftieth-year of service this year.

Rostberg stated that Hope Hospice will be partnering with Memorial Health Center for another "Living with Grief" series. Hope Hospice has a grant to work with veterans in the areas of suicide prevention, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other mental health issues. Danen reported that a \$4,700,000 grant was awarded to a group of Wisconsin counties for education and job training of health care workers. This grant will enable employers to offset 90% of the wages for new hires during their first few months of employment.

Nuernberger has added sexting and cyber bullying to the topics covered in her sophomore health class in Rib Lake. The legal ramifications of these activities are a real eye-opener for the students. She feels that many of these issues are very underreported. In the past three years, she has seen six cases - three males and three females - but feels there are many more unreported cases out in the community.

Discussion: Social Networking: Nordgren reported that at a recent inter-agency meeting on bullying issues, it was found that girls are much worse offenders than boys and that the problem starts in the middle schools. Schools recognize the problem and are working on strategies to combat it, but many parents seem clueless. One strategy for parents is simply to take cell phones away from their children, but most parents don't seem to realize this can be done. Much of the offensive behavior actually happens at home (cell phones, Facebook) but spills over to the schools. Formerly the bullying problem was between 2-3 students, but now through social media the offensive material can be sent out to thousands. What used to be humiliating can seem devastating when the student thinks the whole world knows. Parents are not as tech-savvy as their children and are unaware that they can check the history of their children's use of computers and cell phones and can use such Web sites as watchdog.com to monitor activities.

Another issue seems to be that the parents themselves are doing inappropriate things on their computers and cell phones, and their children feel empowered to do similar things. Parents need to stop being their children's friend and start being their children's parent. There is a movie on cyber bullying, called "Bully", and it was felt that it might be a good program to have at the local theatre. Youth needs to understand that it is very easy to put something on the Internet but that there can be devastating consequences.

It was felt that a campaign should be developed to help promote awareness of and develop a strategy to prevent cyber bullying. It was decided to form a Social Media Sub-Committee. Nordgren, Danen, Nuernberger, Merrill, and Fallos volunteered to work on this project. They would also like to get a school counselor from each school to join the committee and, eventually, several students.

Committee Reports:

Early Childhood: Greget was not present to report on activities of the Early Childhood Committee.

Continuum of Care Committee: Christofoli was not present to report on the Continuum of Care Committee.

ATOD Committee: Krug reported that the ATOD Committee is now meeting regularly on the second Wednesday of each month from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M. Their committee members include, among others, two students and one tavern owner. They are writing a grant in conjunction with Indianhead Community Action Agency.

Confirm Next Meeting Date: The next meeting of the Taylor County Prevention Council will be Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at the Medford Area Public School District Office and will start at 9:00 A.M.

Adjournment: With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 A.M.

Handouts: NebGuide (University of Nebraska), "Cyber bullying"; Safe Communities - Safe Schools Fact Sheet, "Cyber Bullying and Internet Safety"; "Hopes" Suicide Education & Prevention, "Deaths in Wisconsin 2010"; Hope Hospice Foundation of America, "Living with Grief: End-of-Life Ethics"; information on the fish boil fundraiser for Hope Hospice; information on the 2012 Wisconsin Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Conference.

TAYLOR COUNTY PREVENTION COUNCIL

Wednesday, January 25, 2012 - 9:00 A.M.
Medford Area Public School District Office

Members Present: Kris Porter, Stepping Stones; Patty Krug, Taylor County Health Department; Jean Nuernberger, Circuit Court; Jodi Meinke and Kim Christofoli, Indianhead Community Action Agency; Joseph Greget, Medford Area School District; Vi Marie Nelson, Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Rachael Loucks, Parent Resource Center; Peggy Nordgren, University of Wisconsin - Extension; Mary Bix, Aging & Disability Resource Center.

Review Minutes of Last Meeting: The minutes of the November 30, 2011 meeting were approved by acclamation.

Call to Order: Chair Nordgren called the meeting to order at 9:07 A.M.

Review Mission of Council: Council Members felt that the Mission Statement covered what we are about and what we are doing to achieve that mission. It was felt that we should develop a series of publicity pieces for the newspaper and the radio station so that Taylor County residents become more aware of our function.

Committee Reports: Early Childhood: They now have mental health assistance in the Medford Schools. Child Development Days are as follows: Rib Lake - March 1; Medford - March 8; Gilman - March 22.

Continuum of Care: Today, January 25, 2012, is the point-in-time count of homelessness in Taylor County. The Continuum of Care Committee has developed both mission and vision statements, written bylaws, and received their Articles of Incorporation from the State of Wisconsin. They are now working on policies and procedures. For the time being, they are operating under the Indianhead Community Action Agency's 501(c)(3) but eventually will have to get their own non-profit status. When they eventually get a house set up for the homeless, it will be called The Chequamegon House of Taylor County.

ATOD: This Committee has been very active in working on programs and grants, establishing a local lead person, and working with schools to develop a county-wide school policy on alcohol infractions. Their next step is to establish a community committee. Most of what they have done so far has been done behind the scenes through the Taylor County Health Department.

Round Table Announcements/Discussions: The group discussed trends that are appearing in Taylor County at this time. It was generally felt that social networking activities such as sexting and cyber bullying are developing into significant issues - both socially and legally. Homelessness is an increasing problem in Taylor County, and financial issues for the elderly are an ever-present situation for that age group.

Nordgren handed out the 2012 schedule for the "Managing Your Money" classes. She stated they she is seeing less demand for her financial classes than she feels is warranted.

Loucks reported that The Parent Resource Center is getting lots of calls from parents who feel they don't know what to do; these parents come to the PRC for 1-2 meetings with staff and then are not heard from again. The Home Visitor is quite busy, especially with court orders. Their supervised visits program is very busy. A couple of their programs targeting young children are not currently well attended because parents are fearful of pertussis. They are also seeing more social networking and sexting issues showing up; parents need help teaching their children on proper Internet usage.

Nelson reported that Big Brothers/Big Sisters is having their Polar Plunge on March 3, and they are also conducting a raffle. They currently have twelve matches and need more males for matches.

The School District is having a roundtable of providers on February 28 to promote a discussion of available services. The Literacy Council has received a \$7,000 grant and wants to have many different types of classes to reach the maximum number of people. The Medford Diploma Academy has graduated two individuals this past year and has three more enrolled.

Christofoli informed the Council that Indianhead has worked with eight homeless individuals since the first of the year. Human Services and Indianhead are working together with 18 year olds to smooth their transition from foster care. They are installing new software that will require extensive intake information on everyone coming through their doors for services. There is a new program, Community Development Financial Institution that is available to provide loans for weatherization to people who do not qualify for free weatherization. Meinke reported that HUD has a new definition for homelessness that includes "Couch Surfers", people who have no home of their own but go from friend's home to friend's home, usually sleeping on the friends' couches.

Nuernberger stated that eight SMILE classes were held last year, a very high number; this is the result of the high number of divorces with minor children last year. The figure should be lower this year. There were also a lot of restraining orders and bond conditions last year. She also noted that more social networking cases are showing up in court. The problem seems to center are cyber bullying and inappropriate pictures being shared mostly in the high schools but to some extent in the middle schools. Current laws are not designed to handle this situation.

Krug has noted an upsurge in people missing W.I.C. appointments and feels it is because W.I.C. requires nutrition counseling. These same individuals can get FoodShare with no counseling requirements. The teen pregnancy rate is climbing, especially in the 14- and 15-year-old range. The Taylor County Health Department has had seven pertussis cases in the past ten days. She asked Prevention Council members to let people know that they can get discount cards for prescription drugs that will give them \$5 off on their drug purchases even if they have no prescription drug coverage.

Porter reported that Stepping Stones had 1474 shelter nights in 2010 compared with 858 in 2009. They are getting an increasing number of calls from homeless people, but only in rare instances can Stepping stones help them. Also they are getting calls from young people under the age of 18. In order for individuals to stay at Stepping Stones they must be eighteen years of age, have parental permission, or be emancipated. However, Wisconsin is not a state that emancipates its young. They have had a 27% cut in one of their larger grants; originally this cut was to be 42.5%. Some staff changes have had to be made to accommodate this cut in funding.

Bix told the Council that the Aging & Disability Resource Center will probably be opening in Taylor County in late spring. The regional manager will be hired shortly.

Confirm Next Meeting Date: The next meeting of the Taylor County Prevention Council will be Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at the Medford Area Public School District Office. It will start at 9:00 A.M. The main topic will be social networking issues.

Adjournment: With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 A.M.

Minutes were approved corrected/amended on March 28, 2012.