

South Florida Asthma Consortium
Planning Group
March 7, 2008
Meeting Minutes

1) Introductions/Attendees (Andrew Cuddihy)

Andrew Cuddihy- American Lung Association
Dr. Don Torok- College of Education at Florida Atlantic University
Caroline Sterns- Miami-Dade County Health Department
Heather Montoya- American Lung Association
Bill Brookman – Monroe County Health Department
Tim Patton- Barry University
Elizabeth Fitzpatrick- (representing Marsha Fishbane) – Palm Beach County School Health
Erskine Clerjeune- Barry University, MPH seeking
Sandy Lobar- Florida International University, School of Nursing
Phillippa Turner- Broward County Health Department, acting now as sole representative
Denise Robinette- Healthy Living Foundation
Mike Melchior- intern, Florida International University, MPH seeking
Dr. Janvier Gasana- FCEHA, Florida International University
Shiryn Sukhram- Florida International University, PhD seeking
Avinash Sukhram- Florida International University, MPH seeking
Armando Chamorro – CIH Environmental

2) Opening comments – Andrew Cuddihy

We as a community are one big area and should not be divided by our county lines.
The consortium must focus on meeting the needs of the community, identify the gaps in the management of asthma here in the sub tropics.

3) Website Update – Dr. Torok and Mike Melchior

Dr. Torok has uploaded the links to our website www.southfloridaasthma.org and has also made the website available to the public. The website is still under construction, so please pardon the current inactive links. We feel that the coalition needs to be sustainable in its own right, and having a website that acts as a clearinghouse to gain information and resource materials will help achieve that goal.

4) Incorporation – Andrew Cuddihy and Dr. Gasana

Andrew spoke with the attorney who is on the board for the American Lung Association, and he feels that our direction toward a 501(c)(3) non-profit is the proper direction. Dr. Gasana feels that we need to move quickly to get our 501(c)(3) status and will have Mike Melchior file the Articles of Incorporation and other paperwork needed to gain that status. Mike Melchior expects to be incorporated by Wednesday, March 12th, 501(C)(3) status will be granted at the leisure of the IRS.

Mike has spoken with the major pharmaceutical companies, but none will work with us until we have our 501(C)(3) status, though they are showing much interest.

5) Update on the Pilot Study – Dr. Gasana

The pilot study is based on a study put out by John's Hopkins which looked at 7 cities across the United States, but none in the south. The study will perform a skin test on all participants to see what they are allergic to, and then design a home intervention that targets the allergens. Armando from CIH is an industrial hygienist who has volunteered his time to collect samples from 20 homes in Miami-Dade County. The pilot study plans on sampling 20 homes in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Monroe Counties, and Belle Glade. The material provide by John's Hopkins did not include their protocol on Physician Feedback, but it was found through a Virginia-based asthma study. The inclusion of doctor input is felt essential in an asthma program. The pilot study will not include a qualitative measure, but a future study will.

Sandy Lobar from the FIU School of Nursing volunteered information that patients would often not use the peak flow meters given to them and would falsely fill out the daily diaries. A great component of any program would be to "train the trainer."

Dr. Gasana stated that a study performed by the Broward Health Council, found that preventing asthma attacks significantly decreases the healthcare costs over those same children seeking emergency treatment. Governor Crist has recently appropriated \$64 million to 16 counties in Florida to study asthma.

6) Raising Funds

Dr. Patton stated that we need our 501(C)(3) status as soon as possible.

Andrew Cuddihy stated that asthma is becoming a main point of interest for governmental research agencies and community organizations, such as the EPA and the Health Choice Network.

Sandy Lobar mentioned the MBRS program through FIU that is available to faculty. The first round of applications is occurring now. Faculty can pool their efforts and ask for larger grants.

Dr. Gasana spoke directly with Peter Wood, the VP at the Health Foundation of South Florida, and told him about the asthma consortium. He asked to be kept up to date with our efforts. The minutes are being sent to Ginnese, a current PhD student from FIU, who is also working for the Health Foundation. The Health Foundation is accepting spring applications for Summer Awards. Dr. Gasana feels that seed money of \$5k from each county's health department is attainable.

Dr. Patton opened the discussion to a starting salary for the position of executive director. Andrew stated that he felt ~\$40K would be reasonable, with a total cost to the consortium of ~\$55K. Dr. Gasana and Dr. Torok feel that a starting salary of ~\$75K would garner better results and larger grants than a person starting at a lower salary; invest more at the beginning to have a greater product. A larger starting salary would require that more funds be raised in the beginning to start the consortium. The executive director would be required to obtain the grants that would allow their position to be paid each year.

7) **Miscellaneous Discussions**

Dr. Gasana - Presentations from the meetings and those relating to asthma will be available on the website shortly. Next meeting, we will have representatives from Baptist Hospital and Jackson Memorial. We must obtain data that is publishable and shows that asthma is a problem in South Florida, and our efforts are mediating the problem. Without ongoing data, we will not be able to continue receiving grants to maintain the coalition.

All members are asked to write a short biography stating what you currently do and what efforts and knowledge you are able to offer the consortium and email it to Mike Melchior at mmelc001@fiu.edu. These will be posted on our website so that if any other member has a concern or need, they will know who they can contact.

Dr. Patton asked if the meetings could be recorded so that all points can be heard by those who were not able to attend. Armando, of CIH, said that meetings could be recorded as sound files and then emailed to members or posted on the website.

8) **Open Airways in Broward County – Heather Montoya**

The program's goal is to have 700 students enrolled in 35 schools, but current enrollment is 1,000 in 44 schools. Currently the program is experiencing a 75% completion rate, and to-date, 77 students completed the program along with 45 parents. The program uses pre and post surveys and offers Wal-Mart gift cards as incentive for the parents to call the American Lung Association (HIPAA requires that the parents take the initiative to contact first).

Instructors are needed for the program. Teachers are offered \$100 each day teaching or 8 hours of community service. Sandy Lobar stated that the nursing school would be a great resource.

9) **Consortium efforts and resources**

Andy stated that instruments used must collect useful data and all studies be comparable to others to give greater power.

Sandy Lobar will look into getting teaching modules, past projects, and surveys from RTI. These will be available in both English and Spanish. Past studies have trained parents, students, and teachers to gain maximum efficacy.

10) **Efforts of Palm Beach County Schools – Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, rep. Marsha Fishbane**

The district applied to the CDC for funding and was denied. Open Airways program is available in very few schools. 10 schools in the district offer peak flow meters and intense instruction on asthma management. A recent sugar cane burn in the area sent 6 elementary school children to the hospital.

11) **Monroe County – Bill Brookman, Monroe County Health Department**

He has contacted Sonny Brooker, of the Monroe School District, and received pledged support in the consortium's efforts. Open Airways is in a few of the county's schools.

Said that Tally-Ann Reed, the School Health Coordinator, is looking for a model program to follow. Bill requested that representatives of the consortium go to the administrators in Monroe County to inform them in greater detail of our efforts and future projects. Data on asthma was collected by the health department 4 years ago, but it was never compiled into a report. He will look into getting that data to the consortium for review.

12) **Miami-Dade County Schools – Caroline Sterns and Sandy Lobar**

Carline Sterns – Open airways program is available in some schools

Sandy Lobar – explained Healthy Connect

The program expects to have 161 full medical suites in Miami-Dade County Schools. 2 years ago, there were 27 nurses to cover 463 schools. Proposed plan expects to have 1 RN and 1 social worker for every 2 schools, and at least 1 nurse practitioner in each school. Dr. Andy Brickman is the liaison for Healthy Connect in the schools. Pam Toomer needs data for the Open Airways project.

13) **Parent’s perspective – Denise Robinette**

Studies are removed from the understanding of the general public. Environmental health is the key to preventing asthma and asthma attacks. She has developed an educational coloring book that includes tips for the parents at the bottom of each page. The coloring book is nearly ready for publishing, but an avenue for release has yet to be decided. Asked what the consortium plans on doing in schools.

14) **Kickoff Meeting – May 6th**

Save-the-Date reminders will be sent out to all members. Location is a key issue to accommodate those from West Palm and Monroe counties. The auditorium at the Broward County Health Department is available and also a central location, near major expressways and easy to locate. We are expecting 50-75 people to attend. The idea of a rotating meeting location schedule was proposed, and will be considered after looking into availability and rates charged for certain locations. FIU has a room with videoconferencing capabilities. Also, a meeting schedule of alternating face-to-face and conference call every other meeting time was proposed.

15) **Members being added to the committee list:**

School Health and Department Advisory Committee

Elizabeth Fitzpatrick

Bill Brookman

Research and Evaluation Advisory Committee

Armando Chamorro

16) **Next Meeting – April 4th, Friday, 11am – 1pm**

Discuss the agenda for our Kickoff Meeting.

To prepare for the next meeting, try to think of flyer designs that would attract attention. The EPA has an Asthma Day Planning Packet that offers ideas of activities and awareness strategies.