Minutes

Wisconsin Partnership Program
Reducing Health Disparities in Birth Outcomes Steering Committee
January 14, 2009 at 5:00PM
Best Western Midway Hotel, Brookfield WI

Members Present: Georgia Cameron, Ron Cisler, Phil Farrell, C.C. Henderson(phone), Tito Izard, Sheri Johnson, Murray Katcher, Marilyn Kilgore(phone), Lorraine Lathen, Katherine Marks(phone), Tina Mason, Gwendolyn Perry-Brye(phone), Stephen Ragatz, Bill Solberg, Betty Stinson(phone)

Members Absent: Laurel Rice

Staff: Eileen Smith, Cathy Frey, Chris Blakey

Guests: Trina Salm Ward, Patrice Onheiber, Chris VanMullem

Farrell called the meeting to order at 5:10pm.

1. Welcome remarks

Dr. Farrell and Lathen welcomed participants to the steering committee and thanked them for their participation and commitment to the initiative.

2. Introduction of staff and Steering Committee

Members of the committee and WPP staff introduced themselves to the other members. Members also provided brief updates on local coalition activities.

3. Overview of Wisconsin Partnership Program

Farrell provided an overview of the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP), its formation, development and source of funding. Smith described the WPP foundation documents and the obligations and role of the Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC). As a subcommittee of the OAC, all of the formal activities of the Steering Committee must comply with Wisconsin Open Meetings and Public Records Laws. Smith also informed the members that OAC’s commitment to the initiative remains strong despite the reduced financial status of the WPP endowment. However, the decline in the available funds will slow down the timing of implementation efforts for this funding initiative.
4. Overview of Initiative

Farrell presented information to the committee about the current state of racial and ethnic health differences in birth outcomes in the state and the critical issues participants would focus on as a committee.

Lathen described the planning process leading to the initiative including the research report by Richard Aronson MD, MPH. She also described the Wisconsin Infant Mortality Summit where OAC, state and local leaders and experts in maternal and child health gathered at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine WI on May 22 and 23, 2008. The purpose for the conference was to create a strategic action plan for improving birth outcomes among African-American women in Wisconsin. Wingspread participants engaged in the development of an action plan that identified seven priority strategies The OAC would use the action plan as a basis to inform the development of the healthy birth outcomes funding initiative.

The goal of the initiative is to improve conditions that support healthy births and reduce racial and ethnic health disparities in birth outcomes in Wisconsin.

5. Charge and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee

Farrell reported that the Steering Committee's charge is to provide overall leadership and establish strategic direction to the WPP for the Healthy Birth Outcome Initiative. Drawing on the combined expertise of the members and collaborating partners in Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha and Beloit, the Steering Committee will develop a program funding framework, set goals and objectives, expectations and indicators of success using short-term and long-term benchmarks. The committee will also identify an organizational structure that will bring stakeholders together for collaboration on the project, and provide strong community input into the development of the initiative.

The Steering Committee members were selected by the OAC because of their expertise in maternal and child health related fields, leadership from the health care providers and representation from targeted communities. Committee members are appointed by the OAC to an initial two year term. Farrell encouraged the committee members to review the meeting materials that were distributed.

6. Discussion and input on initial Steps

Committee members emphasized the following points as initial first steps:

- It is critical to engage the right individuals, including consumers and affected families as they are essential to the planning process.
- It is important to focus on the quality of life and health care for mother and child after leaving the hospital for high risk infants – emphasis on morbidity as well as mortality.
- Raising the level of public awareness, knowledge and concern for the issue is a major challenge the committee and the program. Part of this effort must help to people to understand they are part of the solution.
- There are immediate opportunities to promote research through faculty expertise in the SMPH and other academic institutions.

Farrell suggested the WPP and School develop a press release on the topic that would be reported on at the next meeting.

Farrell adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm.

Recorder, Cathy Frey