

Task Force on Childhood Obesity

Meeting Minutes

May 29, 2014

Co-Chairs: Senator Bartolomeo & Representative Urban

Present:

Rep. Christie Carpino, Dr. Jean Mee, Judith Omphroy, Alecia Andrews, Brittany Lee Silvestrini, Lucy Nolan, Dr. Fredericka Wolman, Marcia Maillard, Susan Maffee

Next meeting:

June 26th 2014, 1:00 PM, Room 2B

I. Convene Meeting

Meeting convened at 1:15 PM.

II. Remarks by the Chairs

Co-chair Sen. Bartolomeo welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Co-chair Rep. Urban announced that milk would be added to the discussion in addition to the interesting presentations already on the agenda. Sen. Bartolomeo clarified that none of the forthcoming information about milk reflects the position of the committee; it is purely an informational discussion. Sen. Bartolomeo introduces the first presentation.

III. Presentations

i. A Case for Physical Activity in Schools – Alecia Andrews, Dr. Jean Mee, Judith Omphroy

Presentation kicked off with presenters inviting the group to stand during the presentation, do some stretching. Presentation moves into overview of history of physical activity in school. US department of Health and Human Services recommends 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous. Historically recess was a natural part of school day based on common understanding that children need to move and play. Now, recess needs to be legislated, and even with that some administrators are still attempting to prohibit it. According to CT's mandated physical fitness assessment results from 2009-10, 29% of students do not have the aerobic capacity to be considered healthy. CT requires a daily 20min period of physical exercise for students in K-5; this is not specifically described as "recess". There is a pattern of taking away physical activity for reasons such as undesirable behavior, tardiness, and failure to complete assignments. PA 13-173 prohibits the withholding of physical activity as punishment. Academic testing increases pressure to keep children in the classroom, inactive, focused on educational material. However data has indicated that regular vigorous activity improves student performance on standardized testing. CT schools are providing significantly less than the recommended PE and PA across K-12. Middle and High School PE & PA considerably lower than Elementary. The lack of physical activity results in heart disease, obesity, and other health issues. In CT, 15.8% of children age 2-5 are obese. There is racial disparity in childhood obesity; 24% of white children are obese as opposed to 48% and 43% percent of Hispanic and African American children, respectively.

Student obesity is increasing over time, 11 % of CT high school students were obese in 2005 and rose to 13% by 2011. CT taxpayers spent \$665 million dollars on obesity-related illnesses in 2003. Benefits of regular physical activity include increased physiological well-being, academic performance, and attentiveness, as well as decrease in diabetes, colon cancer, and other chronic diseases. Recommendations for increasing physical activity in school include the implementation of free or low cost activities, involving parents in discussions on the impact of being overweight, train school and community member to provide activities for students. The presenters engage the taskforce in another quick physical activity. Best practices and ready-made classroom activities programs, as depicted in the PowerPoint, are discussed. National Model Let's Go! 5210 is called out as an evidence-based program with multiple strategies that is being adapted by various states. The recommendation is made to create a Physical Activity Commission, details of which are outlined in the Power Point. It would involve representation of multiple stakeholders, resources, and recognition for schools and communities that demonstrate desirable physical activity.

Questions

- Sen. Bartolomeo: Are we burning calories just standing?
Answer: Well when you are standing and moving, let's do some stretching that increases blood flow, stretching is very important.
- Rep. Urban: 29% not aerobically healthy is that K-12? Answer: It is. Grade 4, 6, 8, & 10 are tested yearly
- Rep Urban: Which States follow recommended levels of PE & PA and is that recommended for during the school day or the day in general? Answer: Washington and Illinois, during the regularly scheduled school day.
- Sen. Bartolomeo: Why has the percentage of obese children risen despite our efforts? Answer: There are many factors; inactivity, electronics, prevention of physical activity, poverty is a lead factor.
- Rep Urban: We have heard about food deserts and food swamps, is there any kind of data informed study; can you get us some references? Answer: I would be happy to collate some credible studies, it would be very helpful if we collected BMI as a State

ii. Recess before Lunch – Lucy Nolan

Why Recess before lunch? Changing the traditional schedule requires buy-in from teachers and schools. Decreased incidents of children becoming ill on the playground, fewer behavioral problems during lunch, calmer eating environment, transition to class is improved, less plate waste, children eat more of their milk and fruits. Four schools in CT were looked at. It was suggested that a survey be administered to collect more data on this. One drawback is providing appropriate hand washing between recess and lunch. Example lunch wave schedule is included in presentation. Suggestion for pedometer competitions in schools, physical activity mascot, maps, etc.

IV. Nutrition and Physical Activity Focus Group Updates/ Discussions

None – Updates will be given at next meeting.

V. Other Business

Rep. Urban thanked the presenters and commented on possible connection between lack of physical activity and children's behavioral issues leading to incidents of restraint and seclusion.

Sen. Bartolomeo thanked presenters and recommended, *Smart Moves: Why Learning Is Not All In Your Head*, by Carla Hannaford Ph.D.

VI. Adjournment

Milk discussion postponed to next meeting due to time constraints with apologies. The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 PM.