

*WHCC Tobacco Committee
Sunday, October 23, 2005
2:15 – 3:00 p.m.
Hitching Post, Cheyenne WY
Coach D*

***Present:** Commissioner Carol Jenkins, Commissioner Lorraine Saulino-Klein, Janet Jares, Tobacco Control Coordinator, WDH, Julie Sapp, Governor's Office, and Michele Patarino, WHCC Staff.*

Commissioner Jenkins asked if there was any discussion regarding minutes from the interagency meeting between Substance Abuse, the Department of Corrections, and Family Service. There will be a follow up meeting on November 3, where the effected departments will come to agreement on funding requests.

Commissioner Jenkins asked about coordination between the DARE program and tobacco control. Commissioner Saulino-Klein said that communities put a lot into DARE, but it is not effective. Ms. Jares responded that Substance Abuse forwards money to schools under the Tobacco Free Schools of Excellence (TFSE) program. It is up to individual schools to use the DARE program if they wish.

Commissioner Jenkins described a program in Buffalo consisting of a "SWAT team" of high school students viewed as the "cool kids" by middle school students to promote the issue. Ms. Jares responded that meaningful youth involvement and youth cessation are the mostly missing from TFSE results to date. The TFSE program will be reevaluated and more emphasis will be on these projects.

Commissioner Jenkins returned to the interagency meeting, and noted that the WHCC wants to understand the tobacco funding. She asked if the funding request can be broken down into the CDC categories, to facilitate a comparison with recommended budget levels. Ms. Jares responded that the Substance Abuse budget would be broken into the CDC's nine categories (Community Programs, Chronic Disease Programs, School Programs, Enforcement, Statewide Programs, Counter-Marketing, Cessation, Surveillance and Evaluation, and Administration and Management). It will also reflect the categories set by Wyoming State Statute.

Discussion followed regarding the standard definition for successful quitting. Is a person considered "quit" if they abstain for six months? Twelve months? Ms. Jares responded that Substance Abuse uses three month and six month measures, which are considered standard. Anyone quit at six months is typically quit at twelve months. Measuring longer time periods, such as two years, adds complexity in finding and tracking participants, and doesn't make much difference statistically.

The BRFSS and YRBS data are used to evaluate quit needs and rates.

There was additional discussion about the correlation between depression and cigarette use, when people “self-medicate” with tobacco. Should that issue be addressed at some level? Ms. Jares responded that it has been, and will continue to be addressed through Substance Abuse. Anyone who gets state funded Substance Abuse treatment will be provided with or referred to cessation services. There was additional discussion about patients who present with tobacco addictions but have further issues—is there a means to refer them for mental health treatment? The goal is to help people who want to quit with smoking by giving them coping techniques for stressful events in their lives to prevent tobacco use relapse. Additional assessment and referral to a mental health center may in the long run decrease relapse rates. This represents a key long-term approach to keeping people off tobacco. This year, Substance Abuse will have a Wyoming Quit Tobacco site in a residential treatment center, and will monitor results. They could also look into setting up sites in mental health centers.

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The Commissioners approved the adjustments made to the Committee timeline, and agreed that the Committee’s role should be better defined after the full Commission meeting.

Commissioner Jenkins reported that two tobacco tax bills will be introduced this session—one each for chew and cigarettes. The Subcommittee supported the idea that a tax increase will cause a reduction in smoking and is particularly effective in preventing youth initiation of tobacco use. Commissioner Saulino-Klein reported that every 10% increase in price drives a 7% drop in youth smoking. The Subcommittee also discussed supporting smoke free environments. When kids don’t see tobacco use by adults in public behavior, and it is not considered acceptable, then they are less likely to initiate.

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At the full Commission meeting on October 24, Commissioner Jenkins will give a committee report and ask if the full Commission would support the tax increases. With their agreement, the Subcommittee will draft a letter of support for approval at the November meeting.

Ms. Sapp noted that it is worth the Commission’s time to do a supporting letter on the tax increases, even if they are not likely to pass. The conversation itself has positive effects. The Commission should advocate a health policy statement vs. a tax or revenue statement on this issue. While the state does not have a critical need for new tax revenue, there is a critical need to reduce tobacco use. Commissioner Saulino-Klein suggested the term “user fees” vs. tax. The focus is to improve children’s health by reducing initiation as opposed to a penalty on current users. A great deal of money goes into promoting tobacco use to children.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00.