Essex County Cancer Coalition
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 8, 2005, 4:00-6:00 pm
NJMS-Rosemary Gellene Room


Introductions

Committee Updates
Leadership Council
The co-coordinators reported the following activities on behalf of the Leadership Council:

1. The cancer capacity and needs assessment reports and fact sheets were released in mid-September and are available on the Office of Cancer Prevention & Control and the Coalition's website.

2. An oral presentation on the Coalition entitled "Building partnerships: Local implementation, coalition building, and partnerships with other local public health agencies/organizations" will be conducted at next week's American Public Health Association's annual conference in Philadelphia. The Coalition website is referenced on other state health websites such as Healthy NJ and the Office of Cancer Control and Prevention.

3. Our Healthy NJ contact connected us with a representative of PSE&G who is interested in conducting health fairs with cancer education and screening services for employees. We have been in touch with him about organizing these health fairs and have referred him to Essex-CEED and other county cancer coordinators as he is interested in health fairs for PSE&G sites in surrounding counties.

4. Our Healthy NJ contact has also sent messages to a librarian list serve to let them know about the Coalition and that we are available to make presentations.
Development Committee
Catherine informed the Coalition that the Committee continues to gain support and make key connections to establish a Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) clinic in Newark, which would be run by volunteer clinicians.

The Committee is still working on obtaining a new mobile cancer screening van. Several corporate entities are interested in conducting on-site cancer screenings for their employees. The Committee is also looking to corporate entities for fundraising possibilities, and that they have secured a meeting with one of these institutions for the following week.

Education/Outreach Committee – see Distribution of Education/Outreach Survey below

Advocacy Committee – no representative present

Approval of June Meeting Minutes
Minutes of the Coalition’s September 8, 2005 meeting were distributed, reviewed, and unanimously approved with changes.

Agency Updates/Announcements

American Cancer Society-Celebration on the Hill

Beverly told the Coalition about the American Cancer Society's "Celebration on the Hill 2006", which will take place September 19th & 20th in Washington DC. This event will celebrate cancer survivorship and empowers survivors and others to better advocate for laws to help fight cancer. This is an opportunity to share personal stories and educate officials about cancer-related needs.

Eight ambassadors per Congressional District will be chosen through a competitive process. Those who are interested in applying can visit www.acscancer.org/celebration and complete an application. You can also call 1-800-ACS-2345 for a paper application.

Beverly is actively looking for ambassadors from districts 8 and 12 (verify). Cancer survivors, healthcare professionals, caregivers, and researchers are all eligible to apply. Sharing of personal stories or case studies is encouraged.

St. Michael's "In The Pink" Program

Aretha Hill-Forte is the new CEED coordinator at St. Michael's Medical Center. She reported that they have screened 600 women this grant year and diagnosed 12 breast cancers. 300-400 of the women screened were of low socioeconomic status. The program has also conducted screenings for cervical, prostate, and colorectal cancers. More public service announcements have had a positive impact in the number of people coming in for screenings. The program has been reaching more Latinos of late as they have been more responsive to the PSAs.
A 2006 calendar featuring stories of cancer survivors was created and will be released on Friday December 16th at 11am. All are welcome to attend.

**Sisters' Network 3rd Annual "Gift of Life" Block Walk**

Charlotte reported that the Sisters' Network's Gift of Life Block Walk was successful as volunteers were able to reach 75 people going door-to-door in Newark. Most of the people reached were African American or Hispanic. Surprisingly, men were very responsive to messages encouraging the women in their lives to be screened for breast cancer. Sharyce Reed (a patient navigator at University Hospital and a Coalition member) spoke at the event.

**Oral Cancer Screening-Oral Cancer Consortium**

Arnie informed the Coalition that the Oral Cancer Consortium will be holding its annual screening day on April 20th, 2006 from approximately 9am to 4pm. Appointments can be scheduled for other times if necessary. Local universities, dental schools, and oral health societies are involved with the effort.

EVERYONE is eligible for the free screenings regardless of age, insurance status, income, etc. There will also be information available on oral cancer at the screening. If lesions are found at the screening, brush biopsies will be conducted and people will be referred to treatment centers if necessary. Last year 295 people were screened at New Jersey Dental School.

The Consortium is open to arranging tables in the registration area so that others can distribute educational material on other health topics and make referrals for other types of screenings.

Arnie will bring this idea up at the planning meetings scheduled for the end of January.

The Newark Community Health Centers would like to have Arnie present on oral cancer prevention and early detection to their clients.

Arnie is still looking for funding to utilize a van in high-risk areas to conduct oral cancer screenings. Some target groups include smokers, alcoholics, and taxi drivers.

**Update from Essex Communities Against Tobacco (CAT) Coalition**

The Clean Indoor Air Bill will most likely be signed by Acting Governor Codey in the lame duck session. It is unsure whether casinos will be included in the bill. The American Cancer Society and NJ GASP have been lobbying for it to be signed.

A study conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency found that there are 50 sites statewide that have three times the allowed emission levels.
Beverly stated that we could call legislators to demand that casinos be included in the bill. There is a prepared letter at www.acscan.org that can be signed and sent to state legislators.

**Presentation: "Major Findings from the Essex County Cancer Capacity and Needs Assessment"**, Azadeh Tasslimi and Punam Parikh, MPH, Essex County Cancer Coalition Co-Coordinators; Major findings from the Cancer Capacity and Needs Assessment were presented including demographic data and statistics for the seven priority cancers as determined by the NJ Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan. There was an emphasis on cervical, oral, and prostate cancers, which are all priorities in Essex. A review of the Coalition's activities to date was also presented. The floor was then opened to all members and a discussion on future directions followed the presentation.

Diana noted that we don't have a representative from the Essex County Executive Office and that they should be aware of the Coalition's existence and activities.

**Action Item:** The coordinators will draft a letter to the County Executive's office and try to arrange for a meeting that will be attended by the coordinators and principal investigators.

UMDNJ is targeting underserved high school kids to teach them about cancer through life skills curriculum.

Aretha mentioned she was involved in Student Movement Against Cancer at Morristown which educates them about cancer to encourage them to make lifestyle adjustments.

Michele stated that education needs to start *before* high school, as many children are sexually active but are unaware of the associated cancer-related risks.

Diana pointed out that lifestyle, particularly dietary habits, should be emphasized in cancer prevention.

She also noted that *having* insurance sometimes poses a barrier in accessing cancer screening because of co-payments and other out-of-pocket expenses.

Sharyce announced that a CEED-sponsored 211 number will soon be available that will deliver recorded messages about breast cancer and flood the local Black community. The recording will direct women to either CEED or University Hospital (depending on their insurance status) for breast cancer screenings.

Aretha reported that St. Michaels has one barbershop enrolled in The Prostate Net's Barbershop program and is set to have a kiosk available.

Stan suggested that a good strategy to enroll more barbershops is to ask employees who their barbers are and ask them to talk to their barbers about participating.
Virgil has provided all CEED agencies statewide a listing of all licensed barbers in New Jersey complete with contact information. This listing should be used to reach out to barbers to enroll them into the Barbershop Initiative. The listing can be obtained by contacting Virgil (201-342-3202, vhsimons@prostate-online.org) or Roslyn Council (Roslyn.Council@doh.state.nj.us).

Rhonda pointed out that female barbers/hair stylists are more willing than male barbers to participate. However, their clients are mostly or exclusively women and these sites are not currently appropriate for the program.

Johana (who is working as an intern for The Prostate Net) reported that he and Rhonda have visited about a dozen barbershops in Newark and 4 barbers are interested. 2 kiosks will be set up in Newark and Irvington. Another barrier to enrollment is that some shops serve mostly young men, who are not the target group.
Rhonda announced that there will be free prostate cancer screenings every Wednesday in January at UH Family Center Clinic.

A flyer announcing the screenings was distributed through the Coalition list serve.

Michele mentioned that her father is a prostate cancer survivor and a barber in Montclair and may know of some barbers who would be interested in participating in Barbershop.

Next Coalition Meeting:
    Thursday, March 16, 2006 @ 4-6pm
    Location: TBA