

TFRI Policy Workgroup

Thursday, August 2, 2018

1:00 - 2:30 PM

American Heart Association

MEETING DEBRIEF

Attendance: Dan Fitzgerald (TFRI/ALA), Zoe Moreau (TFRI/ALA), Geri Guardino (DOH), Jasmine Arnold (DOH), Megan Tucker (AHA), Ken Farbsten (NIATX), Heidi Driscoll (SC PC), Kris Bennett (Smithfield/Johnston), Kristen Westmoreland (BAYTeam/EB RC), Polly Allen (LC/Tiverton PC), Lori Verderosa (Middletown), Jenn Baldwin (Middletown), Sandy Stuard (Scituate), Robert Dulski (ACS CAN), Jen Wall (ALA), Sheila Jacobson (Lifespan)

Department of Health Update

- Annual Health Equity Summit on September 20, 2018
- Recent RFP from the Tobacco Control program has ended: no decision have been made yet, more details to come in the future.
- On November 15th. 2018, Benvinda will be hosting a Smoke-Free Workshop. More details to come.
- Overview of Lawsuits - Geri provided a brief update on current lawsuits
 - Town of Barrington
 - Tobacco 21 - preemption issue
 - Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids filed an amicus brief
 - Superior Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs.
 - It was found that Barrington did not have express authority to have an ordinance stronger than state law (Tobacco 21 and Flavors)
 - At the last Barrington Town Council, it was unanimously decided that the town would appeal.
 - Town of Middletown
 - Licencing - preemption issue
 - Tobacco Control Legal Consortium filed an amicus brief
 - No verdict yet. More details to come
 - Town of Johnston
 - Licensing - preemption issue
 - Will be enduring the full court process.
 - No verdict yet. More details to come

Policy Prioritization Process

- Dan started the conversation by providing an overview of what the process was up until this point:
 - Via email, workgroup members provided suggestions about policy topic areas they thought TFRI should work on for the year to come
 - After that, Dan put together a survey asking people to vote for their top 3 - 5 policy areas (16 people completed the survey)
 - A list of the 7 top ranked policy topic areas was presented to the group to discuss
- Dan walked the group through each of the seven topic areas and asked the group to express their opinions about each while also thinking about the capacity and readiness to impact change around each item.

“Top Ranked” Policy Areas Discussed:

- Tobacco 21 - (received 10 votes in the survey)
 - The group enthusiastically determined as a state “we are ready” to continue working on the Tobacco 21 issue.
 - Geri discussed that national partners were working on creating a more accurate financial impact state which will be helpful for the year to come.
 - Robert discusses some strategies that worked for a tanning bill - they addressed the speaker's concerns directly and showed the speaker examples of good press other states received from passing similar leg. This could be a strategy partners use with Tobacco 21
 - Discussions around the recent MA Tobacco 21 passage occurred
 - some felt this would be helpful for Rhode Island now that a neighboring state has passed the policy
 - some members thought that legislators would see this as a reason to not move forward because theoretically it could increase tobacco sales in RI for people crossing the border to buy tobacco products (under 21)
 - The group discussed how TFRI was helpful last year with mobilizing and educating partners around the issue. Megan provided the example around the Tobacco 21 Advocacy Day last May.
 - The group also discussed the want to talk more about the pros and cons of passing resolutions
 - The group felt confident that TFRi has a role to play in education and building capacity around the Tobacco 21 issue for the year to come.
- Smoke-free schools - Enforcement Best Practice - (received 9 votes in the survey)
 - Dan discussed how TFRI, ALA, and CVS hosted a training with school administration during the previous spring and the group expressed a clear need for smoke-free signage (currently being addressed) at their school as well as a model policy for how to enforce the smoke-free schools law
 - With FY18 funds, Dan had a subcontractor collect some preliminary research around what other states were doing to enforce similar policies.

- Others around the table who were in attendance and those working in the community mentioned that the need for this assistance in schools was not only of interest but a desperate cry for help from schools.
- Dan also mentioned that CVS expressed interest in funding a model policy to be created because of the need they heard at the training.
- The group decided that based on the clear need, the preliminary work done by TFRI, and potential funding for this endeavor - the network is ready and capable to continue working on this issue.
- Local Tobacco Retail License - (received 9 votes in the survey)
 - The group discussed the current lawsuits and felt that the communities currently going through that process should not be left to deal with the situation on the own; however, they felt it would not be responsible to push for more TRLs while current lawsuits are underway.
 - The group agreed that this policy area should be put on a “back burner” and efforts around it should be reserved to maintain and sustain current ordinances.
- Smoke-Free Colleges - (received 8 votes in the survey)
 - The group expressed hesitations around this policy area at first due to it being unknown territory.
Dan discussed how within the last year, almost every college in the state reached out asking for someone level of assistance or information about potentially going tobacco -free. Dan also discussed how he had the opportunity to attend a training last spring that showcased how schools around the country were passing these policy, how long they took, challenges, and strategies.
 - Jen Wall mentioned that, if nothing else, TFRI had the opportunity to be the connector. Since people are already reaching out to DAN, with a little effort TFRI can pull together pre-existing resources from national partners and assist getting those into the hands of people on campuses around the state.
 - Sheila mentioned that the RI Public Health Association would be starting a to convene a group of academic advisors from colleges. She also mentioned that the policy training they did last year could be a great place to talk with college student this coming year.
 - The group decided that due to evident readiness on college campuses and pre-existing relationships with colleges and network partners this was a policy topic area they would like TFRI to do more work with.
- Increase Tobacco Control Program Funding - (received 8 votes in the survey)
 - The group discussed the current funding level of the Tobacco Control Program
 - The state currently provides approximately \$375,000 of the CDC recommended \$12,000,000 to adequately address tobacco use in RI
 - The group also discussed how \$140,000,000 in tobacco tax revenue is collected annually and put into General Revenue
 - Geri discussed how \$500k of federal money the TCP received in previous years would be ending this year. Megan said this could be an opportunity to showcase what the state would be losing with this money disappearing as a strategy to advocate for the importance of dedicating more state money to the TCP.

- Dan discussed the partnership TFRI and ACS CAN had at the Day at the State House event and how it was an opportunity for the TFRI Youth Advisory Board to talk about the importance of this funding.
- ACS CAN mentioned that they would most likely be keeping this policy issue as a priority for them for the coming year
- Robert expressed the need for more advocacy and education efforts before budget hearing. TFRI could fill that need through the creation of letter to the editor or letter to the governor templates for advocated to use
- The group agreed that there was a clear need for more funding and they felt that TFRI could be a helpful partner working on this policy area for the year to come.
- Establish Tobacco-Free Pharmacies legislation at the state/local level (3 votes)
 - The group advocated that they wait and see how MA does with their recent legislation before working on this policy area.
- Marketing Restrictions of tobacco products in underserved communities (1 vote)
 - The group expressed some concerns about how this issue (while a very important one) could be addressed via policy change
 - Dan mentioned some work at the national level around this issue - mostly around raising awareness and how he would share these resources through the TFRI e-newsletter even if this was not selected as a policy area.
- Increase local ordinances specifically on banning menthol products (1 vote)
 - The group decided that with the current landscape and pending verdicts from lawsuits this issue should be tabled

Final Decisions on Policy Priority Topic Areas:

- TFRI 2018 - 2019 Policy Priority Areas
 - Tobacco 21: Moving the tobacco sale age from 18 to 21
 - Smoke-Free Schools: Creation of a model policy for schools to use when enforcing the smoke-free schools law (which included the use of e-cigarettes)
 - Increase TCP funding: allocate 2.5% of tobacco tax revenue to the RI Tobacco Control Program
 - Tobacco-Free Colleges: build capacity on college campuses to ultimately work toward becoming smoke-free / tobacco-free campuses

Back Burner Policy Areas

- Enabling Legislation
- Local Tobacco Retail Licencing

Additional Policy Goals:

- Dan asked the group if there were additional things related to policy that they would like TFRI to focus on for the year
 - Lori asked if TFRI would be able to assist in education or a media campaign around e-cigarettes
 - Dan discussed a potential ability to partner with CVS to create a statewide youth-based social media campaign around ENDS

- Heidi told the group that South Kingstown would be soon launching a E-cigarette Media Toolkit - more details to come
- Kristen mentioned a new campaign called “Don’t be a Fuul” designed to combat increased popularity of Juuls.
- Sheila mentioned having some resources around e-cigarettes> She forwarded them to Dan and he mentioned that they could be shared in the TFRI e-newsletter.
- Kristen recommended the creation of a yearly policy “year in review” infographic that showcased the work done at a state and local level.
 - Dan thought that this would be a relatively easy task as TFRI already tracks all policy happenings at a state and local level.

Next Steps:

- At the next meeting the group discussed accomplishing the following:
 - Creating elevator pitches around each policy priority
 - Drafting deliverables for each policy
 - What TFRI can feasibly do in a year around each policy area
 - Formation of what would be presented to the Network at annual meeting
- Doodle Poll for October Meeting: <https://doodle.com/poll/zftm3w5exchrz86g>