



March 10, 2020

Participants		
Colleen , DBHDS, Chair	Will, VDH	Neely, UVA, Co-chair
Sally, VDH	Kelly, ACS CAN	Kristina, VCU
Bob, Retired FDA	Brandy, Anthem BCBS VA	Carolyn, VDH
Avis, RCHD	Michael, VFHY	JoAnne, VDH
Rita Miller, VDH	Marge, VFHY	
On the phone		
Aimee, UVA	Olivia & Tabatha, RESCUE, VFHY	Danny, VFHY

Agency Updates:

Colleen , DBHDS

- New printed Synar materials are with Community Service Boards
- Merchant education and store assessment currently being conducted
- VDH Tobacco 21 (T21) questions have been added to the merchant survey
- Projected to reach 100% of stores by June 30, 2020
- Currently, DBHDS is working with ABC for the next round of Synar
 - 844 stores will be inspected (more b/c retail violation rates increased, 220 more than last year)
 - results expected in the Fall
- Overall, not surprised if rate will go up; money is needed to conduct more assessments, which there is none; currently working on trying to find monies to conduct additional assessments
- Concern if Virginia reaches 20% threshold, which will jeopardize future funding

Bob - Embarrassed FDA funding lapsed; FDA did get back to him and said 'yes, there is a new contract'

- Colleen - the inspection contract was award to a 3rd party company (they work in 2 other states)
 - This 3rd party company needs a waiver or assurance of immunity before performing inspections
 - ABC has to issue and currently they are not – why?
 - has to do with VA Code on who can perform enforcement (don't want to be liable)
 - Currently discussing how to work with ABC to get the contract back with them
 - Activity seen on FDA website; not from this 3rd party company but FDA themselves conducting random inspections – [click](#)
 - FDA released RFP and DBHDS currently looking to apply for; FDA would prefer contract be ran by a State agency; DBHDS can contract out

Carolyn, VDH

- “Tobacco Disparities in Virginia” brief developed and is available on the VDH TCP [website](#)
- 2019 BRFSS tobacco data completed, expect new data in the Fall
- Currently working on Regional info-graphs; to have completed in a couple weeks
- VDH T21 questions have been added to the Merchant Survey; questions look at knowledge of T21 Law in Virginia before Federal Law passed, along with compliance; goal is to hopefully help strengthen the T21 Law in the future

Colleen – she is surprised when talking with retailers, as many are unaware of this new Law

Caroline – asked if there are free public service announcements (PSAs) to tap into to help get the message and word out? Can we look into this?

Bob – Noticed near the (*) “data suppressed”; Caroline responded this means the values were too low to be accurate

Avis, Free From Tobacco / RCHD

- Met with Richmond City Council on March 2nd; overall went well and they were able to answer their questions
- Over next few weeks, the Council will discuss budget; looking good for grant monies again
- Currently, working on compiling smoking rates for Richmond City and the subgroups, with the idea of presenting specific data next time
- Free From Smoking utilizes Coaches in the community where they themselves have walked the journey to become tobacco free or know someone close who has. They use combination therapy of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) plus a behavioral component [statistically shows higher quit rates]. They provide direct personalized support to community members, offering 8 to 12 weeks free NRT. Currently there are limits and barriers to getting NRT through Medicaid and Medicare, with their Program people can walk in and walk out with NRT in their hands!

Neely asked was there any interesting or surprising questions?

Avis responded, there was confusion on how State funding worked and they (the City) didn’t want to duplicate services. At this meeting, Sarah Birkhead, Central Region Tobacco Control Coordinator, was able to explain how state funding works and show this Program does not duplicate services.

Rita Miller, VDH

- ANNOUNCEMENT: CDC TIPS from Former Smokers campaign starts March 24th to October 4th (25 weeks)
- VDH will offer 2 weeks FREE NRT to anyone eligible (age 18+); tap into the Quitline
- Hope Governor’s budget holds cessation funding so Tobacco Control Program (TCP) can have their own promotional materials, besides from CDC
- Go to CDC [website](#) for additional promotional materials to use at your worksites

Brandy mentioned it would be nice to have materials ready to post and distribute (refer to link above). **NOTE:** Anthem is always looking for information/events/materials (i.e., something in Fall or Spring) from their partner organizations to be pushed out to the community/their members; share with them

- Members thanked Anthem for getting a large banner on Broad St. & Staples Mill
 - Content included Quitnow and quitting vaping/smoking

Will, VDH

- TCP wrapping up their media campaign (digital, radio and TV); Virginia Broadcasting System took videos and converted to radio (more bang for the buck)
- Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) has joined and shared this opportunity with TFAV
- Catchafire connects members with passionate, pro bono professionals looking to donate their skills through 1-hour phone calls and/or fully fledged projects.

- **ACTION:** Will encouraged members to look through the CatchAFire [website](#) and identify any activities you believe TFAV should participate in
 - Currently, TFAV is working on designing a brochure, improving the look and message of the Alliance Summary and other membership documents
 - SOME possible future work TFAV could get help is creating palm cards, business cards, web and social media services audit, developing elevator speeches, administrative and management work, branding/logo design
 - Can have 3 projects going on at one time

Michael and Danny, VFHY

- Welcome Michael! 5th day new hire at VFHY and new to TFAV
- The 14th Reduce Tobacco Use Conference 4/19-21/2020 in Alexandria plus a post-conference to touch upon many other issues ([click](#))
- Was hopeful in regards to the restoration of funds initially included in governor's budget, but has been removed
- In 12 weeks launching a new anti-vaping campaign aimed at youth
- On the youth engagement side, year one working with Rescue Agency for the *Share the Air Campaign*, which had evolved from tobacco – e-cigarettes campaign to clean outdoor spaces including parklands
- Youth primarily involved in gathering support and VFHY will turn this gathered information into talking points, to holding events in communities, to working with different localities

Sally Goodquit, VDH

- Save the Date - Eliminate Tobacco Use Summit from 4/13-14/2020 at UVA ([click](#))
- 2nd year to host such a summit; first year comprised of campuses throughout VA and now expanded to mid-Atlantic area, thus allowing for a wider representation of participants
- Have great speakers such as Mathew Myers, CTFK and Brian King, DHHS
- ANNOUNCEMENT: Central Regional Tobacco Control Meeting to be held 3/24/20, contact Sarah Birkhead for more details birkhead.sarah@virginia.va.gov
- ANNOUNCEMENT: Eastern Regional Tobacco Control Meeting to be held 4/3/20, contact Nicole Mayaen for more details nicole.mayaen@vdh.virginia.gov

POLICY & Legislative UPDATES

Will, VDH provided the update

- Legislative Chair, Chelsi Bennet was unable to attend, but was able to provide us an update – Thank you!
- Referred to handouts that were passed out and will be attached to a communication after the meeting
- Had high hopes going into this legislative session - looking for monies, flavor bands, licensing, etc...; not as we had hoped
- What we learned is 'Tobacco industry is nonpartisan and their reach is far'
- The argument is always hard when battling money and business
- There were originally 4 control bills, 2 consolidated into 1; thus 3 total

Kelly, ACS CAN

- Provided some updates, not as ACS CAN perspective, but her own
- Going into this session after elections and once Speaker Filler-Corn and other Chairmanships were appointed, realized these positions were staffed by older senior democrats (status quo guys)

- Del. Hope and others introduced many bills a large 'package' of tobacco bills for Virginia and any state to pass on one session; a lot of the bills died quickly; what they saw was the Senate is running as status quo and changing parties did not make a difference
- House was behind many of bills, including patient groups (ALA, etc..), reinsurance programs; but when the Senate took out monies and did not support a lot of the governor's budget, people realized changing parties made no difference; just need additional education and make an argument and overcoming business community environment;
- Her recommendation is to have TFAV pick a couple important points/topics and identify what has the best chance, then put resources behind this
- Overall, this session wasn't for nothing, huge headway made on flavors, vaping, and retail licensing education.
- Agree we 'need to do something' and prepare for the business community, as their arguments were strong
- Del. Watts tax [Bill](#) did pass; it tries to equalize the taxes throughout the state; Bill did go through conference reports
- Delegate Hope
 - called all the players into one room (Altria, vaping companies, etc...); Chelsi Bennet, Shannon Quinby and herself were there and Shannon was a great voice for retail
 - During this meeting they went over all the Bills
- Good objectives moving forward, leadership made a clear voice tobacco not the focus this year
- Many of the bills were 'continued' to the next year
 - Normally Bills do not get continued, they are 'laid on the table'
 - Historically when continued to next year they do not have to be reintroduce; if a Bill gets continued and if not acted upon before an [X] number date, it dies and now it needs to be reintroduced
 - Need to really watch and see if these Bills will be discussed in committees off-session
 - **IMPORTANT** to talk w/legislatures prior to next year to better prepare
- Overall, the robustness of the amount of change, plus the misconception of thinking the 'same party' will align, but not the case

Will commented: possibly next year focus on fewer objectives; plus during the off season determine some ideas and best prospective for a couple ideas:

- a) Competing flavor / tobacco Bills - how can we create an alignment to push at level of collaboration
- b) What might be good to know? Including defining clear benefits and spend more time with the opposition. To sit and talk with them away from the heat of the General Assembly being in session

Bob commented: sometimes the business cost calculations they make are illuminated by torching some of the worst offenders; they might have toleration of the industry to be licensed when they themselves pick off the worst offenders (...*we don't do business like that, this business does not represent our good standing, etc...*); enforcement helps legislation; an idea is to hammer out the outliers so the industry can align a bit and accept a little

Kelly added, there are different licensing and they each have lobbyists (7 just for them); there might be some common ground for some of these retailers

Colleen said - NEXT meeting in June we will

- address off season preparation for next legislative session
- talk more strategy and what we want to focus on and what we need to do to rally the troops
- WE DO have a lot of research we can attest to, now to work on, what do we want to do; create talking points for everyone at the community level;

- Community Coalitions of Virginia (CCoVa), a statewide coalition located at the community levels ([click](#)) will be joining us at the June meeting. We want to “join forces”, to build a strong partnership as they have identified tobacco as a focus area and they have the ability to lead their member’s in how to work with their local legislators to start the conversations – **FANTASTIC!!**

Kelly Fitzgerald commented, it is really important when selecting supporting organizations to speak during hearings, they stick to the topic; important to provide them talking points. Think about ‘can our line be longer than their (opposition) line’?

Smokefree Amusement Parks Updates

Disney went smokefree and wouldn’t it be great if Busch Gardens and King Dominion would too! A subcommittee was formed and we divided up theme parks nationwide to research looking at and how Virginia ranks overall. Our parks are on par with other national parks. Disney is the gold standard.

Sarah Birkhead & Will met with Hanover Cares Coalition + Teens Care Too youth coalition to discuss reasons why Kings Dominion should go tobacco free (they came up with 1.5 pages of ideas). Sarah Birkhead sits on the Hanover Cares and Teens Care Too Board. The teens listed a number of potential first contacts and suggested doing an environmental scan.

Currently the subcommittee is working on developing a one-pager with talking points. The idea is to start laying the foundation now in the hopes to have the policy start in 2021. **If you have input or know anyone in these parks, let us know!**

Pulling in VFHY Share the Air Campaign as part of this initiative; possibly VFHY to focus on Busch Gardens? Danny from VFHY said it is great to hear youth leaders already involved. To better align VFHY efforts and resources with outreach he asked if Hanover Teens Care Too could share any of their ideas, information collected and their time frame in moving forward. (**REFER** to one-pager)

Y-street has already started to conduct Share the Air Campaign surveys, collecting tangible information to assist in the development of further talking points. Overall, evidence shows support. The youth leaders are trained to meet and speak to:

- 1) **ACTION:** VFHY can Share the Air Campaign survey form with Hanover Teens Care Too to help capture data. Let’s discuss further.
- 2) **ACTION:** Question, does VFHY have a Y-street representative in Williamsburg area? Danny will help to identify the youth in the surrounding area.

Capital Square UPDATES

Meetings are underway with a goal to make the area a smokefree space for the future!

Danny Saggese suggested it’s important to know who can make the actual decisions and changes, once found out, this might have a direct route. Marge, VFHY believes getting to the head of the Department of General Services (DGS) would be a good starting point. Further research needed.

State Tobacco Control Community of Practice Update

Will (VDH), Jayne Flowers (VDH), Colleen and Ervina Baskerville (DBHDS) went to CDC. The meeting addressed tobacco use in the behavioral health realm. They discussed Virginia strategies and what the State can do. Currently working on the new 5 year CDC Tobacco Control Program grant, where they want to see a focus on behavioral health and mental health population. National Council for Behavioral Health

TFAV Activity / Discussion

Americans for Nonsmokers Rights has a “Readiness Assessment Tool” to help coalitions in campaign planning. Will attended a session / activity. This brought up the idea to facilitate a conversation amongst the members. Four questions were discussed.

If a Law Maker wanted to introduce a bill tomorrow [do away with Virginia’s tobacco preemption law], would the coalition be ready? What would we need to do to get there?

REMINDER: Legal Dictionary

In a legal context, preemption refers to the principle that certain matters which have a national effect are governed by federal laws, rather than any contradictory state or local laws that may exist. This doctrine is based on the U.S. [Constitution](#)’s [Supremacy Clause](#), which specifies that federal law preempts inconsistent state law.

1. From what groups do you expect to have the strongest opposition?
 - Altria; cigar shops; retailer; vaping coalitions; manufactures (using the cover of honest tobacco merchants); tobacco farmers; other law makers (assembly members); anybody benefiting from preemptions; smokers and tobacco users;
 - possibly once this door opens to preemption, ...
2. What steps can the coalition take to neutralize or reduce the effects of legitimate opposition (i.e., opposition not funded or organized by the tobacco industry) in the state?
 - build TFAV; have strong talking points;
 - call Del. Hope; pull together, identify and develop resources;
 - provide an example of legitimate opposition (people who sell tobacco and other things who have been told this will hurt your business – i.e., bars); data contribution of revenue and who’s affected;
 - case studies of other states in play with the data of that specific view point, then look at two, three, or five-year analysis; show them it will not harm their businesses;
 - rally the troops, we need more than 5 people involved! – bring in the public health narrative, pick a few strong narratives and stick to them;
 - early education in June so start conversations with legislatures and their aids, might have more people onboard – decreasing rumor mill information;
 - provide alternative cessations
3. What background information about the tobacco industry should the coalition have?
 - developing counter arguments to respond well to opposition messaging;
 - what would the counter bill be (i.e., T21) – to know what the underlying counter bill could be;
 - add emotion, good story telling; showing health harms; health vs industry combined stories;
 - CDC TIPS Campaign actors/ppl;
 - businesses stressed with health care premiums - risk and expense goes down when tobacco use decreased – you can help EVERYBODY’S premium go down; might be a way to work with the health care industry and help them present the case (more support to these business and help them pull together); mobilize one giant industry against the other giant industry;
 - need persuasive argument for any of these businesses as they are used to their expenses going up, and businesses are used to a trend with numbers increasing – need to show saving for the future [you might lose an ounce of revenue for a pound of cost] – this delayed effect;
 - we have good information already tap into this;

- among the smaller business, talk to them about the number of inches used in the display space for tobacco products and cost benefit of displaying and selling Hershey bars and stamps vs tobacco
4. What economic impact information should the coalition have?
- case from other states showing impact;
 - refer to others who have blazed the trail;
 - to show costs for society vs industry
 - how much is marked vs costs through health costs / lost life years

Next meeting June 2, 2020

*See you there with my **clown nose** on 😊*