



**General Membership Meeting
October 6, 2016**

9:35 a.m. – 10:27 a.m.

Southcoast Center for Women's Health, 300 B Faunce Corner Road, North Dartmouth, MA

Members present (15): Barbara Acksen, Stephanie Boulay, Arthur Briggs, Helena DaSilva-Hughes, Jean DeCoffe, Darlene Dymsha, Maritza Irizarry, Jay Kenney, Kayla Kinisky, Anne Lynch, Kerry Mello, Amy Sylvia, Gloria Villalobo, Morissa Vital, Kathleen Wilbur. *If your name does not appear on this list and you attended the meeting, please contact gnballies@gmail.com.*

Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Chair, Barbara Acksen, who welcomed round table introductions of those in attendance.

Dr. Acksen also welcomed the community nursing students and their instructor. Students included Lauren Ayotte, Elora Collins, Amanda Frey, Sarah Gaouette, Courtney Grippin, Phuong Pham, and Krystina SanSoucie. Instructor included Marianne McAuliffe.

Presentation #1: Cancer Disparities Grant Update (Kerry Mello)

Kerry Mello gave a brief overview of the Cancer Disparities Grant. She said GNB Allies had been looking at health equity issues particularly as they related to cancer. When the opportunity to apply for a grant came out of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, she said they applied for the grant and were awarded \$50,000. The first phase of the grant included a needs assessment with community health workers in which they looked at what the cancer disparities of the South Coast were and how they were impacting people. During the second phase of the grant, they came up with an action plan which focused on colon cancer. She said colon cancer has one of the highest death rates on the South Coast particularly in certain vulnerable populations. She also said that people on the South Coast are generally diagnosed at a later rate than other areas of the state.

With funding from the grant, Ms. Mello said they enlisted the help of the community health workers to hand out FITs and to do education on why early detection is important. Among the community groups they worked with are: YWCA, Immigrants' Assistance Center, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, Dog Tags Navigator, a number of Hispanic churches and people



who do outreach to the Mayan community. She said they had a huge success with distributing the FIT kits, getting people to turn them in, and educating people about early detection. She said nearly 150 FITS kits were distributed with a return rate of approximately 60% and seven people went on for further testing. By comparison, she said the South Coast Health Van had been distributing FIT kits for nearly nine years and generally gets a 10% return rate.

Ms. Mello said the grant was extended six months through December. She said they hope to distribute up to 200 FIT kits by then.

Presentation #2: Cancer Disparities Grant Successes at Immigrants' Assistance Center (*Helena DaSilva-Hughes*)

Helena DaSilva-Hughes reported on the tremendous success the Immigrants' Assistance Center has had with the Cancer Disparities Grant. She said her organization has done an amazing job at distributing the FIT Kits for colon cancer screening. She said her organization services over 7,000 clients per year who are primarily Portuguese, Cape Verdian and Spanish. She said in the ESL classes they show a FIT kit video that is in English or Spanish but they translate it into the people's native language. Since many people fear of the unknown, she said they have done a lot of one-on-one conversations with their clients as well as constant follow-up. She said it's important to remove the barrier of fear and explain things in detail to them, establishing a level of trust with their clients. She said every staff member has been on board with the project and they have a remarkable return rate of over 60%. She said the Immigrants Assistance Center' has distributed over 75 kits to date and she hopes to distribute up to 100 through December.

Business meeting

Meeting minutes – approval

September 1, 2016 – Kerry Mello moved to approve the report, Jean DeCoffe seconded, with no discussion all members present approved the September minutes.

Treasurer's Report – approval

- Bank balance 8/31/2016: \$206,225.07
- Total Encumbered Funds: \$153,754.80
- Unrestricted net assets: \$47,953.45

Darlene Dymysza moved to approve the Treasurer's report, Arthur Briggs seconded, with no discussion all members present approved the report.

Standing Committee reports

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Health Access – Darlene Dymysza reported that she and Barbara Acksen attended a leadership conference last month in Worcester on the MotherWoman group model. She said these groups provide safe places of mutual respect and non-judgement where mothers can support one another as they navigate the realities of motherhood. At the conference, they learned from other groups in the state about their experience in intervening with postpartum depression as well as the different ideas and successes other people are having. Unlike the other groups, she said GNB Health Access Committee is unique because they are the only coalition in the state whose members come from different agencies.

Barbara Acksen added the GNB Health Access Committee was one of the original six groups in the state to receive a grant. She said the conference brought all these groups of people together to talk about what their experiences were and where they are going. She said it was an insightful and productive conference.

Health Equity – Kerry Mello reported that they have been focused on the final months of the Cancer Disparities grant which was extended through December.

Other Business

Update on youth concerns discussion

Barbara Acksen noted that she attended the video premiere of Samantha Johnson’s video “We Run This (with Pride)” at the Zeiteron Theatre on October 4th. The video was part of the “New Be, New Me” campaign, which is inspiring youth to take better care of their health, their business and their community. The video and the campaign promote self-confidence, community pride, healthy behaviors, and personal success. GNB Allies sponsored the “New Be, New Me” campaign at the \$800 level over the summer.

Deidre Healy was also in attendance. She said the video can be seen on the New Bedford Guide website and Facebook page. She said they also created a website called newbenewme.com to get more youth involved in the campaign.

Member Announcements

Members are always welcome to provide handouts for others and to share upcoming events.

- Deirdre Healy noted that *Tuesdays with Morrie* author Mitch Albom will speak at UMass Dartmouth on Thursday, October 6 at 7 p.m. in the Main Auditorium. Albom’s talk, entitled



“Giving is Living,” will focus on the importance of active citizenship and living a meaningful life and will be followed by a book signing. Admission is \$25 (\$5 for UMass Dartmouth students).

- Amy Sylvia noted that a “Love Heels: Walk to End Domestic Violence” fundraiser for the South Shore Women’s Resource Center and The Arc of Greater Plymouth will be held on Saturday, October 22, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Nelson Park in Plymouth, MA, followed by a Domestic Violence Vigil. The registration fee is \$30 and includes a walk day T-shirt.
- Ms. Sylvia also noted that a Psychic Fair fundraiser for the South Shore Women’s Resource Center will be held on Saturday, October 29, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 345 Court Street, Suite B, Plymouth, MA. The admission fee is \$2.
- Kerry Mello noted that Southcoast Health has teamed up with the Gleason Family YMCA and Voices for a Healthy Southcoast for a new wellness initiative on the fourth Saturday of the month that provides free programs for area residents. It is usually held at the YMCA in Wareham and includes a walk and yoga. There are currently 20 people participating in the program.
- Maritza Irizarry noted that New Bedford Healthy Families is presenting an Education & Job Training Expo on October 19th from 3 to 4:40 PM. The event will take place at 385 County Street in New Bedford. There will be different vendors from various agencies and organizations.

Adjournment

Jean DeCoffe moved to adjourn the meeting, Helena DaSilva-Hughes seconded, with no discussion all members present approved to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on November 3, 2016 @ 9:30 a.m. at Southcoast Center for Women’s Health, located at 300 B Faunce Corner Road in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts.