

## **PATH Meeting**

Minutes—9/10/19, 11:30AM-2:00PM

Location: Carilion Giles Community Hospital

### **Present:**

Harvey Barker, co-convener	Beth O'Connor	Cynthia Luke
Michelle Brauns, co-convener	Andrew Luskin	Meghan Pfliederer
Stephanie Spencer	Andi Golusky	Angie Nichols
Ashley Hash	Beth Deskins	Jared McCormich
Rebecca LeBlanc	Katie Lintz	Rhonda Seltz
Kathleen Polfer	Malinda Britt	Chris Hurst
Pam Ray	Mel Jones	Rebecca Lord
Noelle Bissell	Jeff Dinger	Kay Lucas
Cathy Callahan	Theresa McCann	

**Chris Hurst, Candidate for the 12<sup>th</sup> District for the Virginia House of Delegates:** Chris has been the 12<sup>th</sup> District Delegate for the past 2 years and in which time he worked to change policies including the passing of Medicaid expansion. He spoke about three key issues: the lack of crisis care for mental health available throughout the Commonwealth, the continued battle against substance use disorder, and the lack of housing options in our area (including options for those in recovery).

**Rhonda Seltz, Candidate for the 7<sup>th</sup> District for the Virginia House of Delegates:** Rhonda was born and raised in Pulaski county and knew from an early age that she wanted to make a difference in the world. She went to school at Virginia Tech and received a degree in Psychology. She then moved to California, received a Master's in Community Psychology, and was able to gain experience in legal aid, community organizing, and grant writing. She is very passionate about issues regarding inaccessibility to healthcare and has established it as her #1 platform. She is "running for the people" and is adamant on making changes to healthcare once elected. If you are interested in donating to Rhonda's campaign, you can do so through [ActBlue](#).

**Malinda Britt & Noelle Bissell, Sex Education in Our Public Schools:** Malinda began her talk with a brief exercise asking people to think about what sex education means to them. She shared that there are many types of sex education and that one's sexuality is a lifelong process and presented the curriculum she supports: the Get Real Approach (PowerPoint attached to email). Dr. Noelle Bissell shared that the health department has been treating children as young as 11 years old with STIs. Parents in our community do not believe their kids are having sex and turn a blind eye to the concerns associated. The health department works with the local colleges and have heard firsthand that even college-aged kids do not believe they received proper sex education from their public schools. She also shared that there are numerous myths associated with sexual health that kids believe for protection such as douching with certain sodas to prevent contraction of an STI and that anal/oral sex is not sex since there is no risk for pregnancy. Some of the stats she shared include:

- 11% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 15% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders, 18% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and 33% 9<sup>th</sup> graders are having sex
- 1 in 2 sexually active youths will have an STI by age 25
- there were 568 early syphilis cases in 2014 and 1,300 in 2018 (congenital syphilis has doubled within the same timeframe)
- there were 35,000 cases of chlamydia in 2014 and 45,000 cases in 2018
- there were 8,100 cases of gonorrhea in 2014 and 12,000 cases in 2018 (there are drug-resistant strains on the rise)
- 1 in 2 pregnancies are unintended within our communities

We need to do a better job of preparing them for the risks involved so they may make educated decisions regarding their sexual health. Malinda also wanted to raise awareness that not all 11 year olds are voluntarily having sex and contracting disease—often times they are signs of abuse. Proper sex education is not just about teaching kids how to have safe sex; it also teaches students the difference between abuse and consent. Malinda also shared information on the Teen Connection sexual education program and the Let's Be Honest parents program (info attached to email).

**Healthy New River Valley Update:** There will be a Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) forum on November 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss coordination of resources. The New River Health District will be holding their annual flu clinic on September 20<sup>th</sup> at the Radford Fire Department where they will be administering FREE flu shots. Vaping is an ongoing problem. The CDC has asked for everyone to stop using vaping products due to 5 deaths so far. The health department's mobile unit is out in the community offering FREE STI testing and health education throughout the community; look for their schedule on their website and Facebook page. There is currently a Hepatitis A outbreak in Mount Rogers. If you or someone you know have not been vaccinated against Hep A, you are encouraged to do so.

**PATHways Sharing:**

**Ashley Hash:** Ashley reiterated the CHIP forum on November 14<sup>th</sup> and encouraged anyone interested to attend; invites will be sent out through the PATH list serve. She also shared that Carilion pharmacy has started a smoking cessation program and that Virginia Organizing is working on a state-wide campaign regarding the high cost of prescription drugs and they are looking for personal stories (contact Ashley if you have one you'd like to share).

**Rebecca LeBlanc:** Medicaid expansion has been great for the Community Health Center in getting more of their patients covered. They are working on outreach and are pushing for more dental involvement. Please help spread the word.

**Beth O'Connor:** The Virginia Rural Health Association's annual conference will be in Martinsville November 25<sup>th</sup> (go to VRHA.org for more info). The VRHA will be creating a state-wide rural LGBT interest group looking at suicide, depression, housing, etc. If you're interested in getting involved, contact Beth.

**Andi Golusky:** NRV CARES has 5 parenting classes beginning in the coming weeks that are geared towards ages 0-6. Free dinner and childcare will be provided (registration info attached to email).

**Mel Jones:** Mel works for the Virginia Center for Housing Research at Virginia Tech. They are currently working with the NRV Regional Commission to complete a study. They are currently talking with experts to fill details around the data. They are working on organizing a focus group.

**Jeff Dinger:** The FOCUS group was a way to solidify the network of service providers as well as local government in and around Giles County. It has been a great success. They just recently started working with VT to help determine how they can be more effective as a network.

**Cynthia:** Cynthia is with the new National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) chapter in the NRV. They have two support groups: one for persons living with mental illness and one for friends and families of persons living with mental illness. They are currently looking for new members.

**The Next PATH meeting is TBD.  
If you would like be added to the PATH listserv for PATH updates,  
please email [rebecca.lord@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:rebecca.lord@vdh.virginia.gov).**