



## Essex County Cancer Coalition Meeting Minutes



*Approved*  
NEW JERSEY  
MEDICAL SCHOOL  
University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

Thursday, December 4, 2008, 4:00-6:00 pm  
St. Barnabas Health Care System, Human Resource Training Room  
95 Old Short Hills Road (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), West Orange, NJ

**Attendees:** Anna Berwitz, Clarissa Bido, Andrew de la Torre, Mike Festa, Lois Greene, Aretha Hill-Forte, Rosa Ibanez, Deborah Johnson, Angela McCabe, Catherine Marcial, Kathy Nugent, Daniel Rosenblum, Roxanne Ruiz-Adams, Susan Sanna (by speakerphone), Dionta Sutton, Christopher Tuohy, Stanley Weiss

**Excused:** Kiameesha Evans, Bill Bullock, Arnie Rosenheck, Susan Levin, Amanda Medina

### **Review and Approval of September 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Festa moved that the minutes of the September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 meeting be approved. The motion was passed unanimously with one abstention.<sup>1</sup>

## **Agency Updates / ECCC Committees / Announcements**

### **Essex County Cancer Coalition**

- **Leadership Council—Dr. Weiss & Mr. Tuohy**

The possibility of conducting some meetings by conference call had been raised by the OCCP and discussed, with unanimous opposition, at the September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Coalition meeting. A final decision, however, was deferred until members who were not at that meeting could state their views. Insofar as no comments in favor of that idea were received, Dr. Weiss reiterated that the Coalition had therefore explicitly decided not to have meetings by teleconference or video conference, but that they would rather be all live. Several persons spoke in favor of the Coalition's unanimously expressed objections to speakerphone as a substitute for some members' in-person participation.<sup>2</sup>

- **Transportation (LC Subcommittee)—Ms. Greene & Ms. Nugent**

Mr. Tuohy informed the Coalition that Ms. Nugent has joined the Transportation Subcommittee and that he, she, and Ms. Greene have conferred on several occasions during the past few months. They have been collecting and compiling information regarding transportation resources that are available in Essex County. Ms. Greene plans to bring this material to Newark City Council President Mildred Crump. It is hoped that the Newark City Council will actively assist the ECCC in bringing this to the next step, the creation of a brochure on available transportation resources in Essex County.

**Action item:** Coalition members were encouraged to review Mr. Tuohy's e-mail to the Coalition of Thursday, November 13, 2008, 11:36 AM, and send information about additional transportation resources to him for inclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> The person abstaining publicly stated as the reason: had not been present at the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting and therefore felt that it was inappropriate to vote on the minutes

<sup>2</sup> Speakerphone capabilities will of course continue to be made available at each meeting to allow Ms. Sanna, of OCCP, to participate because of medical limitations on her ability to travel. The Coalition hopes that on occasion she may be able to attend in person, which would further add to the value of her participation.

It was pointed out that the success of the Essex County Cancer Resource flyer could be a model for a transportation resource flyer.

Ms. Marcial asked if there were records of referrals generated by the "Cancer Resource flyer" that the ECCC had previously produced. It appears that there are none. Dr. Weiss suggested that since the Essex County's two NJCEED lead agencies track referrals to their programs, they may wish to review any data they might have in this regard..

• **Education and Outreach—Ms. Marcial, Ms. Berwitz, & Ms. Hill-Forte**

The Education and Outreach Committee reported on recent accomplishments.

- Horizon New Jersey Health held a school health conference at the Newark Marriott on October 15, 2008, with some eighty attendees, including many in leadership positions at their respective schools, which gave the conference a high impact. The presentation went very well, with many questions.
- The Newark Cancer Initiative continues to develop its kiosk (literature rack) project. They have spoken to the Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) to try to obtain initial pilot funding. The first two kiosk sites have been identified. The Essex County Cancer Resource flyer will be included among the literature, and each kiosk will also feature a single posted copy of the Essex County cancer facts flyer. Dr. de la Torre discussed the limitations of kiosks without an audio component and foreshadowed his subsequent presentation (see below) by pointing out the possibility of designing as an alternative a simple computer-based kiosk with multimedia as well as data collection capabilities.
- Ms. Marcial indicated that there is an interest in establishing health literacy multimedia kiosks, notably on the part of Dr. Natale-Pereira at UMDNJ-NJMS, that would address broader health issues.

**Presentation: "Use of Patient Targeted Informatics to Improve Identification of Patients in Need of Cancer Screening"**

*Andrew de la Torre, MD, Associate Professor of Surgery and Director of Laparoscopy & Minimally Invasive Liver Surgery, UMDNJ—University Hospital, Newark*

Dr. de la Torre gave a highly informative presentation which was enthusiastically received by those in attendance. He first surveyed the epidemiology and etiology of hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), focusing on two of its major infectious causes, hepatitis B & C, and their epidemiology and risk factors, as well as on fatty liver and its association with the U.S. obesity epidemic. He noted that these are increasing and that as a result incidence of HCC is also increasing. He then briefly discussed prognosis and treatment options. Prolonged anti-viral treatment at the appropriate time can dramatically alter prognosis of HBV and HCV infection for some, and decrease the risk for subsequent HCC. However, for those whom therapy is not offered early enough or for whom it is not effective, the prognosis can be dismal, especially if HCC develops. He pointed out that 70% of liver cancer patients are "incurable" and that the 5 year survival rate for liver cancer is < 10%. He went on to point out that he believes that early detection and monitoring of hepatitis B and C (as well as reducing infection in the first place) are critical to reducing the incidence of HCC.

This motivated him to develop computer workstations in private areas programmed to interactively ask patients for key information about their risk factors for Hepatitis B and C viruses (HBV, HCV) and thus for HCC. The system features both a touch-screen video and an audio component so the information appearing on the computer screen is also read to the individual, thus alleviating any issues with reading deficiencies the individual may have. Upon completion of the survey, the information is immediately sent to that individual's medical staff at the location where the survey was taken so necessary preventive measures can be taken, and Dr. de la Torre is also notified

electronically. Such workstations have now been successfully deployed in three locations in the greater Newark area.

Dr. de la Torre is planning to extend his project to cover information about such other cancers as breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate. Thus, his work in identifying patients at risk for liver cancer provides both a model and a foundation for similar efforts with respect to several of the priority cancers identified in 2001 in *Healthy New Jersey 2010* that are part of both the first and second New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control Plans (NJ-CCCP).

In the Question and Answer period, there were many comments and questions from the ECCC audience. Among these was whether liver cancer was part of the NJ-CCCP. Dr. de la Torre had pointed out that the relative incidence of HCC in Essex County is especially high, and that the incidence has been rising in recent years. Ms. Sanna was uncertain why it was not included as a priority cancer in the NJ-CCCP. Dr. Weiss then provided a historical overview, as he was familiar with some of the events. Liver cancer was not one of the initial cancers chosen by OCCP and the Task Force as a priority cancer. However, its importance was recognized, and it is included in the Emerging Issues chapter of the first NJ-CCCP (covering 2003-2007), in a section Dr. Weiss was asked to author. When the Governor unveiled that first plan, one of the issues the Governor highlighted to the press was drawn from that section — that the HBV vaccine could help prevent liver cancer, and that this was the first vaccine to be licensed that could help prevent cancer. Dr. Weiss (in his role of Chair of the Task Force's Evaluation Committee) had recommended to the Task Force and OCCP that liver cancer should be formally considered in their future plans, especially given the availability of a mode of prevention (vaccination), and informed them that Dr. de la Torre was interested and willing to serve as an expert on this issue and that the incidence was rising. The section Dr. Weiss had written five years earlier was lifted essentially verbatim by OCCP from the first NJ-CCCP and put into its second NJ-CCCP (covering 2008-2012) without specific goals. No relevant Workgroup or committee has been formed to assess this issue.

Several audience members commented that they thought liver cancer deserved particular attention, and that they greatly appreciated Dr. de la Torre's thorough presentation of this important issue. Those in attendance then urged that action be taken. Since liver cancer and HCC are not "priority cancers" in the current NJ-CCCP, Dr. Weiss asked Ms. Sanna to relay that sentiment to the OCCP and Task Force leadership. Dr. Weiss noted that given the current status, no NJDHSS funds could be used by the ECCC for liver-cancer specific initiatives.

Ms. Sanna acknowledged the importance of liver cancer, stated that she would advocate for its recognition, and said she would let the ECCC know how matters evolved.

Dr. Weiss also noted that the ECCC would be delighted to assist Dr. de la Torre as he expanded his project to include NJ-CCCP priority cancers, and that this aspect of his work was directly related to the ECCC mission.

## **Agency Updates / ECCC Committees / Announcements (continued)**

### **Essex County Cancer Coalition (continued)**

- **Leadership Council—(continued)**

#### Update on Hospitals in Newark—Ms. Greene

Ms. Greene reported that both Columbus and St. James Hospitals have closed, although both have satellite emergency departments that continue in operation. There are now only three hospitals in Newark, but they appear to be managing to satisfy the demand for in-patient care.

- **Advocacy**

The last meeting of the statewide *Ad Hoc* Advocacy Committee was canceled and not immediately rescheduled. Dr. Weiss inquired about rumors circulating to the effect that funding for county cancer coalitions was endangered. Ms. Sanna reported that everything is under tight scrutiny, and was uncertain what would happen in the future.

Dr. Weiss recommended that the Advocacy Committee aggressively support the OCCP, the county cancer coalitions, and the other components of comprehensive cancer control in the state. He pointed out that the American Cancer Society has been strongly supportive of the OCCP, NJCEED, and the comprehensive tobacco control program.

- **Development**

Mr. Tuohy conveyed a message from Mr. Bullock to the effect that the grant application to fund public service announcements had been resubmitted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

- **Update on “The Barbershop Initiative” in Essex County—Ms. Johnson**

During the last quarter, some 22 in-shop barbershop trainings have been conducted in Essex and Union Counties, and these are beginning in Passaic County as well. Ms. Johnson called the Coalition’s attention to the September 28, 2008 article in *The Star-Ledger* on Mr. Scovil and his barbershop in East Orange, which has now hosted two on-site prostate cancer screening events. Other shops are interested in hosting these as well. Some men have asked for screenings in churches and mosques, and prostate cancer survivors have put Ms. Johnson in touch with other barbers. There is a possibility that barbers may organize a barbers’ ball, perhaps in May or June, which would be an excellent venue for further outreach and organizing.

Ms. Johnson reported meeting a barber in Paterson who is now in his late 60s, who informed her of the existence of a barbers’ union that flourished in the 1960s and 1970s and that provided insurance and other benefits.

Ms. Johnson is also looking into activities around Fathers’ Day and Mothers’ Day — the latter to enlist women who are conscious of breast cancer issues to also engage with prostate cancer.

### **Essex CEED Community Coalitions—Ms. Marcial and Ms. Hill-Forte**

- **Mobile Van Update—Ms. Marcial**

Ms. Marcial informed the Coalition that the U.H./S.A.V.E. mammography van has, after delays (of which the Coalition had been previously informed), become mobile and has visited community sites, although there are still some problems.

Ms. Marcial also advised the Coalition that the NJCEED lead agency for Hudson County has been awarded the contract to serve as the lead agency for Union County as well, and has asked for the van to visit Union County. Ms. Hill-Forte reported that it was her understanding that the grant went to Trinitas Hospital. (After the meeting, this apparent discrepancy was resolved when it became clear that the Hudson County lead agency had subcontracted with Trinitas Hospital and others to provide NJCEED screening services in Union County.)

Ms. Hill-Forte informed the Coalition that “In the Pink” screening efforts had found twenty breast cancers so far this year, the most of any NJCEED lead agency. “In the Pink” has been very active with the ACS’s Asian Initiative, screening both women and men, with translators available, and that many of the clients of these efforts have come from the Livingston and Millburn areas.

Dr. Weiss asked if NJCEED lead agencies, having reached or almost reached some of their targets, can continue to screen beyond their target numbers. In reply, the Coalition was informed by these programs that the NJDHSS has said that screening can continue, but that funding is not guaranteed for these additional screenings.

### **NJDHSS Office of Cancer Control & Prevention—Handout from Ms. Susan Sanna**

Ms. Sanna reported that in January there would be an effort to have smokefree hospital campuses. The St. Barnabas system will become entirely smokefree in January 2009, and St. Michael's will in November 2009. Dr. Weiss reported that at University Hospital, the Oncology Committee voted to ask the UMDNJ administration to move in the same direction.

### **Other Old and New Business**

Dr. Weiss announced that Mr. Tuohy had received the New Jersey Public Health Association's annual Ronald Altman Award, presented to a student for outstanding work in a health-related course of study.

The Coalition thanked St. Barnabas Health Care System for hosting the meeting in its Human Resource Training Room, which members found to be an eminently suitable facility.

### **Meeting Evaluation Form**

The evaluation forms for the meeting were collected.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.

**Next Coalition Meeting:** Thursday, March 5, 2009, 4-6pm was proposed; with a location TBA. (This date was subsequently confirmed, with the location again at Saint Barnabas.)

### **Summary of Major Handouts:**

1. Draft minutes of the September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 Coalition meeting.
2. NJDHSS update.