

Obesity Task Force Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2011
Alabama Power Company WaterCourse Building
Clanton, Alabama

Alabama Obesity Task Force (AL OTF)

Mission Statement:

“Working toward prevention and reduction of obesity for a healthier Alabama”

Purpose (Branding) Statement:

“The State Obesity Task Force works to address overweight and obesity issues through advocacy, policies, environmental changes, and programs that support healthy lifestyle changes.”

Heather Whitley welcomed the members. After self introductions, the following information was shared.

- I. Recent tools are available to assist in community efforts. These tools include:
 - The Farm to School Evaluation tools by the National Farm to School Network contains validated or piloted instruments that can be used to collect baseline/ existing program information; determine student knowledge, attitudes and beliefs; collect school gardening activities; and review teacher-farmer impacts and community impacts.
 - The NCCOR offers free measurement tools for childhood obesity research in four (4) domains: individual dietary behaviors, food environment, individual physical activities, and physical activity environment. The types of tools offered include questionnaires, environmental instruments, personal diaries and logs, electronic tips, protocols, etc.
 - The Healthier Food Retail link provides a website for determining availability and access for healthy foods in communities.

2. The AllKids program benefits now include coverage for four annual office visits for patients with an obesity diagnosis, International Classification of Diseases – Ninth Revision (ICD-9) diagnosis code V85.54. This is for pediatric patients with a body mass index greater than or equal to weight at the 95th percentile for their age. In addition, patients with this diagnosis are allowed two annual nutritional counseling visits (Physicians’ “Common Procedure Terminology” codes 97802 and 97803) with an eligible provider. These counseling visits are defined as 15-minute face-to-face assessments with the patient for medical nutrition therapy.

<<https://www.bcbsal.org/providers/publications/providerFacts/2011-015.pdf>>

Kristina Scott of the Alabama Poverty Project provided copies of a press release concerning the high poverty area hit by the April 2011 tornadoes and information concerning the [Alabama Possible](#) Regional Leadership Committee. Ms. Scott explained the efforts to work with faith communities to decrease problems associated by poverty. Alabama is ranked as the 6th poorest state. She reviewed the poverty-obesity connection and discussed vulnerabilities that low income families face in storms and emergencies.

Michael Jackson reviewed OTF efforts in stopping House Bill 195. This bill would reserve the regulation of nutrition labeling in restaurants and vending machines to the Legislature, unless imposed by Federal law. It would preempt any local government from adopting a menu labeling ordinance. The progress of the bill has undergone the following:

4/21/2011 - House passed the bill. No public hearing was held.

4/27/2011 - Senate Health committee gave a favorable vote.

5/05/2011 - Received a 2nd reading and was placed on the calendar pending the 3rd reading. The vote is expected soon. This bill is supported by the Restaurant and Retail Associations. The American Heart Association continues to employ various tactics to detour this legislation. The Alabama OTF sent a letter opposing the bill.

Teresa Johnson, Glenda Avery, and Misty Cousins presented information from the work completed by Troy University in Union Springs, AL through a HRSA grant. The grant funded a wellness coordinator to have a focused approach in Union Springs Elementary School. The pre-grant intervention description of the school environment included an unimplemented wellness policy, overcrowded PE classes, minor nutrition information shared in science class, lack of parental involvement, cookie fundraisers, food-based rewards for good behavior, and physical activity-based punishments for misbehavior. The post intervention description in two years revealed many positive changes, including: a school garden, increased health lessons in PE classes, school field days, teacher role modeling, and parental involvement. The Power point slides are available on the OTF web page.

Sara Byard from the River Region Obesity Task Force reported that each of the five River Region counties completed the [CDC CHANGE assessment](#). This assessment is directed toward the community, the worksite, institutions, schools, and health care settings. It has specific questions in the areas of demographics, physical activity, nutrition, tobacco, chronic disease management, and leadership. The assessment results revealed that all 5 areas met less than 60%. These results will be used to develop an action plan.

Verna Gates updated the group on the three press releases sent for the AL OTF. She also encouraged members to befriend the [AL OTF on Facebook](#).

Rebecca Kinney of the [Birmingham Celiac Disease Support Group](#) suggested efforts for the AL OTF to partner with them in addressing empty calorie foods.

Linda Knol requested help from AL OTF members to collect data on prices of local produce during the upcoming summer and fall seasons. The data will be used in a research study conducted by one of her students. The study will review the average costs of produce across the state at specific times of the year to determine projected costs for consuming the recommended number of servings each day. A long-range goal of this study is to advocate elimination of state sales taxes on produce.

Committee workgroups met and discussed current issues and projects within their individual committees. Ending verbal reports were presented to the entire AL OTF group. Refer to Committee Goals attachment on the web for details.

I. Advocacy- Dennis Pillion, Michael Jackson

- The group will strive to develop a memo of understanding in identifying advocacy issues for the AL OTF. A position/policy statement will be

developed by November 2011. The group expressed a desire to work closely with local obesity task forces.

2. Communication- Verna Gates, Lashanna Tripp
 - Some of our group materials are labeled with State Obesity Task Force, and others have Alabama Obesity Task Force. The communications committee reviewed the names and determined that the official name is Alabama Obesity Task Force.
 - The Committee is working on a logo design. The logo needs to portray a positive message for nutrition and physical activity.
 - Pre- and post-meeting releases were sent to newspapers throughout AL.
 - The AL OTF website is currently housed on the ADPH page at no cost. Ideas about updating the website were discussed.
 - A statewide media list was developed for releases.
 - Members were asked to send information and potential quotes to be used in future releases.

3. Community- Kathe Briggs, Kathy Shuleva
 - A Wellness Toolkit is being developed as a resource for AL employers to use. The Wellness Toolkit document is on Google Platform to review. Members were assigned chapters of the Toolkit to revise and edit. The hopes are that the draft will be ready by August 2011 so that they can be presented along with other states' toolkits in the Tuscaloosa meeting in September 2011.
 - The committee will continue to make strives to enhance community promotion. The committee's goal is to track community activities on the OTF website by requesting community groups to post activity information on the site. The committee will combine efforts with communications committee to make the website more easily available for other obesity task force groups.

4. Data- Linda Knol, Richard Sinsky
 - The group is working on two projects:
 - A dental project with ADPH to analyze the height and weight collected, and
 - Data from schools with new PE policy of collecting height and weight statewide. Discussions were made to start with SDOE.

5. Health Care Provider- Janice Smiley, Felecia Fish
 - The group plans to help health care providers identify tools. Conference calls have been established. AL Chapter AAP has agreed to help OTF with developing plans in reaching pediatricians. By asking what doctors wants and what they need through a survey, AAP will help create a plan of reaching doctors on what they need. Fall AAP meeting and regional meetings can assist in moving the message forward.

6. Membership- Heather Whitley
 - New member letters will be sent to all new members from the chair.

7. Student Engagement- Thomas Maple, Sheena Quizon
 - The group wants to create a handout containing various nutrient-dense foods that can be donated to help during both the April tornado victims and those in future emergency situations.
 - Two ongoing projects within the group were discussed: recruiting more members and promoting campus-wide events. AU had a 5 K run last month. The group discussed the need to publicize the committee within the task force and also recruit instructors for membership.

8. Youth and Family- Scott Silver, Maranda Swanson
 - The committee's goal is to create a model wellness policy for state-wide school use. Jefferson County CPPW grant team members are planning to participate. School meals, physical activity, and environment are aspects that will be included in the policy. A State Board of Education staff member, Valerie Smitherman, joined the group and will help with project.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

- Aug.17, 2011
- Nov 16, 2011

Alabama Obesity Task Force Board and Committees 2011

- Heather Whitley – Chair
- Michael Jackson- Chair Elect
- Bonnie Spear- Past Chair
- Dennis Pillion
- Felecia Fish
- Janice M Smiley
- Kathe Briggs
- Kathy Shuleva
- Lashanna Tripp
- Linda Knol
- Miranda Swanson
- Richard Sinsky
- Sheena Quizon
- Scott Silver
- Thomas Maple
- Verna Gates
- Mim Gaines (non-voting)