

Alabama Obesity Task Force
November 16, 2011
Botanical Gardens, Ireland Room

Heather Whitley welcomed members and guests. The conference addressed emerging hunger and physical activity issues surrounding obesity that affect our communities' health. Dr Linda Knol, Associate Professor at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, laid the foundation with an overview of the connection of food insecurity and obesity. Ms. Kathryn Strickland, Community Food Security Director of the Food Bank of North Alabama (FBNA) in Huntsville, explained the importance of a food council. She outlined the steps taken in Huntsville and at the state level is starting food councils in Alabama. Grant Brigham, Jones Valley Executive Director, reviewed the steps taken in North Carolina to build their successful food council. Don Wambles, Director of the State of Alabama Farmers Market Authority, reviewed considerations needed in choosing methods to get healthy food in the community, with explanations of what a farmer's market is and what is it not. Sam Crawford, Director of Business Growth at Main Street, presented making food access possible in a business format, stressing the economic importance to a town's stability. The meeting was concluded with Nisa Miranda, Alabama Trails Commission Board, providing an overview of Alabama's physical activity sites and plans for a central data base detailing physical activity venues. (Available speaker Powerpoint presentations are posted on the web page.)

After the noon break, the OTF workgroups convened. The following are reports that were given at the end of the workgroup time.

Data:

- Height and weight data collections at specific elementary schools are being collected through the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH). The Data Committee will continue to work closely with this.
- Four UA graduate student projects are focused on fact sheet development. These include: obesity rates, breastfeeding, fruit and vegetable intake, and food access. These completed fact sheets will be reviewed by the OTF communications committee and will have the OTF logo on them.
- A data directory for researchers will be developed and posted on the Obesity Task Force web page.

Healthcare:

- Alabama pediatric survey responses were received. They will be reviewed carefully to identify what MDs are requesting. The committee will use this to

make a tool kit. Plans are being discussed to attend the AL Chapter AAP meeting next year

- One future goal is to reach out to school nurses.

Community:

- Work on the work site wellness manual continues. A face to face meeting was held in October. Another working meeting is scheduled in December to discuss chapters; a conference call is scheduled for January 2012.

Student:

- At Auburn University, two meetings with approximately 30 interested students were held. Efforts will continue to reach out to other schools on the AU campus. In addition, outreach efforts will include freshman and sophomore level students instead of only senior level students.
- At the University of Alabama, students created a twitter account in order to send evidence-based nutritional messages. Each message includes a challenge action step. The name for the account is "One a Day- UA". A health student will be creating a graphic.

Youth and Family:

- Jennifer Ropa is the interim chair.
- Work in Jefferson County includes developing wellness implementation guidelines. They are working with several schools to implement the tools as a pilot. The goal is to share this with the rest of the state.
- A meeting has been requested for the 2nd week of December.

Advocacy:

- New members are being recruited. Debbie Morrison will be the co-chair.
- The committee revisited the goals and will concentrate on writing select resolution statements. These can be linked to the topics from the data fact sheets. In addition, they will work with the student committee for needed back up documentation.

Communication:

- Heather Whitley appeared on Fox 6.
- Verna blogged about the meeting.
- A new goal for next year is work with the past chair and co chair to proof the policy manual.

- The Birmingham Botanical Gardens Earth day committee would like to work with OTF to do a Seed to Plate presentation on May 5. They need speakers and hands on activities. Debbie will contact Frank Stitt. Bree Garrett needs to be contacted because of her work with this at Jones Valley.