

Obesity Task Force Meeting Minutes
May 31, 2012
AL Power Company WaterCourse Building
Clanton, AL



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.”

Michael Jackson, Chair, welcomed the group followed by introductions.

Michael provided a review of the goals for the Alabama Task Force, and emphasized local support and local success stories needed.

A review of new committees and Board restructure included combining the present Youth and Family Committee with the Action for Healthy Kids Coalition. Mary Martin Nordness provided background on the Alabama Action for Health Kids Coalition. The two groups have very similar objectives. To reduce duplication and gain more effectiveness, the Board recommended combining these two groups into one committee. The group will be referred to as Healthy Kids. Mary Martin agreed to be the chair of the committee.

The second change was the creation of a new committee to address food systems issues. Jennifer Ropa, current chair of the Youth and Family, expressed interest in developing a committee to address sustainable food systems issues and advance regional environmental health, as it pertains to obesity. Coordination and networking will occur with the Alabama Food Policy Council and local/regional councils, such as Jefferson, Huntsville, Lee, and Montgomery Councils. Producing educational materials concerning food policy issues will be the first task.

These changes will result in a bylaws change.

Caroline Dunn, University of Alabama master’s level student, provided her thesis findings on the taxation of fruits and vegetables. She thanked the OTF for help in gathering the data needed from grocery stores across Alabama. Caroline stated that Mississippi and Alabama are the only two states to have level taxation (4%) on all foods regardless of the type of food. Caroline pointed out that when salaries increase, an increase in fruit and vegetables does not automatically follow. She provided several solutions in assisting the general population to consume more fruits and vegetables. Power point slides are available.

Dianne Lollar provided information on two initiatives that addressed food access. The first was from an educational opportunity for her to help Cuba with sustainable food concepts and planting. The second was as a result of a local grant from Share Our Strength, which funded grocery store interventions. A tour, followed by web based menus and phone applications resulted in increased skills in purchasing and preparing produce.

Announcements from the floor included a request for a member of the Task Force to serve on the Cancer Coalition. Interested members should contact Michael Jackson who will follow up with the Coalition.

Heather Whitley, Membership Chair, welcomed the first time guests and provided an explanation of the committee breakout sessions. Each committee chair briefly shared an overview of the plans for the session. Heather worked with new members in selecting committees in which to participate.

Michael Jackson reconvened the group for committee progress reports and adjourned the meeting. The next meeting will be August 14, 2012 in Clanton.
(<http://www.adph.org/obesity/Default.asp?id=3340>)