

## **Tobacco-Free Coalition Meeting – December 3, 2008**

### **Health Disparities Group**

Summary of remarks and input given during the Health Disparities Sub-group at the Tobacco Free Jeffco Meeting of Dec 3, 2008. In Attendance: Alma Sandoval, Ed Ellis, TPI; Glen Most, Program Director at Exempla West Pines; Joanne Ouellette, CASH Co-Chair

Two health disparities groups were chosen out of the list: Substance Abuse/Mental Health and Low Socio-Economic Status. The consensus was that these groups not only represented those in high need but are also naturally inclusive with the other disparities groups as well.

In the area of Mental/Health and Substance Abuse:

There continues to be a high need to educate the providers in the research that validates tobacco dependence as a true addiction and the need to deal with it in a systematic way within the mental health and substance abuse treatment settings. There should be more investigation into how the pharmaceutical companies could financially support these endeavors. Glen Most committed to provide the TPI team a list of the representatives of these companies that he works with to begin this process. Dr. Most also volunteered to speak with other providers in the county about his feelings on this topic and how he has successfully implemented this into Exempla West Pines.

Along with educating providers, it was agreed that clients would also be educated as to the nature of tobacco dependence and why quitting tobacco in conjunction with their other drug(s) of choice is critical to their overall recovery. After much discussion it was agreed that in both areas the materials used for clients should be customized to meet their needs in the area of readability and offering all materials in English and Spanish.

In the area of Low Socio-Economic Status:

First and foremost it was agreed that in order to truly meet the needs of this group, there should be a system whereby focus groups could be established and the affected groups could have meaningful input on the strategies to be pursued. It was also agreed that incentives for attendance at these meetings should be budgeted for to ensure broad, representative input.

Regarding the discussion of how to involve the community into helping in this area, it was agreed that Dr. Most would recruit volunteers and Joanne would communicate with CASH about what is being done in this area and getting feedback from them for our review. The importance of this group reaching out and building a community coalition to specifically work in this area can not be overemphasized.

As strategies are developed, we agreed that all options should be on the table, with emphasis on customizing materials for this group, and when discussing health or financial concerns looking at the traditional as well as non-traditional offerings. For example, there was a lot of discussion on offering classes not only on tobacco/SHS topics but on general financial management and general wellness as well. Tobacco cessation should not only address the physical challenges but the emotional and social challenges as well with a broad scope of the traditional and alternative.