



Organization: Healthy Horizons- a Healthy Maine Partnership in Waterville, ME

Contact: Tina Chapman

Q: What did you change a law, a regulation, an ordinance, a policy or other?

A: The Dorchester County Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA) created a School Dance/Activities subcommittee. The purpose of the subcommittee was to communicate with the superintendent of schools, board of education and high school principals to assist them in preventing underage drinking at school dances and activities. CMCA was able to facilitate the creation of a policy that allows school officials to test students with preliminary breath test devices and outlines consequences for a student who is found to be under the influence of alcohol.

Q: Where did the idea to make the change originate?

A: The idea originated based upon the results of the CMCA Young Adult Survey and information members of the subcommittee had received from high school students who were fed up with attending dances where other students arrived drunk or under the influence of alcohol.

Q: What elected or other government officials did you meet with to accomplish this change? And at what point(s) in the process did you meet with them?

A: We did not meet with any elected or government officials directly. However, the CMCA Board includes a county commissioner. The county commissioner was extremely supportive of the efforts of the subcommittee.

Q: What materials did you use to make your case that the change was necessary and would produce the desired results?

A: The subcommittee used the Young Adult Survey and the Discipline, Philosophy, Policy and Procedures of the Board of Education. With these two documents, the subcommittee drafted a plan to purchase, train and have a policy in place to allow the high school principal and vice principal to use a preliminary breath test device if a student was on school premises and suspected to be under the influence of alcohol. A letter, drafted and endorsed by the superintendent of schools, was sent home to every student's parent/guardian. The letter outlined the procedures for use of the preliminary breath test.

Q: Through what system/process did you make your change?

A: The subcommittee made this change through the Board of Education and local public high schools. However, the biggest change was that the students followed through with the expectation that their prom would be alcohol free.

Q: Who were your allies in making this change?

A: Our allies were the Board of Education, Dorchester County Public High Schools, the Cambridge City Police Department, the Dorchester County Sheriff's Department and the Town of Hurlock Police Department.

Q: Who opposed this change?

A: There was no one who opposed this change.

Q: Did you testify in front of local boards or state governing bodies?

A: Testimony was provided by: Amy Craig, CMCA Member and Subcommittee Chairperson; Nancy Shockley, the Director of the Dorchester County Local Management Board; and Pat Doyle, Cambridge City Police Lieutenant.

The topic of the testimony was to outline the research and planning conducted by the subcommittee, as well as the plan that was developed to allow for the use of the preliminary breath tests at school dances/activities.

Q: Did you participate in media advocacy to make your change?

A: Press Releases were done for the local newspapers.

Q: Please describe in detail the outcome of your change.

A: Due to the subcommittee's efforts, the Board of Education's no tolerance policy was enforced. There were no incidences of alcohol use at either of the two public high schools' junior/senior proms held in May 2004.

Q: Any other comments about your environmental change that you wish to share.

A: Through the hard work of the subcommittee, the public high schools implemented the letter to parents/guardians as a year-round initiative, instead of an initiative specific to dances/activities.