

**LowCountry Alliance for Healthy Youth
Community Board Meeting Minutes
August 19, 2023
Bluffton High School Media Center and Via Zoom**

Meeting called to order 6:00pm by Jim Berl, Treasurer, in the absence of Wendy Cummings, Chair.

Approval of Minutes: May meeting minutes were approved. (motion by Galen Sturup Gameau and seconded by Francine Tobin)

Attendance: Francine Norz Tobin (Government Sector/Solicitor’s Office), Dr. Loretta Novince (LCAHY/DFC Grant Consultant and Principal DFC Grant Investigator), Galen Sturup Comeau (Substance Abuse Government Agency/BCADAD), David Martin (Business Sector), Geoffrey Lawson (Faith-Based Sector/Grace Bible Church), Susie Maurer (Health Care/Nurse), Jennifer Weitekamper (Schools/Hilton Head High School THY advisor, Dr. Ronda Stevens (Health Sector/Wright Directions), Sharon Brown (Schools/THY Bluffton), Alayne Lawson (Schools/USCB College of Education), Jim Berl (Youth Serving Organizations/Island Rec Center), Cheryl Rodriguez (Parent Sector), April Small (Bluffton High School THY Co-Advisor), Cara Vercellone (Civic Sector/Bluffton Rotary), David Martin (Business Sector), Jill Lutz (School Sector/HHCA THY Advisor), Ellen Andreoletti (Parent Sector/Bluffton High School), Erin Pawlak (Health Sector/Behavioral Wellness Group), Sgt. Lancaster (Law Enforcement/Bluffton PD), Sophia Blackwell (Youth Sector/ HHCA THY), Kyra Pasquaone (Youth Sector/Bluffton HS THY), Claudia Barrienos (Youth Sector/Bluffton HS THY), Aviana Stevens (Youth Sector/Bluffton HS THY), Ben Vaught (Youth Sector/Bluffton HS THY) Staff: Laura Pirkey (DFC Grant Program Director and Youth Coalition Coordinator). Kathy Brookshire and McKenzie Guerrero (DFC Grant Co-Coordinators), Ethan Barrera (Intern/USCB Student) Guest Speakers: Bluffton PD Chief of Police, Joseph Babkiewicz and (WSAV TV representative, Jim Ziska)

**PRESENTATION BY CHIEF BABKIEWICZ
TOWN OF BLUFFTON NAMES LCAHY A RECIPIENT
OF THE TOWN’S OPIOD SETTLEMENT FUNDS**

Dr. Novince introduced Bluffton PD Chief Joseph Babkiewicz who presented on the Opioid Settlement Fund awarded to the Town of Bluffton and the Town’s proposed uses. The allotment that Bluffton Police received is just over \$25,000 every year for 19 years. Based on inputs provided to the Police Department about the needs in our community, the Chief stated that the Town believes a winning grant strategy is to focus on Prevention Programs as our Core Abatement Strategy, specifically the efforts of media campaigns and medical provider education and outreach programs. They chose to give LCAHY \$10,400.96 to create a social media campaign targeting youth about the dangers of medicine misuse, opioids, and fentanyl. Beaufort County First Responders Project is being given \$20,000 for outreach and training programs. [See link to PPT.](#)

**PRESENTATION BY JIM ZISKA, WSAV
SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN INTRODUCTION**

Dr. Novince introduced Jim Ziska, WSAV, who will promote LCAHY’s PSA messaging created by our College Interns, Ethan Barrera, USCB marketing major, and Ella McCarthy, College of Charleston marketing major. She further explained that LCAHY Summer Interns (Aya Banigbe (Cross THY), Ashlyn Elrod (May River THY), Sophia and Juliet Blackwell (HHCA THY), and Avi Stevens (Bluffton HS THY) reviewed the scripts and gave feedback. Jim gave an introduction to YouTube True View and Streaming Audio that WSAV will produce, which will target zip codes in Southern Beaufort County. [See](#)

[link](#). He read the scripts, which the Chief then approved. The release date is September 2024. Jim noted that LCAHY PSAs on fentanyl and the misuse/dangers of prescription drugs are currently streaming on WSAV TV and Facebook.

DFC Support Program Grant Update

Dr. Novince announced that the Sustainability Plan had been submitted and the DFC Support Program Grant has been approved for Grant year 8, September 30, 2024 – September 29, 2025.

12-Month Action Plan Updates/Ad-Hoc Committee Reports

Teens for Healthy Youth

Bluffton High School Teens for Healthy Youth (THY) Representatives, Aviana Stevens, Claudia Barrientos and Kyra Pasqualone reported that THY Bluffton High are focused on recruiting new Teens for Healthy Youth members at Bluffton High School for the 2024-2025 school year. They recruited members during the Open House and held an interest meeting. They are also planning activities for September National Suicide Awareness Month to educate their peers. Students also made a bulletin board to educate their peers on how to manage Back to School stress in positive ways and share Back to School Stress Fact Card.

HHCA THY Sophia Blackwell, Teens for Healthy Youth Co-President at Hilton Head Christian Academy, reported that HHCA THY is also working on recruiting new members. They are also planning social media posts for September Suicide Awareness Month. THY HHCA will participate in The American Suicide Prevention Walk "Out of the Darkness" on Sunday Nov. 3rd, 2024, at Old Oyster Factor Park. All THY Groups will participate and have an informational table during the event.

Town of Hilton Head Includes Electronic Smoking Devices in the Current Smoking Regulations

Ben Vaught, LCAHY 2023 Summer Intern, announced that the proposal to include electronic smoking devices in the current smoking regulation presented by Jill Campanella, JP Pirkey, Amber VanHorn, and himself in July 2023 was accepted unanimously, 7-0, on July 2024 by the Town of Hilton Head Town Council. [See link](#).

Introduction to LCAHY/THY 2024 Summer Interns

Dr. Novince announced the 2024 LCAHY/THY Summer Interns who served under her preceptorship: Avi Stevens (Bluffton HS THY), Ashlyn Elrod (May River THY), Sophia and Juliet Blackwell (Hilton Head Christian THY) and Aya Banigbe (Cross Schools THY). She reported that the interns will present their projects at a future meeting.

LCAHY Faith Based Breakfast

Pastor Lawson, Faith-Based CIA and pastor of Grace Bible Church, chaired the LCAHY faith-based breakfast, titled, "The Role that Faith-Based Organizations Play in Promoting the Health and Wellness of our Youth." Pastor Lawson and Dr. Novince presented a summary of the event. Dr. Novince reported that she gave a brief overview of LCAHY and THY and introduced the attendees to LCAHY website resources. Pastor Lawson then facilitated a conversation around the role that their respective churches plan in promoting the health and wellness of youth. LCAHY Summer Interns Ashley Elrod, Juliet Blackwell and Aviana Stevens presented a call to Action, asking all churches and youth ministries to support Teens for Healthy Youth with their mission of promoting positive teen health through faith-based protection. During the PowerPoint presentation, Pastor Lawson shared the fact card created by Aya Banigbe, Strength and Scripture: The Power of Faith and Mental Health, which was distributed to attendees. He remarked that the messaging was excellent. [See link](#). He then reported that the attendees participated in a Protective Factor Survey that addressed existing protective factors in our communities. [See link to PPT](#), which compares the attendees' responses to LCAHY Board responses surveyed at the April Board meeting. He also noted that attendees were given a packet of resources and surveyed on

training/resources each needed. An interest in mental health literacy for parents and youth was reported. Dr. Novince is looking into electronic resources that use scripture language to train Youth Ministers and others who work with youth in the faith-based community.

Environmental Scan

Laura Pirkey presented that an environmental scan is planned for gas stations in Hilton Head on Saturday, September 28th, 2024, from 10 AM- 12 PM. More youth volunteers and adult drivers are needed. As a result of the last environmental scan at gas stations in Bluffton, THY members recommended that gas stations need more signage in Spanish. The youth also reported that alcohol is too easy to access at some gas stations. Later in the year, LCAHY and THY plan to do an environmental scan at local vape Stores.

Providing Information/Posting E-News

Laura encouraged the Board to share the E-News and displayed the “Back to School” August E- and noted that this counts as in-kind support as well as being a strategy in the 12 Month Action Plan. Novince reported that the LCAHY/THY Summer Interns highlighted common back to school stressors for teens and that the E-News included resources for parents. It was noted that it is important to include grandparents. [See E-News Link](#). Avi mentioned that during the open house at Bluffton High School, parents were interested in THY/LCAHY and asked questions when they visited the THY resource table. She suggested that LCAHY staff a resource table for parents in the future as was done in previous years. Laura shared that THY is always looking for opportunities to reach out and educate parents.

Other DFC 12 Month Action Plan Updates

Reducing Access at Coligny: David Martin presented that due to the shortage of officers available through the Hilton Head Sheriff’s office during the summer months, he researched private companies to conduct patrols on Coligny. However, his search was not successful; he recommended that the Sheriff’s office be contacted again in the Spring to discuss officer availability.

Respectfully submitted, -- Francine Norz Tobin, Recording Secretary

Scheduled Board Meetings:

October 21, 2024
November 18th, 2024
December - No Meeting
January 13th, 2025
February 10th, 2025
March 17th, 2025
April 21st, 2025
May 12th, 2025