

PROVIDENCE SPF SIG

Interim Community Level Evaluation Report

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OVERVIEW

The Rhode Island SPF is a cooperative agreement between the Governor of the State of Rhode Island and the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration/Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP). The purpose of this cooperative agreement is to:

- Prevent the onset, and reduce the progression, of substance abuse, including underage drinking
- Reduce substance abuse related problems in communities
- Build prevention capacity and infrastructure at the State and community levels

As a result of a comprehensive state-wide needs assessment and state epidemiological profile, priority consequences and related consumption patterns were identified as significant sources of burden to the State of Rhode Island.

The priority consequences for Rhode Island are:

- i) DSM-IV diagnoses of alcohol dependence or abuse
- ii) DSM-IV diagnoses of drug dependence or abuse

Related consumption patterns identified for Rhode Island were:

- i) Underage drinking in general
- ii) Underage and young adult binge drinking in particular
- iii) Use of marijuana and other illicit drugs by 9th – 12th graders

SCOPE OF WORK IDENTIFIED BY PROVIDENCE

Providence Mayor's Substance Abuse Council (MSAPC), after engaging in local data, capacity, and readiness assessment, has chosen the following consequence and consumption patterns to address on the local level:

Priority consequence:

DSM-IV diagnoses of alcohol dependence or abuse

Related consumption patterns:

Underage drinking in general

EVALUATION OF PROVIDENCE SPFSIG

Conducting independent community evaluations of sub-recipient communities is a condition of funding from CSAP. Community evaluations will be aggregated and reported on at the State level evaluation team, the Community Research and Services Team (CRST) of the University of Rhode Island.

The SPF is explicitly designed to implement a set of five inter-related steps:

1. Assessment
2. Capacity building
3. Strategic planning
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation

This interim evaluation report will address SPF Steps 1 through 4, with the exception of sustainability issues, which will be addressed at the end of the grant period. Information included in this report were collected through both qualitative and quantitative data, including the Monthly Environmental Strategy Tracking Instrument (MESTI); Community Fidelity Assessment Rubric (CFAR) for fidelity adhering to steps 1 through 4 (Tables 4, 6, 8, and 10) as reported by Datacorp and by CRST; Community Level Instrument (CLI) as reported by MSAPC; key informant interviews conducted by Datacorp with Caitlin Thomas-Henckel, the Director of MSAPC, Stephanie O'Keefe, ATOD Coordinator; and Doreen Vanacore, Media Specialist.

In addition to the above data collection, as part of reporting on the progress of Step 4: Implementation, as requested by CRST, the fidelity measure for the environmental strategies were completed using CFAR Table 13 and Appendix C for each implemented strategy. These findings will be incorporated into the section below covering the implementation step.

ASSESSMENT

Community Level Data

- ⦿ To what extent did the communities act with fidelity to the State's intentions regarding the gathering of additional community level data to supplement state produced profiles?
 - With the unexpected and unfortunate cessation of the SALT survey, Providence, along with all other Rhode Island communities, lost an extremely valuable source of youth behavior data.
 - As such, MSAPC has applied for Drug-Free Community funding. Included in this grant are plans to collect data from youth through a local after school program. If funding is granted, the youth risk and protective factor survey will be conducted in November 2009, and will provide information on the NOMS four core measures.
 - This will be the only data collection of its kind of Providence middle school youth, and will be a valuable resource for subsequent programs and grant applications.

Risk and Protective Factors

- ⦿ Which specific risk and protective factors were identified by the community as locally associated with the state's consumption and consequence priorities?
 - Providence is home to over 20 public middle and high schools, as well as various public and private universities and colleges.
 - As such, underage drinking is of a particular concern, and youth access to alcohol, via both retail and social means, is a major risk factor that MSAPC addresses through their SPFSIG plan.
 - In addition to addressing youth access as a risk factor, MSAPC also promotes parental monitoring as a protective factor through their social media campaign.

CAPACITY BUILDING/MOBILIZATION

Organizational Capacity

- ⦿ Did the SPF build coalition/community capacity?
 - MSAPC is very active in building and continuously developing coalition capacity
 - Each September, MSAPC conducts a self-evaluation of their coalition by administering a survey adapted from the Community Toolbox (developed by University of KS) to measure coalition effectiveness, identify areas of strength, and determine areas to strengthen.
 - MSAPC has conducted trainings on ATOD issues to further educate its members about substance abuse issues
 - MSAPC has conducted trainings on capacity building with its council members
 - MSAPC has recruited additional members to increase and diversify membership
 - MSAPC continuously applies for additional grant funding as a way to establish sustainability and build upon the scope of work outlined in their SPFSIG goals

Community Capacity

- ⦿ Have coalitions increased their capacity to address sub-population differences at the community level?
 - MSAPC has diversified its membership, recruiting from various sectors and sub-populations of the community from which they did not have representation at the start of SPFSIG funding:
 - Business
 - Faith
 - Human Services
 - College Administration
 - Ethnic minorities

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Community

- ④ Is each community strategic plan ultimately approved?
 - MSAPC identified the following strategies that were approved by Linda Barovier
 - Media
 - Compliance Checks
 - In addition, Crystelle Egan from the CRST identified the following additional strategy as being conducted by MSAPC
 - Media Advocacy
 - MSAPC is also very active in advocating for policy changes at the local and state levels, and their significant progress will be documented as additional information later in this report.

Sub-population

- ④ Do community plans specifically address sub-population needs?
 - MSAPC has identified two sub-populations within Providence, the Hispanic population and the college population, and has successfully taken various steps to ensure that the needs of the two sub-populations are met.
 - College Population
 - MIT was invited to address alcohol issues in the college populations to ten universities and colleges
 - Orientation was conducted with Providence College to establish a relationship
 - MSAPC is currently preparing to provide safe service training to college social hosts. This training will include information regarding the social host law, as well as basic education about issues with underage drinking and harm reduction
 - MSAPC is preparing to support schools in administering assessment to determine their needs in the coming year

- Hispanic Population
 - Recently, MSAPC hired a bilingual Spanish speaking staff member who is currently undergoing RBS training.
 - In addition, this staff member is translating all RBS materials into Spanish, in preparation to do outreach with the Spanish-speaking business community, who may not be aware that RBS training is required by law, and is available at no-charge to the business.

IMPLEMENTATION

Fidelity

- Ⓢ Are programs implemented with fidelity, that is, at the planned dose strength and delivered to the number and kind of intended participants?
 - MSAPC actively implements all their proposed strategies and programs with high fidelity. In addition, fidelity ratings from both the local evaluator and CRST for SPFSIG steps one through four have been consistently rated highly for MSAPC.
 - Social Norms Campaigns/Social Marketing/Mass Media: MSAPC's social norms and media campaign targets Underage Drinking, and they implement media strategies with high fidelity, with a written plan, focus group testing of their advertisement, and research of local data.
 - Compliance Checks: MSAPC has established a strong relationship with the Providence Police to implement compliance checks with high fidelity, and has been actively involved in how the compliance checks are conducted.
 - Media Advocacy: MSAPC shows high fidelity in their efforts to have strong relationships with various media contacts. They continuously strive to improve and hone their message so that it is clear, impressionable, and timely.
 - Policy: MSAPC has been extremely active in policy change, and has successfully passed ordinances since the start of the SPFSIG funding. They currently have various policy changes pending, being voted on, or being prepared.

Environmental Strategies

- ④ What particular array of environmental strategies is proposed and what implementation steps were accomplished for each?
- ④ Social Norms Campaigns/Social Marketing/Mass Media:
 - MSAPC has hired Doreen Vanacore, a Media Specialist, to oversee the very active media campaign that is launched against underage drinking.
 - The focus of their campaign against underage drinking has been to promote healthy, positive behavior, addressing their message to youth and their parents, through the voice of the youth in Providence.
 - MSAPC created public service announcements by inviting youth to become the “voice” of the community. Youth were invited to a studio and were asked to discuss issues regarding underage drinking among their peers. The discussion was recorded and edited to create three versions of a public service announcement, using the youth’s own words to send a message that will resonate with their peers.
 - Bus shelter ads were established in both English and Spanish, with messages focusing on the youth’s point of view on how to curb underage drinking. For example, one bus shelter advertisement is a message from a teen saying “you’ve told us not to drink, now tell us *why*” – sending a message to the parents that in communicating with teens, it is important to state why a certain behavior is not condoned.
 - Radio commercials have also aired focusing on the same message of rewarding positive behavior, and telling the message from the youth perspective.
 - MSAPC has recognized the effectiveness of reaching out to the Spanish speaking community via the radio, and has applied for funding to implement radio programming on Spanish radio channels that will inform the community about underage drinking issues, and educate parents on how to discuss the topic with their teens.
 - MSAPC has found through focus groups and informal interviews with youth that youth prefer to get their information from websites rather than paper materials.

- In addition, they found that the older members of the Hispanic communities are not always literate in English, and that culturally, they prefer their news source through the local Spanish radio stations.
- Therefore, MSAPC decided not to allocate resources on paper-based advertisements, but instead focus their resources on the media channels used more frequently by the members of its community.
- Website development is currently in progress. The MSAPC website is constantly undergoing changes as it builds more pages and expands on the links they currently have available.

⦿ Media Advocacy

- MSAPC has established a very strong relationship with the city newspaper, Providence Journal. Providence Journal has covered various events hosted or supported by MSAPC, and consistently reports on the findings and results of MSAPC efforts.
- MSAPC recognizes the importance of keeping current on local news, research findings on ATOD, and advertisements created by alcohol and tobacco industries. Pertinent information collected through monitoring various sources of media is used to improve on their campaign against underage drinking.
- MSAPC recognizes the importance of linking the message to local data so that the information is relevant to the target audience. They have been actively seeking funding to administer surveys on youth risk behavior through their own agency, and collaborate with various local colleges and universities to obtain access to statistics they have collected about their students.

⦿ Compliance Checks

- Most recently, with the approaching start of the school year, MSAPC staff members have been working with the police to prepare to do a ride along as the police conduct compliance checks as students arrive on campus.
- Providence Police conducts compliance checks throughout Providence. Rather than plan out a standard route, the choices of retail locations have been made based on particular areas that are

known to be problematic (e.g., MSAPC requested checks in the Elmhurst area, where there are higher percentage of underage alcohol access by college students), or in response to information provided about recent activities.

- Providence Police recruits underage youth as part of their compliance checks, and in-person training is provided so that the youths have received proper training prior to starting the process.
- As Providence Police conducts compliance checks, any alcohol citations are documented, reported, and shared with MSAPC, and the information is also shared with the Hospitality Research Partnership, which is attended by many retail business owners. In addition, the police officers who conduct the compliance checks directly report their hours to MSAPC utilizing the same reporting tool used by MSAPC to document SPFSIG activities.

④ Policy

- Passed city ordinance to charge fines for public drinking. Before, first offenses had no specific fines or penalties attached to the charge. Now, people who are charged for the first time with public drinking may face fines of \$100-500, and/or imprisonment of not fewer than 3 days and not more than 30 days, and/or 10 to 30 days of community service
- Bouncer Ordinance was passed, which mandates that job specific training must occur for any employee hired as a bouncer. This includes training in fake identification and underage drinking education.
- There are pending policies which are currently being written or proposed and awaiting voting. This includes ordinances to double fines when retail business serves alcohol to minors, and to stagger closing hours of nightclubs, thereby alleviating the disturbances caused by all the nightclubs closing all at once.
- Recently, the Board of Licenses voted and adopted the plan to establish pre-hearings, so that club owners facing hearings for liquor violations can be contacted to settle the dispute prior to the hearing date; this process will conserve money, time, and personnel resources

HIGHLIGHTS

Most notably, MSAPC developed a three year strategic plan in 2008 for their council. This is a comprehensive plan to address the continued development of the council as a whole, and looks at how to improve on the strengths of the council over the course of three years. The coalition also conducts self-evaluations of their organization each year, and creates a report that is delivered to the Mayor's office and shared with other interested parties.

Developing a strong organization is a key element when striving for community-level changes and MSAPC's dedication to strengthen its organization as a whole is clearly a reflection of their commitment to substance abuse prevention in the city of Providence.

In addition to having strong leadership and a dedicated staff, MSAPC also has established a very strong relationship with two youth leadership organizations in the area, Young Voices, and Youth Pride. These youth organizations prepare youths to become powerful advocates for issues that influence their lives. MSAPC has worked closely with both groups and these youth have become active participants of the coalition as youth representatives and as the PSA voices. By lending their voices and using their own words, these youths have brought a genuine voice to the message delivered by MSAPC.

MSAPC recognizes that Providence is home to many universities and colleges, and therefore has an increased number of "transient" underage residents (in the form of college students) during academic semesters. As such, they have done extensive outreach to the local higher education institutions in order to coordinate prevention and education work geared to these part-time Providence residents.