

PREVENTION IS THE ANSWER

NORTH CAROLINA SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

January 2009 – Historic Elections Occur

Membership Applications and Nominations, mailed in December 2008, were returned and the elections were set for the new year. Twenty-three members organization paid graduated dues and received ballots to vote in the first substance abuse prevention organization election. The results were compiled and plans for this initial meeting were developed. An organization is born!

January 2008 – PITA II and June 2008 – PITA III

The Steering Committee began work to determine the need for a substance abuse specific prevention organization association. These events were well-attended (90+) and included both updates on policies and service delivery issues. There were also discussions about provider issues, educational needs and areas of concern for providers that were not being addressed by any other organizations. At each event, prevention providers continued to express the need for events that celebrate their unique identity and to work toward addressing shared problems. Excited individuals formed and began meeting in Statewide Committees; these groups were created to address specific constituent needs:

The volunteer Steering Committee began the process of creating infrastructure. The North Carolina Substance Abuse Prevention Providers Association was incorporated and bylaws were developed. Following a retreat in October 2008, a plan for soliciting members organizations and holding elections to seat the initial Board of Directors was developed.

June 2007 – Prevention is the Answer Inaugural Event is held for Prevention Leadership

That spring, Governor's Institute staff sent letters of invitation for the inaugural Prevention is the Answer (PITA), providers' association symposium. Held at the Embassy Suites in Cary, NC on June 19-20, people attended to "Unite and to proactively chart the future of our field." Issues of policy, funding workforce and leadership were addressed by speakers. A special guest was state Representative Marian N. McLawhorn who addressed the symposium on the second day and spoke on "What Makes a Difference to a Legislator?" Each participant completed a questionnaire about ways that they would like to commit to addressing the development of a statewide organization. Steering Committee volunteers were then contacted by the Governor's Institute on Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Inc.

January 2007 – Substance Abuse Providers Begin to express Need for Organizational Identity

The Inaugural NC Substance Abuse Providers Symposium, coordinated by the Governor's Institute on Alcohol and Substance Abuse, was held at the North Raleigh Hilton. The purpose of the symposium was for "...providers, advocates and other leaders to define and discuss the

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service delivery issues that affect their clients with substance abuse disorders.” The symposium was a response, in part, to mental health reform in NC, and with that, the need to have providers assume more responsibility for addressing the issues affecting them and the clients they serve. The symposium was almost entirely treatment focused. Only Phil Mooring spoke on the program to represent prevention. His speech on “Why is Prevention Critical” was a powerful message about a critical piece of the service delivery continuum. In attendance were Representative Verla Insko, Senator Martin Nesbit, and Mike Moseley, Director of the Division of MHDDSAS. It was an event that succeeded in reminding these leaders that substance abuse providers were a critical constituency. And it highlighted the need for prevention providers to assert their presence.

Phil Mooring and Mary Powell entered into discussion with Division of MHDDSAS staff, including Dr. Janice Petersen, Team Leader for the Division of MHDDSAS’s Office of Prevention, and Flo Stein, Chief of Community Policy Management, about the possibility of holding a prevention specific symposium. An independent planning was formed to organize a summit to be held while the General Assembly was in session in order to invite legislators interested in prevention in their communities.