

Keiki Caucus Meeting Notes
Tuesday - September 19, 2006

The Keiki Caucus meeting was convened in room 229 at the Capitol on Tuesday, September 19, 2006 at 11:30 am. Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland and Rep. Dennis Arakaki presided. In attendance were representatives of all the different private and public organizations that provide services, teach providers and advocate for the needs of children.

The first presentation was by Dr. Patricia Wright of the JABSOM, faculty member in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She gave a progress report on the Perinatal Substance Abuse Clinic. The clinic offers medical, counseling and social services for pregnant women under treatment for substance abuse. The newborn is evaluated and followed in the pediatric component of the clinic. Funding was received from the Legislature last Session with support by HAAP and the Keiki Caucus. The Clinic is held at KMCWC now but will be moved to a Salvation Army facility when funding is released by the State. We will have to support renewed funding in 2007 Session.

The main subject of this meeting was **Bullying/Cyberbullying and Substance Abuse Prevention.**

Bullying and harassment is a widespread problem in schools. It involves not only student to student but also student to teacher and teacher to student. The DOE have no consistent policy on this matter. Schools which teach conflict resolution and emotional skills tend to experience low levels of drug and alcohol abuse, violence, social cruelty, harassment, bullying and eating disorders. What is needed is a statewide school policy, stated in positive terms, modeled by all school staff and administration and communicated and modeled consistently to the students. Details relating to carrying out such a policy can be obtained by contacting Lisa Jensen, lisai@hawaii.edu and the website, www.peacetableproject.com. Information on Cyberbullying can be obtained from Kristen Izumi-Nitao, 587-4114, kristin.e.izumi-nitao@hawaii.gov.

Bullying by school children is seen by Law Enforcement as a precursor to crime as the bullies become young adults. Law Enforcement has an active program to work with schools and communities to prevent bullying in the schools and outside the schools. After school programs, involving Parks and Recreation is another aspect of this approach.

Substance abuse prevention was presented by several speakers. Elaine Wilson, retired social worker, gave an overview of the framework and principles related to substance abuse prevention. This overview goes from the "Public Health Approach" to "Evaluation" in a very logical way, touching all bases. This theoretical approach has been very well worked out. The problem is in implementation which is where the crunch comes. Details of this approach as well as other aspects of the DOH programs may be found on the website, www.hawaii.gov/health under "substance abuse". Virginia Jackson, Supervisor of the Program Development Services Office in DOH, gave a summary of prevention programs located in particular schools throughout the State.

For the DOE, Kendyl Ko and Yvette Achong presented a current inventory of services and future directions. Kendyl Ko is Educational Specialist for Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities and may be reached at 733-9141, ext. 315. A list of federally supported programs which have been shown to be effective and are in place in Hawaii's schools was given. Apparently the starting dates for these programs are not yet available. Statistics show that abuse of drugs has decreased in school aged children. However achievement scores have not gone up. Ko made the interesting point that this generation of children learned from their predecessors that drugs are a bad way to go. Instead they have turned to alcohol, bullying, aggressive behavior and overeating leading to obesity (? suicide) to relieve their feelings of inadequacy and depression.

Perhaps the most interesting presentation of the program was that of Jeffrey Mueller, President/CEO of Recoveryworks. His company, in conjunction with Edgy Lee and professional

consultants, has developed video teaching tools for Substance Abuse, Obesity, Depression and Bullying/Violence. These materials are being used in classrooms, Detention Home and by businesses/corporations. The materials meet the DOE Health Standards Context. There are videos for teacher training. Surveys and assessments are done which show this to be an effective prevention strategy. Since this is a business proposition, there is no fooling around.

Jeffrey may be reached at 221-2299 or <jeff@recoveryworks.net>. The website is www.recoveryworks.net. This site is well worth a visit. Can it be as good as it sounds?

Implications for Legislative Action

1. There will be a need to support the Perinatal Substance Abuse Clinic in the 2007 Session.
2. Watch for bills/legislation which requires DOE to develop a consistent policy and action plan with regard to bullying.
3. Support after school programs.
4. Investigate the activities of Recoveryworks, Inc.
5. Others?