

**Sitka Health Summit planning meeting**  
**November 16, 2007**  
**10:30 am – 12 noon**  
**SEARHC Board Room**

**In attendance:**

Jack Ozment – CBS Assembly  
Charles Bingham – SEARHC Communications  
Anne Williams – Planned Parenthood  
Gretchen Clarke – SEARHC Steps  
Chris Bryner – AMSEA  
Rick Petersen – AMSEA  
Phil Welsh – Sitka Pioneers' Home  
Kendra Poutney – SEARHC  
Frank Sutton – SEARHC  
Jeff Hartshorn – Sitka Hospital Board  
Roald Helgesen – SEARHC  
Nancy Cavanaugh – SEARHC Student Health and CBS Assembly  
Grace Brooks – SEARHC Steps  
Jeff Johnston – UAS Sitka  
Bill Denkinger – Mt. Edgecumbe High School  
John Holst – CBS Assembly  
Doug Osborne – SEARHC Health Promotions  
Gus Adams – Baranof Island Housing  
Chris Tadlock – USCG Air Station Medical Clinic  
Elisabeth Crane – SCH  
Pat Alexander – SEARHC  
Margaret Andrews – Center for Community  
Max Rule – Hames Corporation  
Steve Bradshaw – Sitka School District  
Lee Bennett – SCH  
David Voluck – Youth Advocates of Sitka  
Heather Crondahl – SEARHC Communications  
Paula Scott – Scott Insurance

**Facilitated by** Matthew Turner and Kayla Boettcher of Advancing Our Community – umbrella for efforts of health summit projects.

**Agenda** – look at present (where we've come so far); flashback to past (overview of steps that made last summit happen); future (next summit?)

**Background:** vision is for Sitka to serve AK as model of wellness. Last April was the first summit, 4 priority areas named: create bike and pedestrian friendly community; improve nutritional environment in schools; promote/develop/create community wellness center; bring employers and insurance companies together to improve the health status of employees in Sitka.

Goal was to make advancement on these goals in one year.

## **The Present – updates on 4 areas from 2007 summit, key highlights and key next steps**

### *1. Bring employers and insurance companies together to improve the health status of employees in Sitka – Doug Osborne*

Paula Scott met with several entities – insurance reps, businesses, and community members – to reach goal of improving health status of employees. Focus has been to educate employers about resources available and how to access them; they have the support of Premera Blue Cross in these endeavors also. Sitka Employee Wellness coalition created consisting of representatives of all sized businesses – they meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at Centennial Hall. Doug: 966-8734.

### *2. Create a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community – Matthew Turner*

This is actually two separate things – bike friendly is defined by the League of American Bicyclists, but no specific definition of pedestrian friendly. Decision was to start with bicycle friendly and use that work as model for ped friendly in 2008. CBS applied to Steps for funding to work on this project. Community Ride held August 25, high percentage of population participated. Brought in board member from LAB to train community members and work with CBS staff to look at engineering. A level of service survey happening soon to grade all of Sitka's streets by bikability. LAB provides lots of emphasis on education and enforcement – he trained 5 people in Sitka to be league-certified instructors and now are able to present standardized education to community.

Next Steps: list on [www.sitkaaoc.org](http://www.sitkaaoc.org), follow the bicycles – find the application to be bike friendly and join the forum to discuss current situation. March 28 is application deadline.

Also – Safe Routes to School program: focused on getting kids safely to school by walking or biking within 2-mile radius around elementary and middle schools. Federal funding available through the State to work on improved lighting, crossing guards, etc., but needs group of people who want to work on this, identify key areas to work on, tap into funding and State coordinator to make it happen. Sitka may be further along on making ask for that money than other AK communities. But, no person has stepped up to do this – we need someone to champion that effort here. Matthew: 747-3665.

### *3. Promote/develop/create community wellness center – Kayla Boettcher*

With closure of Sheldon Jackson College, community coalesced around the Hames P.E. Center. A task force has been actively working together to keep it open. Assembly signed lease to keep it open through November; it's on their agenda again for Nov 27 to sign a one-year lease. One year under city operation would provide task force time to find more sustainable long-term solution. Community Schools will manage operations; city staff will monitor engineering needs. Task force will meet on Tuesday, Nov 20 to finalize Assembly packet information. Request for demonstration of community support to Assembly so they adopt this one-year plan. Kayla: 747-3665

### *4. Improve nutritional environment in schools – Grace Brooks*

Steps provided funds to SSD to provide more healthy choices in vending machines. Next – working on hot lunch options. Currently have to pre-package salads because of federal regs – trying to find new solution for that. Also looking at possibility of just having one served lunch instead of pre-packaged choices; but difficulty is that you don't have as many students

participating in those programs. MEHS and UAS have also changed vending option. Grace: 966-8865

*Questions/Comments on reports*

Q: thought part of the insurance thing was to reduce health insurance premiums also?

A: broker said you see reduction over time because you have healthier employees. Long-term goal.

Community Rec – possibility of combining resources, grants for future programming; e.g. diabetes grants.

Commission on Health Needs & Community Services– school nutrition also on their to-do list.

Bikes and benchlands property – cost estimates were high and need to be scaled back; plan includes bike paths, need someone from bike group involved to help make decisions about cuts in a responsible way. Sitka Trail Works – cross trail extension would come through benchlands property, next year getting to Cascade Creek Road – multi-use trail. STW board very interested in benchlands and how that works

**The Past – frame of what went into planning the last summit**

SEARHC and SCH looking to collaborate better and provide higher quality of health care for community. Hospital leaders came up with idea of health summit to get moving and build excitement from there. They invited several key community leaders, and Steps provided some funding. Goal was to build bridges between hospitals and different types of medicine, unifying health message around prevention, and time of celebration – honored groups and individuals for their work toward health.

Budget: \$16,000 in cash, plus in-kind; fed people a lot. Food and speaker were \$9,000; ads \$3,000; sponsors – YMCA, Paula Scott, Premera Blue Cross, Steps, SEARHC, Sitka Medical Center, SCH.

This year, Steps has only \$1,000 for conference. Need to look for more sponsors this year. Some momentum from initial summit to carry this one forward.

**The Future**

Group agrees we should have another summit in 2008.

Who will sponsor? Logistical considerations, content/framework, etc.

Insurance – pharmacy costs are so high; Paula Scott said a good portion of that was for anti-depressants – Sitka high in the nation. Maybe nutrition and impact on mood for a focus?

Suggestion: get public health in as partner.

USCG committed to participate – every one of last year's goals impacts Coast Guard families – can help plan, find sponsorships, etc.

**Vision for next Summit:**

bridge-building (maybe not just hospitals, but new bridges? Connecting with youth?)  
Celebration/recognition  
Unifying message of health (last year's message or altered for this?)  
Planning/Steering – 4 goals from last year may be present, but expanded, change focus, etc.

Individual responses to question: How do you want to direct Steering Committee as they begin planning next health summit?

- Approach each of the health orgs, inc. private, to contribute financially somehow, even a little. I like ideas of broadening nutrition piece. Mental health piece very important and not focusing on that yet at all – open to how nutrition impacts mental health. Also maybe an alternative healing piece.
- Assembly should have member on Steering Committee to talk about financial backing.
- Conduct community inventory of available services. How to help clinical practitioners and prevention people work together better – find ways to incorporate info about resources into clinical visit.
- Food affecting mood; can see food through all four goals of last year too. Maybe have summit at Hames Center. Subsistence food and health.
- Summit should start with broad unifying message of community wellness, allow participants to choose the specific focus
- Create opportunity for high level of public participation at the summit
- Present statistics on Sitka health issues and assets, athletic events, food events
- Bridge building across continuum of ages
- Last year's vision and overarching message is fine; where we go with that may be different; expansion on what we did last year instead of doing something totally new – e.g. expand nutrition out farther.
- Stop smoking, exercise more, eat better: 3 focus from speaker last year; nutrition and exercise two biggest things to help general outlook.
- Too much dependency on pharmaceuticals to solve problems – place emphasis on nutrition and exercise instead of quick-fixes
- Community needs to identify specifics, but need to be sure the community is actual reflection of community; continue on the 4 goals from last year.
- Private for-profit: take-aways for employers about overall wellness b/c they are dependent on healthy active employees,
- Internationally known speaker at Bastyr University – Dr. Murray, president emeritus; could use it as a recruiting trip maybe on reduced fee.
- Nutrition education is notoriously ineffective – great ideas, but no action. Like to see something that sets action set with measurable goals – able to tell if we've been successful. Attendance is not only success.

**Steering Committee members**

Elisabeth Crane  
Grace Brooks  
Gretchen Clarke  
Doug Osborne  
Charles Bingham  
Auriella Hughes

Anne Williams  
Kendra Pountney  
Max Rule  
Chris Tadlock

**Steering Committee meeting set for Nov 28, 10:30, at SEARHC Board Room.**