

Commission on the Status of Men
Minutes of Meeting

March 31, 2004

Institute for Politics

Saint Anselm's College

Commissioners attending were Gerard Boyle, Joe Mastromarino, Ron Blankenstein, Larry Colby, Mike Geanoulis and Steve Gorin. Tony Raymond was absent.

The meeting began at 9:10 a.m. Gerard Boyle welcomed attendees, thanked St. A's for hosting this meeting and asked each commissioner to introduce himself.

After considerable discussion, minutes from the February meeting were approved with edits as agreed on by the commissioners. Edited minutes will be distributed and forwarded to Scott Garman for posting on the commission website. In the future, minutes will not be released until approved at the subsequent meeting of the commission.

Website Update: Gerard Boyle recommended a change in format regarding commission meetings. Mike Geanoulis will speak to Scott Garman about making this change. A question was raised about the link to the Monadnock Men's Resource Center website. It was agreed that having this link on the commission website is appropriate and that the Monadnock Men's Resource Center will be invited to a future meeting of the commission so that we can learn more about this organization.

Committee Report – Suicide and Men's Health: Joe Mastromarino reported that a subgroup of the commission met with Tom Andrews, Chief Medical Examiner, and reviewed the data sets drafted to date. Additions and edits will be made and forwarded to Tom and he will begin plugging in information prior to our next committee meeting at his office.

Joe reported on the composition of the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee was discussed at the ME's office. Tom mentioned that he would suggest that a person representing men's issues be appointed to this committee. The commission noted interest in also having a person representing men's issues be appointed to the NH Governor's Commission on Domestic and Family Violence.

Joe also reported on other resources that were mentioned by Tom Andrews. Theses include the Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory Assembly data availability, Elizabeth Burrows as a resource from the Bureau of Health Statistics, and the Self Inflicted Injuries report (distributed). Steve Gorin mentioned Effie

Malley at UNH and the NH Chapter of the Alliance for the Mentally Ill as other resources in the study of suicide in NH. It was suggested that Effie Malley, Chuck Rhodes and Maury Straus be invited to the next commission meeting.

Gerard Boyle reported that Bob Zetler from the Illinois department of public health contacted him after seeing the commission website. His department has 1.5 million dollars to publicize men's health issues including the high incidence of prostate cancer.

Association Health Plan legislation : Mike Dennehy, President of the Dennehy Group briefed the commission on H.R. 660 and S.545, the Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2003. Mr. Dennehy discussed reasons why the commission should consider joining the NH Coalition Against AHP's. It was agreed that this item would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting which would give commission members the time to examine positions on both sides of this issue.

Family Law Task Force Update/Domestic Violence Update

Mike Geanoulis distributed notes describing comments made by District Court Judge Michael Sullivan and Merrimac County Atty Marc Hathaway at the last meeting of the FLTF. Judge Sullivan said he was educated and experienced on the problem of domestic violence and could get a sense of the truth from a petitioner giving one-sided testimony. Atty Marc Hathaway responded to a question about a clause in Art 15 of the NH Constitution guaranteeing "Every subject shall have a right to...meet the witnesses against him face to face,..." by saying that "Art 15 applies to criminal cases, not civil cases."

It was recommended that funding be found that could bring Linda Mills to NH to present her findings to the commission. It was also noted that the Chairman would work to get Linda Mills, Lee Newman and the commission members invited to the

The Annual Conference on Domestic and Sexual Violence will be held in May at the Mount Washington hotel.

Lee Neuman updated the commission on recent accomplishments of S.A.F.E. including: a 24/7 help line established for residents of NH, production of a quarterly newsletter, increased number of presentations, outreach events, and an increased number of hits to the website (including hits to the *Men's* commission website). Lee distributed the National Domestic Violence Hotline newsletter and publications about 'the rule of thumb' for review. SAFE is working closely with DHHS in Washington, DC concerning men's issues.

Commissioner's comments:

Gerard Boyle commented that an effort is underway that would create a statewide Family Division. Given that the public comments received to date largely come

from Grafton and Rockingham counties, he shared his concern about a incorporating the remaining counties into a statewide family division. Gerard will keep us updated as he learns more about this plan.

Public Comments – comments were heard from one individual who discussed family court custodial issues, DCYF caseworker and supervisory issues and issues concerning the issuance of restraining orders.

Next Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 28, 2004. The meeting will be held at the University of New Hampshire, Memorial Union Building, Durham, NH from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.