

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN**

<http://www.nh.gov/csm>  
Official Meeting Minutes  
May 30, 2008 1-4 PM  
Legislative Office Building Room 206, Concord, NH

These minutes were taken by Larry Colby.

The meeting was called to order at 1:11 PM.

**Opening and Introduction of the Commissioners:**

Joe Mastromarino, Larry Colby, Mike Geanoulis, David Lauren, and Scott Meyer were in attendance. Scott Garman and Marshall Hickok were absent. Two seats remain open. Joe asked for a volunteer to take minutes and Larry said he would if he could interrupt at will in order to be accurate. Joe asked if there were items to be added to the printed agenda, and the following were inserted for discussion at the end of the regular agenda:

1. Invitation for Grace Mattern of the Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.
2. Letters to NHDHHS (NH Department Health and Human Services) Director Toumpas.
3. Meeting times and schedule.
4. Membership.
5. Wear blue for men's health idea.

**Approval of February Minutes:**

The February 2008 minutes were approved as printed. Mike stated that there was not a quorum at the April meeting and minutes were not produced.

**Web Site Update:**

None.

**Treasurer's Report:**

No report

**Lee Newman Payment for Brochure/Pamphlet:**

Joe will find out for sure if Lee has been reimbursed.

**Public Input I:**

Commissioner Geanoulis stepped out to offer a public comment. He had been approached via email about a dad's difficulty in keeping connected to his child by a 'gatekeeper' mom. Unless the dad could

come up with money for a lawyer his contact with his child would be curtailed. Mike suggested that the Commission discuss ways for such fathers to stay connected. Scott suggested a 'what to do' list for men in such a situation. David cautioned that the list could not take the form of advice from the Commission but rather a list of possible resources. Mike asked if a referral to the NH Bar Association would be appropriate. Joe and David talked about a letter from the Commission to the Bar Association to seek a list of attorneys willing to help men in such situations. Joe and David agreed to email one another about the form such a letter would take. David suggested that the Commission may want to invite a family law professor from Franklin Pierce Law Center to speak about how lawyers are trained vis-à-vis father involvement. Commissioners agreed that such a speaker would be a good idea for a future meeting.

### **New England Fathering Conference:**

Larry shared information about the 10th Annual New England Fathering Conference scheduled for March 25-26, 2009 in Cromwell CT. The planning committee for the conference has issued a call for papers/presenters for the meeting and Commissioner Colby wondered if individual members might be interested in applying to present at the conference. He also stated that the Commission might want to consider a sponsorship for \$250 dollars as a way to support the conference and also as a way to get the Commission and its mission out to a wider audience. Commissioner Geanoulis offered a motion to support the conference with a sponsorship of \$250 dollars and members agreed unanimously. Larry shared a handout from the last conference showing men and their children in a positive light. The group discussed the feasibility of producing a poster or series of posters with such positive messages. Larry said he would follow up and try to see if the actual posters from the conference would be available. Colby also shared an AP (Associated Press) article titled 'Father's Day: In Cards, Dad is A Lout' which appeared in the Keene (NH) Sentinel on 5-23-08.

The group took a well-deserved break from 2:25 – 2:43.

### **Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (PSSF):**

Commissioner Geanoulis talked about the funding for the federal program, PSSF which has been cut. He suggested that individual members may want to contact NH Senators and request a restoration of funding:

Senator John Sununu-United States Senate  
111 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-2904  
Phone: 202.224-3324  
Fax: 202.228-4131  
*mailbox@sununu.senate.gov*

Senator Judd Gregg-United States Senate  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-2903  
Phone: 202.224-3324  
Fax: 202.224-4952

### **Fatherhood Support Groups – All Pro Dads:**

Mike talked about the group which promotes dad-child activities and is a national program. Larry talked about the local (Keene) effort that is on hiatus for the summer. Commissioner Geanoulis talked about how he wished the group could help booster All-Pro Dads or at least the idea of dads and kids together. One suggestion was to reach out to ‘animal clubs’ (Lions, Moose, Elks, etc) in local communities to ask for their support. Larry said he would check the Commission website to see if a link to All-Pro Dads is listed. Scott wondered if it might be time for the Commission to secure an intern for work on the Commission

### **Take Your Child to Work Day:**

Mike wanted to know if take your child to work day is a nationally recognized day. He is interested in encouraging dads to follow through with this activity. Larry found that the day was started in 1993 by the Ms. Foundation for Women and is a continuing event now known as Take your Daughter and Son to Work Day.

### **Other Agenda Items Brought Forward at Start of Meeting:**

1. Invitation for Grace Mattern of the Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

The group asked Joe to formally invite Grace Mattern, Executive Director of the NH CADSV to the July 25 meeting to report on a recent study and to discuss areas of common interest between our two groups. David suggested that he could informally set up the meeting as he has already talked with Grace about appearing. David will invite Grace to the meeting. Discussion followed concerning SAFE (Stop Abuse For Everyone) and its relationship with the Coalition. The group decided that the July presentation would be Ms. Mattern’s opportunity to share information and a chance to explore areas between the missions of NH CADSV and the NH Commission on the Status of Men.

2. Letters to NHDHHS (NH Department Health and Human Services) Director Toumpas.

Joe shared two letters addressed to Nicholas Toumpas, Commissioner of NH Health and Human Services. The letters address topics of a liaison to serve on the Men’s Commission from HHS and certain areas related to the department’s outreach to men in the state. The group agreed that the letters should be redrafted by Joe and sent to the Commissioner as soon as possible. Also that the letters be added to the minutes (see Appendix A and B of these minutes). Mike suggested a reference in one of the letters to the 2nd biennial report of the NH CSM on the website.

3. Meeting times and schedule.

David brought up the idea of meeting every other month and Larry that we meet for 2 and ½ hours rather than three. The group felt it was important to continue the monthly schedule for three hours each time.

#### 4. Membership.

Mike stated that the Commission was still down two members and that membership applications were being held at the Governor's Office. He asked if Commissioners should make recommendations about new members. Joe felt that this would be counter-productive and that the Commission needs to be independent and filled with many voices. David suggested that he had gained the impression from conversations with Kathy Goode at the Governor's Office that one possible reason for the slow response was that Governor Lynch wants the Commission to have a diversity of ideas and a geographic representation. He also stated that he shared with Kathy that he would be interested in a second three-year term on the Commission. The group agreed that the process must be put into fast forward if the Commission hopes to be able to move ahead. Mike suggested to Joe that he phone or otherwise contact Kathy with the Commission's sincere request to help us have full representation – we need the two openings filled. Joe agreed to phone.

#### 5. Wear blue for men's health idea.

Mike advocated again the need to find a way to publically support the idea of the importance of men and their health.

The meeting ended at 4:02

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Colby

Next Meeting: Friday, June 27, 2008 1:00 – 4:00 PM  
Legislative Office Building, Room 206  
Concord, NH

**Appendix A: Letter to NH DHHS Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas**  
Re: NH CSM Liasion

June 18, 2008

Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas  
NH DHHS Commissioners Office  
129 Pleasant St.  
Concord, NH 03301-3857

Dear Commissioner Toumpas:

As I am sure that you are aware, the NH Commission on the Status of Men (CSM) was created by the legislature in order to quantify and address some of the issues affecting men which have quietly become quite significant and contribute unnecessarily to: The financial burden to the state; the decreased quality of the physical health of men and reduced life span; the psychological morbidity of men; the decreasing levels of educational attainment; and perceived inequities in

the Family and General Court systems, to name a few. I am writing somewhat belatedly to follow-up on several issues from a meeting that the NH CSM had with Commissioner John Stephen while he still held that office. As sometimes occurs when offices change, there are several actions which we had thought were in process. It is now apparent that this is not the case, and I will reiterate them for your benefit.

1) The appointment of a permanent liaison from DHHS to the Commission  
2) During the deliberations to create a CSM, lawmakers noted that fatherless children were the largest users of state funded services, and they intended that a CSM might obtain some relief for the taxpayer by bringing fathers and children closer together pursuant to RSA 19-I:4. With what we know about the wellness of fatherless children from the national data for such statistics as poverty, suicide and educational failure, we suspect that there is a significantly disproportionate overrepresentation of fatherless children in domains such as DCSS, TANF, and DCYF. The Bureau of Vital Statistics could only provide gross estimates that approximately 5% of all New Hampshire birth certificates do not name the father, and an additional 5% have the surname of the father different from that of the child's. These estimates are inadequate for the investigatory charge to the CSM by the legislature to determine the cost to the state of these social problems and to formulate action plans to address these extremely costly worriments. Although it is clear that this information may take some effort to procure, we must reiterate our critical need for the previously requested data for the numbers of:

- (A) Percent of birth certificates in which the father is not named
- (B) Percent of birth certificates in which surnames are different
- (C) Percent of households in which the natural father does not live

Any other data to help us determine the extent to which the biological father is not involved.

Sincerely,

Joseph H. Mastromarino, MD, Chair  
NH Commission on the Status of Men

**Appendix B: Letter to NH DHHS Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas**

Re: Gender-specific state programs

June 19, 2008

Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas  
NH DHHS Commissioners Office  
129 Pleasant St  
Concord, NH 03301-3857

Dear Commissioner Toumpas:

One of the mandates of the NH Commission on the Status of Men is to assess the state of men's health in New Hampshire and the state of services available for men and boys. Please reference

our most recent reports on our web site: [<http://www.nh.gov/csm/index.html>]. When we draft our next report to the governor, the information that you and other New Hampshire Agencies is vital in order to create an accurate assessment. Pursuant to our founding legislation (HB587 FN-A), all state agencies are charged with providing us with the data necessary to accomplish our mission. We ask that you answer the following questions in order to help us achieve these goals:

1. Would you please sort the programs you provide into three categories. The first is programs specifically for women and/or girls, the second is programs that you provide specifically for men and/or boys, and the last would be for all other programs which presumably are for both sexes. Please include the goals and purposes of each program in each category, including budget information (direct and indirect), staffing numbers, places of service, and statistics regarding utilization of the service with a breakdown by male and female usage for the last category, along with the data which documents the outreach efforts of DHHS to recruit both sexes and the participation of both genders for these services both before and after the DHHS outreach efforts.

2. Do you have suggestions on services needed specifically for men and boys? Do you have any recommendations for the commission related to men's health? Is there anything that you would like to see included in our report to the Governor?

We appreciate your contributions in this matter

Sincerely yours,

Joseph H. Mastromarino, MD, Chair  
NH Commission on the Status of Men