

DILLINGHAM COMMUNITY MEETING MAY 12, 2015 MIDDLE SCHOOL GYM

Sponsored: Dillingham Unity Youth Council Cheri Johansen, Mentor

Guest: Ari Levinson Southcentral Foundation Psychiatrist from Anchorage

Attendees: Dillingham citizens, Dillingham school students, Togiak Village council representatives, Togiak Student council President, BBAHC Behavioral Health, Medical Staff, BBNA Family Services, Public Health, KDLG and Bristol Bay Times/Dutch Harbor Fisherman.

This meeting was recorded, by KDLG

Opening presentation: Chenita Sorenson, DUYC:

Youth are seeking sustainable way to keep their culture alive. Concern that youth will lose their culture due to increasing drug abuse and continued alcohol abuse. Reviewed 5 areas where youth are impacted by substance abuse: Family, Culture, Community, Economic opportunity, Finances.

Community Discussion: Dr. Levinson: Talk about OPIATES / Talk about Prevention

Dr. Levinson started and ran the opiate (drugs like heroin, morphine, prescription pain medication) treatment program at S.C.F. for the past 5 years. Goal was to develop a good relationship with clients. New treatment medications have improved success outcomes. However, opiate addiction is hard to kick the habit due to changes in brain receptors. Relapse is high, (90 %) and risk of death is higher during a relapse due to a reduced tolerance for the drug.

Tolerance is the increasing need for more drug to provide same effect and dependence is the need for drug to keep from feeling physically ill due to withdrawal.

Here is how different substances affect a person:

Opiates (like Heroin) 35 % addiction rate after as short a time as one month of use

Alcohol 25 % addiction rate

Heroin use can cause a 30 times greater likelihood of death

So: Why do people Use Drugs:???

To **Experiment / Peer Pressure** (fun, drug is paid for, bored, get different high, curiosity)
/ To Self-Medicating / or there is the **Moral Model** (a person is thought to be “weak, have failings, not be as good. Incorrect, of course).

Southcentral Foundation has seen A Lot of Opiate addiction. Medications like Saboxone and now a newer drug, Vivitrol, have improved outcomes for clients age 18 and older. There are no known treatment centers for those under age 18 in Alaska.

To support Youth, PREVENTION is the key. What can or what is being done locally?

CANDU Community Action group in Dillingham

Wellness is part of the City of Dillingham Comprehensive Plan. Need to review it, use it, Prevention requires EVERYONE in community. Who do kids look up to? (Karl Clark, Cheri Johansen mentioned by youth present). We must be willing to stand up and fight against just like Pebble Mine.

What do youth want to know? What opiates are, what they do to you, what is bad about them?

Use a hook (Facebook (old school already) kids use twitter, snapchat or Instagram) Gain youth's interest, then talk about drugs and how they won't be able to do the things they enjoyed. Best if is a youth who has already walked the path of addiction, or another youth or adult that youth look up to. Need a variety of ways to grab attention.

SUPPLY Versus DEMAND

Prevention – deals with the demand side for drugs. NPR stated that buying heroin directly funds ISIS and terrorism, as the manufacture of heroin is almost all from poppy fields in Afghanistan. (Boo, couldn't verify this at the NPR website..may need to remove).

Law Enforcement – deals with the supply side (drug dealers, etc)

Medical – deals with addicted "hooked" clients.

Vivitrol: Opiate blocker (keeps -heroin for example- from attaching to the Meu receptors in the brain) Gets rid of cravings that addicts suffer with. Is actually a better drug for youth or those who have not been addicted for too long, once they have been through Detox.