

Vermont's Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentives Grant

EPIDEMIOLOGY WORKGROUP

September 29, 2005 1:00pm – 4:00pm  
Conference Room 3B

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Purpose:  
Share the goal and objectives of the project overall  
Share Epidemiology workgroup goals and objectives
3. How do we get there?
4. Next steps
5. Future meeting dates



STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK STATE INCENTIVE GRANT (SPF SIG)  
State Epidemiological Workgroups (SEW)

Strategic Prevention Framework Data Applications Contract (SPF DAC)  
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE)

## SITE VISIT REPORT

**SPF SIG Grantee:** Vermont

**PIRE Staff:** Renée Boothroyd, [rboothroyd@pire.org](mailto:rboothroyd@pire.org), 301-755-2740

**Date(s) of visit:** September 29, 2005

**Date of trip report:** October 14, 2005

### Meeting Participation/Other Context:

VT requested CSAP/PIRE participation in their inaugural SEW meeting to be held September 29. Prior to the meeting, PIRE communicated with Kelly Hale LaMonda, the VT Chair of the SEW, to discuss objectives and clarify a PIRE contribution (email and phone). PIRE also met with Kelly and other key SEW/SPF SIG staff face-to-face the day before the meeting to provide a SEW overview, outline presentation components, and identify/problem-solve particular elements requiring attention at the subsequent meeting. At the SEW meeting, PIRE provided an overview of the SEW component of the SPF SIG, including (a) examples of consequence and consumption data, (b) an outcome-based prevention orientation to the SEW's contribution of the SPF process, (c) state/community roles, (d) the State Epidemiological Data System (SEDS), (e) criteria, processes, and illustrations for assessing epidemiological burden and determining prevention priorities of the SPF SIG State Plan, and (f) considerations/lessons from other SPF SIG grantees. Post-meeting, PIRE met with SEW/SPF SIG staff to identify/problem-solve particular issues and discuss and outline next steps for preliminary assessment and analyses of epidemiological data. PIRE also provided examples of SEW-related technical assistance (content/format). NOTE: CSAP (Michael Lowther) also provided a SPF SIG overview at the meeting.

### SEW STATUS AND CONTRIBUTION TO SPF SIG

**Strengths:** As VT takes steps to operationalize the SPF SIG, they have already initiated SEW efforts. This evolving group of SEW members represented critical expertise in and access to data as well as core partnerships for substance-related prevention efforts (e.g., law enforcement, community coalitions). The group expressed a number of concrete goals, including (a) to illuminate the needs of other populations not traditionally targeted by prevention efforts, (b) to develop a more uniform, deliberate, and generalizable way to look at and define problems, and (c) to link data to a process that enables VT to continue to strengthen evidence-based strategies for prevention.

#### **Areas of attention:**

- The State noted concurrent "assessment" forums across the substance abuse spectrum sponsored via a Governor's initiative. There is some concern about merging data-driven problems and those generated/driven by public perception. These efforts are certainly not mutually exclusive, and may take additional effort to integrate.
- YRBS has been the cornerstone of data-driven efforts for prevention efforts that target youth. As the initiative unfolds, ongoing data assessment activities can expand to address needs across the lifespan.
- Current SIG funding is directed at coalition development and/or evidence-based programs (often to address youth). It will be important to communicate the broader vision/mission of the SPF SIG (e.g., lifespan, population-level change) and strategic emphasis on programs, policies, and practices.

## **Considerations:**

1. The SEW has met before a SPF SIG State Advisory Council has become active (NOTE: VT aims to host a SPF SIG and State Advisory Committee kickoff in November). It will be important, as these groups develop, to clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and proposed interactions for these groups as both contribute to the data-driven decision making that will follow. VT may want to consider a kind of "bridge group" comprised of SEW and SAC members who can connect, translate, and communicate needs between the groups.
2. As the VT SEW continues data selection/analysis and develops products for communicating findings, they might consider the following questions (from more general to more specific): a) what is the burden of substance use in VT (epi-profile)? b) What dimensions (epidemiological) can help VT understand the nature of these patterns and problems? c) how can these dimensions (and possibly others such as capacity/resources) be used as criteria and applied to discern priority problems, and d) based on such analyses, what priorities emerge, and how can VT invest limited prevention dollars to address priorities?
3. As SEW data work continues (indicator and data source decisions), the VT SEW might consider organizing indicators into a matrix by substance (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs) and data constructs (e.g., mortality, acute/chronic, morbidity, other harm, consumption) so that SEW members can begin to see how these categories address the question "What is the burden of substance use in VT?" Some kind of organizational framework for the data may facilitate SEW members understand their implications (versus long lists or table of data with little context for interpretation).
4. As data analyses continue, take care to document data gaps and/or quality concerns. An ongoing role of the SEW might very well be to recommend and take action on objectives for building information/data systems and improve data capacities.
5. Consider setting a timeline/set of deadlines (e.g., final version of VT SPF SIG State Plan submitted and approved by CSAP), and back up to define a set of SEW tasks and timelines to get there. This might enable the SEW work to become concrete.

## **FOLLOW-UP**

### **SPF SIG Grantee:**

- o Identify and recruit additional SEW members (to address and/or strengthen expertise and data source gaps), and advance SEW structure and operations.
- o In terms of SEW and SAC membership, begin to examine what questions each group wants to ask of the other
- o Begin to examine both SEDS data (<http://epidcc.samhsa.gov/>) and VT survey data regarding consumption to address "what can we know right now?"
- o NOTE: SEW aims to involve tobacco collaborators in the SEW from a data perspective, but not necessarily for the SEW to incorporate tobacco into an assessment of SPF SIG priorities (other extensive efforts are already addressing this issue)
- o SEW meetings scheduled for Tuesdays, Nov. 1 and Dec. 6 from 2:00-4:00 pm.

### **PIRE:**

- o Ongoing contact to address SEW development and data selection/analyses questions.
- o Clarify any messages from CSAP regarding who (SEW et al.) does the resource assessment and other non-epidemiological components of the SPF SIG needs assessment.