

DUKES COUNTY HEALTH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

“The Dukes County Health Council is a coalition of community members, public officials, health practitioners and health care organizations working together to promote community-wide health and wellness by the creation of a cooperative, integrated network of health care for Martha's Vineyard.”

Mission statement adopted March 27 2003

The Dukes County Health Council is a 35 member committee of community health providers and consumers created in the mid 1990's under the auspices of the Dukes County Commission to work on issues relating to health care on Martha's Vineyard. It adopted the above mission statement in 2003.

The Council is probably best known for its work in improving access to health insurance through the Vineyard Health Care Access Program and through the work of the Youth Task Force. Also of note has been the work of the Rural Scholars Program that has brought UMass Medical School students to the island twice a year to work on issues affecting the provision of health care to islanders. This year the Rural Scholars were asked to undertake two projects:

- Ensuring the “Healthy Aging” of Year Round Martha's Vineyard Residents Over 60 for the Next 30 Years
- Screening School Children for BMI: Recommended Best Practices for a Rural Community

These were undertaken and presented to the Island in October and were very well received.

As a result of the “Healthy Aging” projects, the most significant work of the Council in 2013 was that of the Healthy Aging Task Force. This group was formed from the DCHC Elder Affairs Committee to work on issues identified with the Rural Scholars that affect the quality of life and health for older Vineyarders, a rapidly growing group. The Task Force held a Healthy Aging Symposium in June. Approximately sixty community leaders attended this event sponsored by the

Donors Collaborative. A follow up meeting was held in November with approximately seventy-two people attending. Several work groups were established at the symposium and have been working ever since. One of the main focuses in this area seems to be a One Stop Referral Service to assist seniors in accessing the many resources that currently exist on the island.

In an effort to provide information to the community on the recently passed Medical Marijuana referendum, the Council brought a well respected speaker on the topic to the Island in September. He spoke at the meeting and it was covered by the press as well. This is a topic that has continued to be of interest to the Council and we have received updates as information has become available.

The following is list of the Subcommittees of the Council who work on issues of concern and report back to the Council as appropriate:

- Substance Abuse Network
- Vineyard Health Care Access Advisory Board
- Rural Scholars Committee
- Youth Task Force
- Healthy Aging Task Force
- Mass in Motion