

DUKES COUNTY HEALTH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

“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 has been 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 to work on issues affecting the provision of health care to islanders. As a result of the work of this group in 2013, the Elder Affairs Committee of the Council became the Healthy Aging Task Force and expanded to include practitioners and consumers from outside the Council. This group continued to discuss and work on issues related to the aging Vineyard population.

This year the Rural Scholars undertook another project related to the elderly: “Elder Abuse, Neglect and Self-Neglect” in conjunction with Martha's Vineyard Community Service. The group reported to the Island in October and was very well received.

The Health Council also heard reports on the Priority Grant and Mini Grant projects funded by Martha's Vineyard Hospital and were updated on:

- The work of Hospice of Martha's Vineyard;
- Efforts of the Healthy Aging Task Force;

- The work of the Vineyard Health Care Access Program to help Islanders navigate the provisions of the Affordable Care Act;
- The issue of homelessness on the island;
- Status of establishment of medical marijuana dispensaries here;
- The introduction of medical mobile devices to the provision of services to the elderly;
- Changes to Vineyard Medical Care with new ownership and expanded services; and
- The VNA.

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 – inactive in 2014

Vineyard Health Care Access Advisory Board

Rural Scholars Committee

Youth Task Force

Healthy Aging Task Force