

**Stamford School Readiness Council**  
**Health & Wellness Committee Meeting**  
**Monday, May 14, 2012**  
**12:00-1:00 p.m.**  
**Stamford Hospital, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Attendees**

Dr. Madhu Mathur <i>Chair, Health &amp; Wellness Committee</i>	Director KIDS' FANS Wellness Program; Medical Director, Regional Medical Home Initiative, Southwest CT, Stamford Hospital and Chair, Obesity Task Force, Stamford
Jody Bishop Pullan	Dental Case Manager, Health Department, City of Stamford
Karen Brennan	Stamford Discovery Coordinator, United Way of Western CT
Dr. Anne Brewer	Associate Director, Family Practice Program, Stamford Hospital
Jennienne Burke	Health Educator, Care to Care (Family Centers)
Kerri Hagan	Health Educator, Health Department, City of Stamford
Karina Reininger	Dental Health Care Specialist, CT Dental Health Partnership
Ellen Swan	Early Childhood Consultation, Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center
Amy Taylor	Fairfield County, Community Health Center, Inc.

**Guests**

Ivelise Alicia	Care Coordinator, Child FIRST
Terri Drew	Director, Youth Services Bureau, City of Stamford
Elaine Gugliemo	Vice President of Human Resources, Stamford Hospital
Dr. Erica Pomerantz	Program Director, Child FIRST

**Committee Introductions and Sharing (Dr. Madhu Mathur)**

Dr. Mathur welcomed committee members and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

She then set the stage today's presentations. As reported by the American Academy of Pediatrics (May 11, 2012): Every day in the United States, 160,000 students are too scared to go to school. Every day, the social and mental growth and development of children is being damaged. Every day, a child considers suicide to end the torment of being bullied.

**Bullying: Awareness and Prevention (Elaine Gugliemo, Vice President of Human Resources, Stamford Hospital)**

Elaine shared a number of important facts about bullying and ways to help prevent it. She has a person passion for this work, and is a trained PeaceWorks volunteer who actively volunteers in classrooms throughout Stamford. For those who don't know, PeaceWorks is a prevention education project of the Domestic Violence Crisis Center (DVCC). The DVCC believes the prevention of violence in our society begins with the education of children. PeaceWorks provides tools for our pre-Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth to help them learn how to solve

conflicts peacefully and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. For more information, see: <http://www.dvcct.org/>

In sum:

- Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. A child who is being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself.
- Bullying can take many forms such as physical bullying, such as hitting or punching; verbal bullying, such as teasing or name-calling; nonverbal or emotional bullying, such as intimidating someone through gestures or social exclusion.
- Children who are bullied are more likely than other children to have lower self-esteem, higher rates of depression, loneliness, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. They are more likely to experience a variety of health problems, including headaches, sleeping problems, and stomach ailments.
- We need more education and programs to help students, parents, teachers, and other educators recognize and understand bullying. We need to empower bystanders to teach them how to respond when someone is being bullied.
- We need to change the climate within schools with regard to bullying.

A thoughtful discussion followed with the Committee sharing personal experiences some of their own children went through. It clearly is a topic of interest to all.

#### **Dr. Erica Pomerantz, Program Director from Child FIRST**

As the Committee knows, Stamford applied for and received a Child FIRST (Child and Family Interagency Resource, Support and Training) grant. By way of background, in March 2010 it was announced that a \$3.2 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation would go towards replicating the Child FIRST program in communities outside of Bridgeport. Child FIRST is a model program to decrease the incidence of serious emotional disturbance, developmental and learning problems, and abuse and neglect among high-risk young children. Child FIRST works with pediatricians, teachers, and other community providers to identify, assess, and intervene with vulnerable children and their families.

Importantly, this grant will enable the Child Guidance Center to help families when children are infants (and in some cases help their parents before these children are born), thereby hopefully preventing the need for future services later on. The Child FIRST grant keeps with the Child Guidance philosophy that understanding behaviors are as important as changing behaviors.

Dr. Pomerantz was recently hired as the Program Director, along with two full time care coordinators. Dr. Pomerantz came to give an update to the Committee and will join the Committee going forward as a regular member. To date, print materials have been created, a community guide is in draft form, and referrals have already begun.

#### **Next Meeting**

We will be next meeting on Monday, September 10.