

Committee targets tobacco use in Wagoner County

On Feb. 19 the Wagoner County Family Service Council Communities of Excellence Tobacco Use Prevention Committee met at the Coweta Public Library to discuss these and other issues.

The purpose of the group is to develop a county-wide plan for preventing tobacco use—especially among youth. The group is using a grass roots effort to impact the future of Coweta’s children and the health of its citizens.

“I am very pleased, but not at all surprised at the community support we are receiving,” said WCFSC Chairperson Wanda James. “Community members are stepping forward and coming together to design a plan for our county—a custom fit plan of action to address the health issues surrounding tobacco.”

The group is examining four areas:

- Preventing youth initiation;
- Eliminating second hand smoke;
- Promoting cessation services, and
- Reducing tobacco industry influence.

Program Coordinator Debbie Brewster said the group is still recruiting new members.

“We want community members from Coweta and Porter to be a part of this group,” Brewster said. “Parents, business owners, faith based community members and people who are interested in being involved to make a difference in our children and grandchildren’s health for the future are welcome.”

Those attending the Feb. 19 meeting were Tom Tillotson and Ivy Battles with the City of Coweta, Mike Wilson with the Coweta Public School, Wanda James with Area Prevention Resource Center, Susan Johnson with the Post Adjudication Review Board, Marjorie Lyons and Barbara Volz with the Wagoner County Health Department and Brewster.

Highlight of the February meeting was information related to the impact of smokeless tobacco.

Ingredients found in smokeless tobacco are acetone, arsenic, butane, cadmium, cyanide, formaldehyde methanol, nicotine, polonium 210, sand and uranium 235.

Brewster said these ingredients are commonly found in bug spray, rat poison, gas used in executions, dead laboratory frogs/embalming fluid, jet engine/rocket fuel, car batteries, lighter fluid, paint stripper, radioactive nuclear waste, disintegrated rock, addictive substance and smokeless tobacco.

“The health risks related to smokeless tobacco use may be an increased heart rate, narrowed blood vessels, disease of the tissues around the teeth, cancer of the mouth, cheeks or gums as well as bad breath and stained teeth,” Brewster noted. “While only a small percentage of adults use smokeless tobacco, a larger percentage of high school boys and some high school girls use it.”

“Young smokeless tobacco users are more likely to start smoking cigarettes, making it even more likely that their health will be harmed,” she added.

The next WCFSC Communities of Excellence Tobacco Use Prevention Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, March 18 at 1 p.m. in the Coweta Public Library conference room. This is the only March meeting.

For more information, contact Brewster at 485-4522.

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