



**Enhancing the
Prevention Workforce in Ohio:
Strategic and Comprehensive
Recommendations**

January, 2007

**The Ohio Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention
Workforce Development Taskforce**

Strategic Planning and Development Support from

**The Center for Learning Excellence
The Ohio State University
807 Kinnear Road
Columbus, Ohio 43212**

Published by
The Ohio Department of Drug and Alcohol Addiction Services

Acknowledgments

The Ohio Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Workforce Development Taskforce would like to thank the Ohio Alcohol and Drug Addiction Workforce Development Project (its umbrella organization) and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services for convening the taskforce. Both organizations saw the value in convening a representative group to prioritize and strategize prevention-specific workforce issues.

Enhancing the Prevention Workforce in Ohio: Strategic and Comprehensive Recommendations was made possible through funding support from the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services.

The Taskforce would also like to recognize the dedication and commitment of its members who have worked to create these recommendations. With participants from the full spectrum of prevention services, including providers, boards, funders, and state associations, this workgroup provided diverse and crucial input into the process.

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Executive Summary

The Ohio Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Workforce Development Taskforce engaged in a formal planning process between January and December, 2006. The purpose of this planning process was to “**create a meaningful, evolving plan to serve as a guide to Ohio’s alcohol and other drug (AOD) prevention workforce over the next three to five years.**” Members of the Taskforce reviewed a variety of data and applied their considerable expertise to identify key issues and develop formal recommendations designed to enhance the capacity of the prevention workforce in Ohio.

Taskforce members generated 12 recommendations which are broken down into strategic recommendations to be prioritized over the next 12 to 18 months and comprehensive recommendations targeted over a three- to five-year timeframe.

Taskforce members prioritized five recommendations that should be addressed immediately in order to build the capacity of Ohio’s prevention workforce. These five strategic recommendations were selected due to their impact on workforce issues and/or their timeliness. While all five may not be achievable in the next 12 to 18 months, initial work can begin on each of them.

Recommendation #1

Define the scope of practice relevant to alcohol and other drug prevention.

Recommendation #2

Develop and implement consistent procedures including standards for outcome definition and measurement and reporting requirements across funders of services in Ohio in order to increase workforce efficiency and retention.

Recommendation #3

Modify the prevention credentialing process to include requirements that can be achieved in a reasonable period of time and that reflect the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective prevention services in Ohio.

Recommendation #4

Increase salaries and benefits so that compensation packages for the prevention workforce are competitive with compensation packages for other professions.

Recommendation #5

Provide for multi-year funding for prevention programming in order to foster job stability and security.

When convening the Taskforce, emphasis was placed on inviting representatives from the full spectrum of Ohio’s prevention system, including direct service providers, prevention managers, agency executive directors, funding boards, state departments and statewide associations. As Ohio moves forward with these recommendations, all levels of the prevention system – from individuals to institutions – take responsibility for the development of the prevention workforce. Other allies, including community members and legislators, have roles to play as well. Together, we can build the capacity of Ohio’s prevention workforce to meet the needs of all our citizens.

Introduction

On January 21, 2006, the Ohio Alcohol and Drug Addiction Workforce Development Project and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) convened the Ohio Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Workforce Development Taskforce to “**create a meaningful, evolving plan to serve as a guide to Ohio’s alcohol and other drug (AOD) prevention workforce over the next three to five years.**” Taskforce members met seven times between January and December, 2006 and produced the recommendations contained in the following report. Taskforce members focused their efforts on addressing four primary themes from the review of selected data related to the status of the prevention workforce in Ohio:

Theme #1: Certification for providing prevention services - This theme focused on revising the credentialing process to make it accessible and attainable for individuals interested in earning their prevention credentials. Taskforce members believed that revising the credentialing process was critical to increasing the pool of qualified applicants for prevention jobs and ultimately creating a workforce in Ohio with recognized skills and responsibilities.

Theme #2: Training for the prevention workforce - This theme focused on four major issues related to training. *Issue one:* adoption of prevention training guidelines that encompass the state of the art in the field. Taskforce members believed that adopting prevention training guidelines might also provide a basis for making distinctions between prevention and treatment services. *Issue two:* provision of services that are evidence-based and culturally appropriate. *Issue three:* use of processes that encourage collaborative decision-making and setting priorities at the community level. *Issue four:* distinguishing between approaches that focus on individual change and approaches that have the potential to change conditions at the population level. Taskforce members believed that the gathering and distribution of information about these issues would assist in the development of a common language and a consistent standard for prevention services.

Theme #3: Administrative issues - This theme focused on the infrastructure at state and local levels that support the delivery of prevention services. According to Taskforce members, a functional infrastructure should include “user-friendly” processes and tools that are consistent across funding systems. Furthermore, planning and implementation procedures should be based on sound business practices. Finally, Taskforce members believed that programmatic interventions that demonstrate outcomes should be priorities for funding.

Theme #4: Compensation/benefits for the prevention workforce - This theme focused on the consensus that compensation for prevention workers is lower than compensation for workers in comparable fields. Taskforce members believed that demonstrating links between prevention outcomes and long-term benefits at the individual and population levels will provide a basis for developing a strong constituency in support of prevention. Demonstration of outcomes should also help increase the advocacy for, value of, and funding for prevention services in

Ohio. Taskforce members believed that advocacy based on strong evidence might translate into higher wages and increased benefits for the prevention workforce.

These general concerns provided a basis for developing strategic (12 to 18 months) and comprehensive (three to five years) recommendations to support the development of the prevention workforce in Ohio. The following report is divided into six major sections:

Section I provides a summary of background information that was critical to developing the Ohio Prevention Workforce Development strategic plan.

Section II provides a definition of alcohol and other drug (AOD) prevention and other key concepts.

Section III summarizes key “guiding principles” for providing prevention services in Ohio.

Section IV identifies five strategic and seven comprehensive recommendations for the development of the AOD prevention workforce.

Section V summarizes key issues related to the highest priority recommendations and action steps that might be implemented in the next 12 to 18 months.

Section VI suggests several “next steps” that could be implemented to further refine the Ohio Prevention Workforce Development strategic plan and to ensure that thoughtful planning continues to guide the future development of the prevention workforce in Ohio.

