



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

DEHS Directors' Meeting: 03 August 2023

[Meeting recording available](#)

Next conference call 02 November 2023 1:00-2:00PM ET

Alaska:	Hugh Denny	Nashville:	Charles Woodlee
Albuquerque:	Carrie Oyster	Navajo:	Donna Gilbert
Bemidji:	<i>Not on call</i>	Oklahoma:	Danny Walters
Billings:	Darcy Merchant	Phoenix:	Rob Morones
California:	Carolyn Garcia	Portland:	<i>Not on call</i>
Great Plains:	Shelby Haddeland	Tucson:	<i>Not on call</i>

Environmental Health Support Center: Jeff Dickson

DEHS HQ: Matt Albright; Brian Hroch; Molly Madson; Andrea Tsatoke

1. Welcome and Update

- a. CAPT Reed was at NEHA – Reach out to him anytime

2. Area Highlights

- a. Alaska –
 - i. General EH
 - Numerous cases of rabies occurring – W and NW AK
 - One in Moose (subsistence food source)
 - Advocating for Vet services
 - ii. Climate Change
 - Food security and subsistence is greatly impacting AK families
 - iii. IP
 - TIPCAP reports were complete and submitted on time
 - iv. DEHS Director visit
 - CAPT Reed visiting AK
- b. Albuquerque
 - i. General EH
 - Feast days are providing continuous work over the summer and fall
 - ii. Head Start Summit
 - Completed and received assistance from Shelby Haddeland with the trainings (thank you!) – largest attendance ever with 275 attendees
 - EHSC management of participant enrollment was very helpful
- c. Bemidji – *Not on call*

d. Billings

i. Staffing

- Jordan Vandjelovic is leaving for the CDC; IP Specialist vacancy announcement forthcoming
- Blackfeet SU EHO selected
- Davis Reardon selected FTE in current duty station

ii. General EH

- Rabies Lay Vaccinator Program started in 2 locations

iii. IP

- Darcy to cover until Jordan's vacancy filled
- Davis Reardon continues to fulfill the duties of the fellowship
- TIPCAP in-person site visit conducted at RMTLC by IHS HQ and UCD monitoring contractor in July 2023

e. California

i. General EH

- DEHS is developing its third goal for its strategic plan using the PACE-EH method. Will be meeting tomorrow to discuss preparing environmental health issue profiles. Profiles will be drafted by September and ranked at the DEHS staff meeting in October.
- Reviewing and updating our DEHS Division Guidelines based on the tactics developed for two of the goals in the program's strategic plan so we are ready to move forward with the plan beginning January 2024.
- Escondido District will be having a rabies clinic at Indian Health Council later in August. Have partnered with the San Diego SPCA Spay Neuter Action Project. Were unable to partner with the Army Reserve this year.
- DEHS staff have begun to offer ServSafe courses for the first time in the Area. One staff has been certified as an instructor and another will begin the process due to the warm reception they've had for the course thus far.

ii. Emergency Preparedness

- Two wildfires near Desert Sage Youth Regional Treatment Center last week. One is 90% contained, the other is 50% contained.
- The Area held an ICS tabletop in July and has scheduled a COOP tabletop for August with an IT focused scenario to satisfy a mandate from HQ.

iii. Institutional EH

- Staff are in the process of performing Nitrous Oxide assessments using the new Viasensor gas analyzer. Staff have reported they like using the new instrument and found it works well for assessing leaks and exposures.

- iv. Injury Prevention
 - Funded two more life jacket distribution special projects. One project has reported completing its distribution of its cache of life jackets.
- f. Great Plains
 - i. Staffing
 - The GS level for the two IEH positions are now 11/12. 90% of applicants have screened out due to a lack of professional credential(s) (e.g., REHS, CIH, or CSP). Rapid City, SD was added as a potential duty station.
 - Efia Taylor, EH Extern, started on 10 July with positive reception
 - ii. General EH
 - Connie Giroux, District EHS, Sioux City worked with the State of Iowa, Sac & Fox Tribe and other local health departments on pre-planning and health and safety surveys for the Ragbrai event. The event is 60,000 bicyclists riding across Iowa. One of the stops is located near Sac & Fox settlement. A lot of local events took place along the route to support the riders.
 - Survey are way behind for the year – staffing vacancies have exacerbated the issue
 - On the topic of surveys – EHS staff conducted a comprehensive team survey of a casino campus. Policy and guidelines were reviewed along with the physical facilities across the entire campus. Many deficiencies were noted and a detailed report will be generated and delivered to facility leadership.
- g. Nashville
 - i. Staffing
 - OEHE Director due to retire, 01 November 2023. Charles Woodlee expects to pick up some additional responsibilities as this date approaches.
 - Still working with OEHE Director and Office of Tribal Affairs to review EHSA residual and recurring funding commitments as well as the allotment between SFC and EHS program.
 - Thank you to HQ, Bemidji, and Phoenix Areas for your assistance
 - ii. Gen EH
 - Busy travel time while staff cover powwows, as well as start offering training ahead of the new school year
 - iii. Emergency management
 - Lots of security-related activity lately, including the same work that all EMPOCs did to provide information to Chris Jones at IHS HQ
 - Keeping an eye on severe weather events throughout Area



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iv. IP

- Developing small projects with several locations, including one location that has finally gotten DEA certification to administer a drop box program
- Recently met with Dr. Joyce Pressley, from the Columbia Univ. Center for Safety and Injury Prevention. Her program has helped tribes in the Western US tap into roadway improvement funding, and they are seeking to do the same in New York. Will be connecting her with our regional tribal consortium that has a transportation program as well.
- Attended panel discussion on tribal community transportation safety that was part of the 2023 conference for the Assoc. of Transportation Safety Information Professionals (ATSIP). Discussion was very informative and the organization may be a potential resource.

h. Navajo

i. Staffing

- 8 vacancies – no tribal EHSs at the moment = no enforcement

ii. General EH

- Hantavirus – 10 cases in CY23 (two were fatal)
 - DEHS staff heavily involved in response and prevention efforts
- Rabies Vaccination Clinic prep occurring, Partner: non-profit orgs and Navajo Nation Animal Control
- Navajo Head Start trainings
- Rodeos and Fairs are keeping everyone busy

iii. IP

- Hosted the Virtual IHS IVP Course 1 with the Great Plains Area

i. Oklahoma City

i. Staffing

- Struggling with recruiting and getting quality candidates
- Pawnee vacancy announcement still open
- Holton SU Sanitarian announcement still open
- Beau Carter will be a direct transfer to the Claremore Hospital

ii. General EH

- FDA Retail Food Safety Standardization of staff ongoing

iii. IP

- Beau Carter will continue to be supported throughout the IVP Fellowship

iv. Misc.

- Annual DEHS Director planning continues and are looking for a vendor

j. Phoenix

i. Staffing

- GS-12 Sanitarian Consultant for Reno, Tempe and Show Low vacancy announcement closes 04 August
- DEHO Vacancy in Reno vice new IEH Officer Landon Wiggins; GS 13 DEHO remains in classification
- EHS Vacancy in Polacca and Ft. Duchesne closes on 10 August
- LCDR George Chung selected as District IP Coordinator, EADO
- LCDR Landon Wiggins, formerly the DEHO, Reno District EHO selected as IEH Officer
- Francis Robinson selected as Area EMPOC

ii. General EH

- Sarah Snyder achieved FDA Standardized Retail Food Inspection Officer certification and can now standardize EH professionals
- Eastern Arizona District personnel Sarah Snyder and Kate Pink contributed to "[Detection of Hantavirus during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Arizona, USA, 2020](#)" published Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal
- OEH&E facilitated the PAIHS COVID-19 Hotwash and After Action Report to HQ

iii. IP

- Rob Morones and Andrea Tsatoke presented and moderated opioid disposal best practices at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Forum in Washington, D.C.
- The State of Arizona held a Tribal Transportation Safety and Injury Prevention Summit this week focusing on data collection, road safety assessments and highway safety improvement
- Rob will be supporting IP Course 2 in Albuquerque
- Firearm storage cabinets were successful at Hualapai and Whiteriver; IP looking to partner with BH to expand project to Nevada tribal communities

iv. Institutional EH

- LT Paula Morgan from our U&O SU to PIMC this week as one of the Safety Officers

k. Portland – *Not on call*

l. Tucson – *Not on call*

m. EHSC

i. Staffing

- Braden Hickey selected as General EH Consultant (vice Angela Hodge)

ii. Kudos to Shelby Haddeland on the REHS study group

iii. Courses

- LPD – 08 August
- Course 2 [in-person pilot] in August 2023 in Albuquerque
- Sanitary Survey Course – 28 August in Oklahoma City
- Strategies for building professional success forthcoming

iv. Train-the-Trainer workgroup (Braden Hickey, Jeff Conner, Sam Frank) presented to 45 people at NEHA today

3. HQ Announcements

a. Injury prevention (Molly Madson & Andrea Tsatoke)

i. Fellowship

- Implementation phase has begun and will include the in-person field course in Duluth, MN in October
- In-person course in Atlanta was last week alongside Annual IPS Meeting

ii. Short courses

- Course 2 [in-person pilot] in August 2023 in Albuquerque

iii. Housekeeping

- IP Specialist calls – every other month, all are welcome
- 2025 AI/AN National Conference on Injury and Violence Prevention planning to begin August 2023

iv. TIPCAP

- Bi-annual reports were due 31 July and 26/27 received, with one extension
- Non-competing continuation application is due 02 September and a new template was provided and is available
- Annual Workshop will be in September 2023 in Denver
- In-person site visits beginning
- Webinars for the TIPCAP sites, including building a video presentation and the National Digital Car Seat Check Form available at www.tipcap.org

b. Institutional EH (Brian Hroch)

i. National IEH Meeting was 25-26 May in Phoenix

- IEH Program Plan
- IEH Workforce Development
 - Residency (field and USUHS)
- Professional development
- Safe Patient Handling and Mobility
- IH Protocols: finalize
- Trainings
 - EHSC Safety Officer Courses
- Radiation Protection Program
 - Templates and training opportunities

- Office of Quality
 - Total System Safety and Quality Workgroup
 - IHS Root Cause Analysis Workgroup initiation
 - Enterprise Risk Management
- ii. [IHM Part 1 – Chapter 9 – Occupational Safety And Health Program](#)
now available
- c. Performance Measures FY2026-2030 (Matt Albright)
 - i. Next Performance Measure cycle is FY2026-2030
 - These usually need to be included in the Report to Congress a couple years before implementation
 - ii. Surveyed Area DEHS Directors in July 2023
 - Results
 - Environmental Surveillance – 73% voted to Keep It
 - Injury Prevention – 50% voted to Keep It; 20% voted to Change It; and 30% voted Unsure
 - Some felt it didn't show behavior change
 - Some felt it was easy and doable for all Areas
 - Some indicated it could be better but unsure how to make it better
 - iii. Environmental Surveillance
 - Changes not needed
 - iv. Injury Prevention
 - Molly Madson asked Areas if she could poll IP Specialists on 08 August IP call to get their specific feedback regarding the IP PM and Areas agreed
 - Further discussion necessary to determine IP PM
 - DEHS HQ will set up focused calls to occur in fall 2023
- d. Miscellaneous (Matt Albright)
 - i. 2023 Model Aquatic Health Code in WebEHRS summer 2023
 - ii. COSTEP & [Civil Service] EH Extern update
 - Virtual Symposium 09 August, 1300-1530ET
 - iii. DEHS Climate Change Workgroup
 - Meeting routinely and developing recommendations to present at the Annual DEHS Directors Meeting in 2024 in Oklahoma City
 - iv. RRM Freeze: October 2023



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v. WebEHRS

- Establishments entered during COVID-19 may not meet WebEHRS establishment type definitions
 - Area staff should review the establishment types to ensure they align with definitions
 - Can there be duplicate establishments if the RRM is denied for one of them? Possibly, will discuss on future call
 - Sam Frank (reporting 14 August) will be working on this initiative
- Grocery stores and aquatic facilities may have their current definitions refined

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