



Environmental Health Services

● Healthy Environments = Healthy People ●

DEHS Directors' Meeting: 03/05/20

Meeting recording available; <https://ihs.cosocloud.com/px4lxt1idfbe/>

Next conference call May 07, 2020 1:00-2:00PM ET

Alaska:	Denman Ondelacy	Nashville:	Kit Grosch
Albuquerque:	Chris Bradley	Navajo:	Donna Gilbert
Bemidji:	Casey Crump	Oklahoma:	Danny Walters
Billings:	Darcy Merchant	Phoenix:	Kenny Hicks
California:	Carolyn Garcia	Portland:	Shawn Blackshear
Great Plains:	Chris Allen	Tucson:	Travis Bowser
Environmental Health Support Center: Jeff Dickson			
Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Martin Smith, Holly Billie, Charles Woodlee, Molly Madson, Stephen Piontkowski			

1. Director's Welcome and Update (Kelly Taylor)

- a. Overview of this call and it's focus on COVID-19
 - i. *Tribal and Urban Indian Organization Leader Call on the Coronavirus 2019* today at 3:30 p.m. ET
 - ii. [COVID-19 Preliminary Guidance to Agencies, OPM, 3-3-20](#)
 - iii. See [CDC's COVID-19 website](#) for current and relevant information to ensure all your consultations are accurate
 - iv. Call on COVID-19 Update for IHS Employees, March 06 at 3:00 p.m. ET
- b. Environmental Health Specialist of the Year Award – 2019
Congratulations Robert Morones, Phoenix Area
 - i. Alaska Area Nominee: Christopher Fish
 - ii. Albuquerque Area Nominee: Sam Frank
 - iii. Bemidji Area Nominee: Garrett Steiner
 - iv. Great Plains Area Nominee: Dusty Joplin
 - v. Oklahoma City Area Nominee: Jordan Cox
 - vi. Phoenix Area Nominee: Robert Morones

2. Area Highlights

*Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?
Are you targeting specific populations?
What resources and information are you utilizing in your risk communication activities?
Is there anything HQ-DEHS can do to assist with your efforts?*



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

a. Alaska

i. Other COVID-19

1. ANTHC made preparations in case they received any cases and they have test kits
2. ANTHC Environmental Health in communications w their counter parts; no formal requests for action known to date
3. Concerns if a tribal member is COVID-19 positive should they be allowed into the community and How would you isolate them
4. 17 Commissioned Officers from Alaska Area deployed

b. Albuquerque

i. Other COVID-19

1. 06 March call planned w CEOs, clinical directors, etc.
2. Received an inquiry from a detention center
3. Using CDC as primary resource

ii. Staffing

1. Applicants for the two district vacancies were received and interviews will be conducted on 06 March
2. Area DEHS vacancy closes 05 March
3. Service Unit Sanitarian vacancies at Taos and Durango forthcoming
4. RADM Buchanan recently chatted w RADM Taylor re: ABQ vacancies and she stated announcements and interviews are ongoing

c. Bemidji

i. Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?

1. Drafted emails to head starts, child care, casinos, etc. sharing CDC resources and offering assistance

ii. Are you targeting specific populations?

1. Basically anyone we serve

iii. Other COVID-10

1. National Supply Service Center plans to make expired masks available to give to tribes based on CDC guideline
 - Bemidji Area, IEHO, charged to contact tribes and determine need for masks
 - Much discussion on this issue
 - Clarification determined: the National Supply Service Center has expired N-95 respirators they plan to make available to clinic/patient care staff based on CDC guidelines
 - Concurrence: IHS needs to ensure this initiative is communicated appropriately and carefully (RADM will follow-up w IHS leadership)



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

- iv. Staffing
 - 1. Filled two positions in Minnesota District Office (both previous COSTEPs)
- d. Billings
 - i. *Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?*
 - 1. Planning to begin outreach on 16 March
 - ii. *Are you targeting specific populations?*
 - 1. Similar to what the other Areas have stated they're doing
 - 2. In addition injury prevention programs who may be doing car seat clinics and such
 - iii. *What resources and information are you utilizing in your risk communication activities?*
 - 1. CDC
 - iv. *Is there anything HQ-DEHS can do to assist with your efforts?*
 - 1. Any information you can send down the pike
- v. Staffing
 - 1. Vacancy Announcement for Wind River SU forthcoming
- e. California
 - i. *Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?*
 - 1. Sent info to childcare facilities about three weeks ago
 - 2. Sent [CA] infection control guidelines to ambulatory care facilities earlier this week
 - ii. *Are you targeting specific populations?*
 - 1. Childcare and healthcare facilities
 - iii. *What resources and information are you utilizing in your risk communication activities?*
 - 1. CDC; CA Dept. of Health [alert network]; CA OES
 - iv. *Is there anything HQ-DEHS can do to assist with your efforts?*
 - v. *Other COVID-19*
 - 1. CA declared state of emergency on 04 March
 - 2. CA Area formed COVID Coordination team last week and DEHS on team; [team has a website](#) targeting public and staff
 - 3. DEHS created FAQ re: use of expired respirators based on CDC and CA guidelines and will distribute that at tribal leaders meeting next week
 - CA has large cache of expired respirators they plan to make available and DEHS trying to ensure they include tribal health clinics w available resources
 - Example of criteria to receive respirators are having a Pan Flu plan and respiratory protection program in place
 - vi. Staffing
 - 1. Redding and Ukiah vacancy announcements forthcoming
 - 2. Tim Shelhamer transferring to Sacramento District position



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

- f. Great Plains
 - i. Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?*
 - ii. Are you targeting specific populations?*
 - 1. Elders and children
 - iii. What resources and information are you utilizing in your risk communication activities?*
 - iv. Is there anything HQ-DEHS can do to assist with your efforts?*
 - v. Other COVID-19*
 - 1. Conducting outreach to IHS and Tribal clinics
 - 2. Involved w ICS at many sites who are not yet activated but on alert
 - 3. During monthly DEHS staff call emphasized using reliable sources like CDC
 - vi. Staffing*
 - 1. Vacancies at Belcourt and Pine Ridge
 - 2. Selection made for Minot District EH Specialist
- g. Albuquerque
 - i. Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?*
 - ii. Are you targeting specific populations?*
 - iii. What resources and information are you utilizing in your risk communication activities?*
 - iv. Is there anything HQ-DEHS can do to assist with your efforts?*
- h. Nashville
 - i. Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?*
 - 1. Area's emergency manager and CMO are distributing the information
 - ii. Are you targeting specific populations?*
 - 1. Attending 05 March meeting on how to protect childcare and elder feeding programs
 - iii. Other COVID-19*
 - 1. Nashville Area team asked Kit for respiratory protection info
 - iv. Staffing*
 - 1. Mike Hiles to report in August
 - 2. Riley now in an admin position in Nashville Area
- i. Navajo
 - i. Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?*
 - 1. Working w Navajo Epi Team who did radio show last week
 - ii. Are you targeting specific populations?*
 - 1. CDC
 - iii. Other COVID-19*
 - 1. Navajo Area and Navajo Nation ICSs activated
 - iv. Staffing*
 - 1. Vacancy announcements for Gallup and Fort Defiance close on 10 March
 - 2. Many Farms selection made and should report in April



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

- j. Oklahoma City
 - i. *Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?*
 - 1. *Basic messages community-wide*
 - ii. *Is there anything HQ-DEHS can do to assist with your efforts?*
 - 1. If you get information send it anyway, I'd rather have it than not
 - iii. *Other COVID-19*
 - 1. Two DEHS staff tasked with helping clinics w accreditation [focus on infection control during accreditation surveys], and helping w preparedness in the clinics
 - 2. Using CDC assessment tool for healthcare facilities
 - 3. Provided pandemic or infectious disease response plan
 - iv. Staffing
 - 1. Vacancy announcement for Clinton, OK closes on 05 March
- k. Portland
 - i. *What resources and information are you utilizing in your risk communication activities?*
 - 1. CDC
 - ii. *Is there anything HQ-DEHS can do to assist with your efforts?*
 - 1. If you get information send it anyway, I'd rather have it than not
 - iii. *Other COVID-19*
 - 1. Working w IHS clinics
 - iv. Staffing
 - 1. Shawn Blackshear transferring to Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board
 - 2. Request for 1-2 week TDYs over the next few months; if you or your staff can assist please contact [Marcus Martinez](#) and send FYI to RADM Taylor
- l. Phoenix
 - i. *Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?*
 - 1. No Area-wide coordinated outreach in the community at this time. Phoenix Area DEHS Management Team have a team call on March 05 to begin to formulate a COVID-19 health communication plan for targeted community populations/establishment types.
 - 2. To date, outreach has been case-by-case in response to questions or as part of routine surveys. One team member has drafted a very basic bulletin for schools/child care centers



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

We understand staff, parents, and students may have questions and concerns about the novel (new) coronavirus disease, now called COVID-19. The situation surrounding the outbreak is rapidly evolving and the information or recommendations are changing as new information becomes available. Please follow the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html>

The CDC will update this guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available. Please check the following CDC website periodically for updated interim guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

For this or any other environmental health issues, please feel free to contact the Reno District IHS Office of Environmental Health and Engineering or your designated IHS Environmental Health Officer/Specialist.

3. CAPT Cramer prepared a targeted communication for healthcare establishment safety officers

ii. Are you targeting specific populations?

1. The clinical response has received most attention to date by multiple Area/HQ subject matter experts
2. Targeted community-based populations under consideration for DEHS COVID-19 health communication plan: Schools/Child Care Centers; Elder Care Centers; Jails

iii. What resources and information are you utilizing in your risk communication activities?

1. CDC and State Dept of Health

iv. Is there anything HQ-DEHS can do to assist with your efforts?

1. Coordinate with partner agencies (e.g., BIE, BIA, ACF, CDC) on targeted messaging initiatives specific to tribes so we aren't duplicating effort and have a degree of consistency
2. Provide "canned" messaging if/where warranted

v. Other COVID-19

1. CAPT Cramer is deployed to Newark airport (New Jersey) conducting passenger screening and health and safety related initiatives

m. Tucson

i. Is your Area conducting any community outreach on COVID-19?

1. Working alongside tribal PH Emergency Coordinator

ii. Are you targeting specific populations?

1. Community-wide, but schools and Head Starts sent several requests for training

iii. What resources and information are you utilizing in your risk communication activities?

1. CDC and County Health Dept.



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

n. EHSC

- i. COVID-19 – no request sent to EHSC, but are willing to assist in Area support if needed.
- ii. Leadership and Personal Development webinars and Leading Self cohort will be announced very soon
- iii. New Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) will be deployed in Areas by end of July; system relates more to the IEH staff (clinics) rather than field staff
- iv. Intro to IP course in Portland has 9 people registered
- v. Staffing
 1. Angela Hodge to retire soon; final date TBD

3. HQ Announcements

- a. Annual DEHS Directors' Meeting
 - i. When: 03-07 August 2020
 - ii. Where: Rockville, MD
 - iii. Lodging: TBA
- b. NDECI
 - i. Pilot extended to mid-August
 - ii. Considerable data quality items completed
- c. IEH (Charles Woodlee)
 - i. WebCident replacement
 1. Known as IHS Safety Tracking & Response (I-STAR)
 2. Launch on ~~16 March 2020~~ – (postponed after DEHS call, to 23 March at earliest)

4. COVID-19 Deployment Experience (S. Piontkowski)

- a. Background
 - i. APHT 5 February on-call month
 - ii. Typical PHS deployment
 - iii. 02-28 February at Chicago O'Hare Quarantine Stations
 - iv. Augmented CDC full-time Quarantine Station staff
- b. Logistics
 - i. A cluster
 - ii. You're your own best advocate
- c. Roles
 - i. Passenger screening
 - ii. Data entry and verification
 - iii. Assisted w Quarantine Station's screening processes, training, and SOPs



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

d. Take homes

- i. Be flexible
- ii. Know when to lead and when to follow
- iii. You're your own best advocate
- iv. Select trusted resources
 1. In addition to CDC and State please see WHO
 - [WHO COVID-19 publications listing](#)
 - [WHO COVID-19 situation dashboard](#) (i.e. interactive map)

Next conference call May 07, 2020 1:00-2:00PM ET