



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

DEHS Directors' Meeting: 04/01/21

Meeting recording available upon [request](#)

Next conference call June 03, 2021 1:00-2:00PM ET

Alaska: *Not on call*

Albuquerque: Braden Hickey

Bemidji: Tim Duffy

Billings: Darcy Merchant

California: Carolyn Garcia

Great Plains: Chris Allen

Nashville: Michael Hiles

Navajo: Donna Gilbert

Oklahoma: Danny Walters

Phoenix: Kenny Hicks

Portland: *Not on call*

Tucson: *Not on call*

Environmental Health Support Center: *Not on call*

Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Martin Smith, Charles Woodlee, Molly Madson, Stephen Piontkowski

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

- a. Thank you for joining today & for everything you're doing in response to COVID-19
- b. Congratulations LT Darcy Merchant on becoming USPHS Commissioned Officer (HSO category)
- c. Congratulations CAPT Kenny Hicks on retirement from USPHS Commissioned Corps and becoming Director, OEHE, Phoenix Area
- d. Leadership announcements
 - i. Xavier Becerra, Secretary, HHS
 - ii. Rachel Levine, Assistant Secretary for Health
 - iii. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General
- e. USPHS Unaccompanied Children Mission
 - i. Many Commissioned Officers being activated for deployment
 - ii. Some confusion surrounding deployments
 - iii. COs should be flexible
 - iv. Know if your staff are on your Area's mission critical list
 - v. Please notify RADM Taylor if your staff deploy
- f. DEHS COVID-19 Contributions Summary Document
 - i. Thank you for updating this routinely over past year
 - ii. Last version distributed on 30 March 2021
 - iii. We are in the process of retooling the frequency and method we collect & disseminate your contributions
- g. [IHS Director's Award for COVID-19 Pandemic Heroism](#)
 - i. Please let us know if you would like your staff to be included in a group award nomination submitted by HQ



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2. Performance Measures (Martin Smith)

- a. DEHS Performance Measure 2016-2020
 - i. Thank you for SurveyMonkey responses
 - ii. Summary report forthcoming
- b. DEHS Performance Measures 2021-2025
 - i. Guidance document distributed 31 March 2021
 - ii. Environmental Surveillance
 1. FY20 baseline – 70% of food establishments with Certified Food Protection Manager
 2. FY21 target – 70%
 - iii. Injury Prevention
 1. FY20 baseline – 154 persons who received injury prevention training
 2. FY21 target – 154

3. DEHS COVID-19 Survey – preliminary results (Stephen Piontkowski & Braden Hickey)

- a. [See slides presented](#) after the Area Highlights and HQ Announcements portion of these minutes

4. Area Highlights

What takes up most of your time, specifically; vacancies/job announcements?

Do you support DEHS HQ writing up all DEHS staff for IHS Director's Award or do you want to do it yourself?

- a. Alaska – *Not on call*
- b. Albuquerque – no report
- c. Bemidji
 - i. What takes up most of your time, specifically; vacancies/job announcements?
 - Fluctuates based on program needs
 - Recruiting
 - Getting announcements made; [Area IPS announcement](#) closes 31 December
 - Staff support: supervising; coaching/mentoring; working w staff in the field; special projects
 - Extinguishing fires
 - ii. Do you support DEHS HQ writing up all DEHS staff for IHS Director's Award or do you want to do it yourself?
 - Support a nomination from DEHS HQ

- d. Billings
 - i. What takes up most of your time, specifically; vacancies/job announcements?
 - No current vacancies
 - Preventing TA to 638 tribes & DEHS field staff
 - Alternate Billings Area EMPOC
 - ii. Do you support DEHS HQ writing up all DEHS staff for IHS Director's Award or do you want to do it yourself?
 - Support a nomination from DEHS HQ
- e. California
 - i. What takes up most of your time, specifically; vacancies/job announcements?
 - Ukiah field position to be re-advertised in April
 - EMPOC
 - Area After Action Report
 - Updating Area COOP
 - IP mini grant close out
 - Updating COVID-prevention plan
 - ii. Do you support DEHS HQ writing up all DEHS staff for IHS Director's Award or do you want to do it yourself?
 - Support a nomination from DEHS HQ
- f. Great Plains
 - i. What takes up most of your time, specifically; vacancies/job announcements?
 - EMPOC
 - Area SITREP
 - Developing Safety Officer staffing agreement
 - Facility accreditation
 - ii. Do you support DEHS HQ writing up all DEHS staff for IHS Director's Award or do you want to do it yourself?
 - Support a nomination from DEHS HQ
- g. Nashville
 - i. What takes up most of your time, specifically; vacancies/job announcements?
 - Reviewing & distributing COVID-19 safety updates
 - Writing field safety plan for staff
 - OEHE monthly newsletter
 - CAPT Grosch to retire in CY21
 - LT Grinnell to complete his current TDY & return to DEHS in June
 - ii. Do you support DEHS HQ writing up all DEHS staff for IHS Director's Award or do you want to do it yourself?
 - Support a nomination from DEHS HQ



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- h. Navajo
 - i. What takes up most of your time, specifically; vacancies/job announcements?
 - Acting DEHS Director
 - Covering SUEHO position
 - Working w Tribe on community mitigation & OSHA work
 - Review reopening plans
 - Mass vaccination clinic support
 - ii. Do you support DEHS HQ writing up all DEHS staff for IHS Director's Award or do you want to do it yourself?
 - Support a nomination from DEHS HQ
- i. Oklahoma City
 - i. What takes up most of your time, specifically; vacancies/job announcements?
 - Greatest focus on all things COVID
 - Facility accreditation
 - No current vacancies
 - Buy-back contracts
 - ii. Do you support DEHS HQ writing up all DEHS staff for IHS Director's Award or do you want to do it yourself?
 - Support a nomination from DEHS HQ
- j. Phoenix
 - i. What takes up most of your time, specifically; vacancies/job announcements?
 - 3 EHOs rostered to deploy; but 2 likely to deploy with USPHS Unaccompanied Children Apollo mission
 - Greatest focus on all things COVID
 - Some 'routine' EH services beginning to be provided
 - Guidance for personnel to safely plan & conduct field visits & establishment inspections
 - On-boarding new hires in Ft. Duchesne, Reno, & Parker
 - New Commissioned Officer at Elko, NV
 - Pending vacancies: San Carlos; Yuma; staff EHO position in Area Office; Area DEHS Director
 - ii. Do you support DEHS HQ writing up all DEHS staff for IHS Director's Award or do you want to do it yourself?
 - Support a nomination from DEHS HQ
- k. Portland – *Not on call*
- l. Tucson – *Not on call*
- m. EHSC – *Not on call*



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5. HQ Announcements

- a. Injury prevention (Molly Madson)
 - i. [Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award of 2020, Debbie Whitegrass Bullshoe](#)
 - ii. Injury Prevention Specialist call 06 April
 - iii. TIPCAP
 - Annual Workshop 09-10 June
- b. IEH (Charles Woodlee)
 - i. [Gary J. Gefroh Safety and Health Award of 2020, LCDR Michelle Livingston](#)
 - ii. I-STAR
 - OSHA reports complete
 - Governing body reporting dashboard in development
 - iii. NIOSH Data Analysis Collaboration
 - Canceled
 - iv. Residency update
 - Brandon Parker finishing thesis
 - Brandon will be available for full-time position in June
- c. [DEHS Award winners of 2020 on the IHS Blog](#)

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Slides presented during DEHS COVID-19 Survey – preliminary results session (Stephen Piontkowski & Braden Hickey)

DEHS COVID-19 SURVEY PRELIMINARY FINDINGS


- Introduction / Overview
- MPH Capstone
- Project Summary
- Q&A



CAPT Stephen Piontkowski




LT Braden Hickey




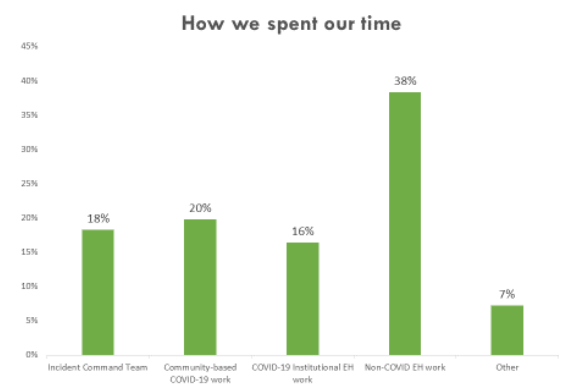
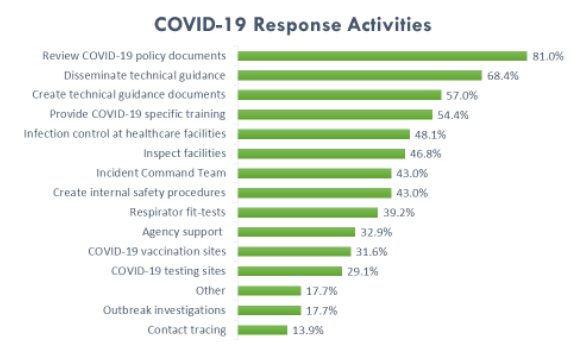
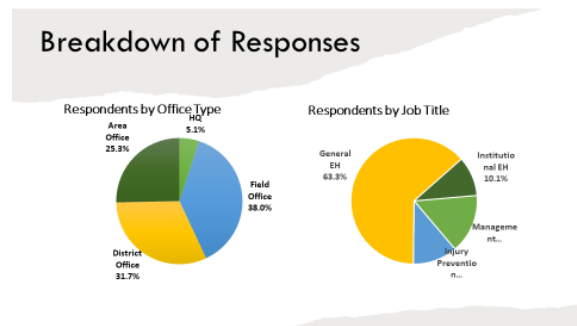
PURPOSE

- Research question
 - What has the COVID-19 pandemic prevention, response, & recovery activities looked like for the Indian Health Service, Division of Environmental Health Services?
- Goals
 - Identify activities DEHS conducted during the pandemic
 - Determine how prepared staff felt when conducting COVID-19 related activities outside of traditional EH work
 - Identify successes & challenges of providing services during the pandemic

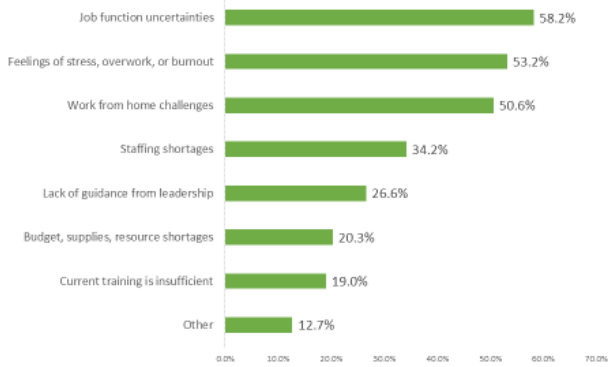


SURVEY QUESTIONS

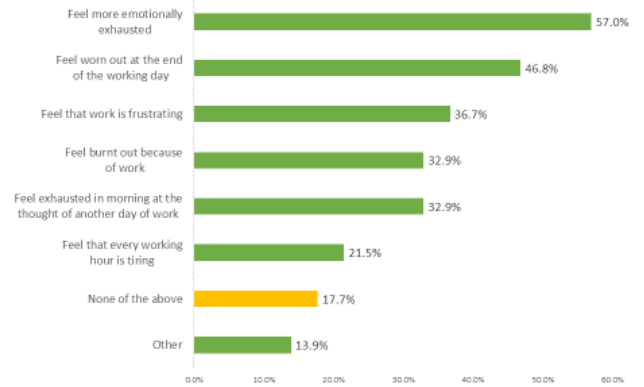
- Demographic (Area, Job Title, Credentials, Years of Experience, etc.)
- COVID-19 Activities
- Routine Work
- Needs, gaps, issues
- Worker resources and protection
- Communication
- Burnout, stress, overwork
- Telework
- Successes & challenges

Gaps Due to COVID-19



Burnout & Stress



Will you request telework in the future?



Successes

- Showcase skills – flexibility, resourcefulness, adaptability
- Teamwork
- Workforce Safety
- Importance and value of environmental health as a critical public health service.


Challenges

- Lack of standardized guidance and clearly defined roles.
- Communication with staff – staying “in-sync” with field staff and their work.
- Lack of preparation for emergencies – COOP, training, resources, etc.

QUESTIONS?



CAPT Stephen Piontkowski



LT Braden Hickey

