Next conference call October 07, 2021 1:00-2:00PM ET

Alaska: Not on call
Albuquerque: Carrie Oyster
Bemidji: Tim Duffy
Billings: Jordan Vandjelovic
California: Carolyn Garcia
Great Plains: Not on call
Nashville: Kit Grosch
Navajo: Donna Gilbert
Oklahoma: Not on call
Phoenix: Not on call
Portland: Chris Fish
Tucson: Travis Bowser

Environmental Health Support Center: Jeff Dickson
Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Charles Woodlee, Holly Billie, Mike Reed, Stephen Piontkowski

1. Director's Welcome and Update (Kelly Taylor)
   a. Today's Area highlights has a focused question related to COVID-19
      i. Please include other pertinent updates related to your programs
      i. IHS asked to report things related to the pandemic (e.g. ongoing challenges and weaknesses likely to exist beyond conclusion of the pandemic)
      ii. Please start thinking about those as they apply to your program. For instance, what comes to mind for me include the following weaknesses:
         • IHS Indian Health Manual Chapter 9 – outdated
         • Revised Chapter 9 complete and has been awaiting approvals for extended period
         • Lack of official emergency preparedness program in IHS
         • Need for agency focus and funding for a more formal program (e.g. full-time EMPOCs and national program managers [no collateral duties]) that report directly to the Area or Agency Directors
         • Need for Employee Health Program
         • Lack of nationally-led initiative, too varied from Area to Area
   c. American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)
      i. IHS Facilities = $600M for COVID-19-related needs for leasing, purchasing, construction, alteration, renovating, or equipping of health facilities and maintenance and improvement projects
         • Of the $600M, $29M went to Facilities and Environmental Health Support Account and ~$9M of the $29M was specifically for EHSA. EHS and SFC share the EHSA so it may look like we should get a proportional share of that $9M but that is not completely accurate.
ii. In addition to the $600M, $10M is specifically for the delivery of potable water
   • This increases SFC’s workload so much, that they feel like they should get the bulk of the ~$9M so they can spend that $10M on projects
   • It’s hard to argue with that, but if **DEHS has a need related to COVID activities, you should work with your Area OEHE Director** to see if DEHS can use some of those funds to complete that work

2. **Area Highlights**

   *Has your work shifted at all in light of the current rise in cases/variants & the latest CDC guidance for fully vaccinated people & the President’s new actions to increase vaccinations?*

a. Alaska – **Not on call**

b. Albuquerque

   i. **Has your work shifted at all…?**
   • Head Start Summit 2021 was virtual
   • Used EHSC platform to register participants & for pre/post test: worked very well; many folks from outside AQ Area
   • Posted recording on YouTube & will administer pre/post test to those who viewed the recording
   • Conducting trainings virtually will continue & may be more frequent then pre-pandemic
   • Will continue to use EHSC to register training attendees & to conduct pre/post tests

   ii. **Safe and Proper Use of Disinfectants to Reduce Viral Surface Contamination in Correctional Facilities**, NIOSH, 2021

c. Bemidji

   i. **Has your work shifted at all…?**
   • On the verge of a shift: BE Area standing-up ICS with a current focus on attestation plan; OEHE not involved yet, but providing consultation & ensuring DEHS staff conducting work that aligns with their skill set (e.g. not conducting swab tests)
   • Update planning & response plans as needed
   • Sense of disappointment that all the work completed so far has not prevented the potential next wave of cases
   • There was an upswing of traditional (non-COVID-19) EH-related work conducted this summer
ii. Office space updates
   • Mt. Pleasant, MI: conducting interviews next week for positions in this new office
   • Duluth, MN: new office should be open in about one year
   • Grand Rapids, MI: discussions of long-term plans to shift Area resources to this location to better serve tribes in MI

iii. Staffing
   • Rhinelander, WI: District EHO vacancy announcement should be posted next week

d. Billings
   i. Has your work shifted at all…?
      • Not as of yet, but may change in near future

e. California
   i. Has your work shifted at all…?
      • Not really, EMPOC duties ongoing but there has been a recent increase in attaining testing supplies
      • Update planning & response plans as needed; not really a new duty as this has been done routinely throughout pandemic
   ii. Dixie fire impacted Dixie Rancheria; town evacuated so no loss of life but structures destroyed
   iii. Staffing
      • Ukiah Field Sanitarian vacancy re-announced after selectee declined offer

f. Great Plains – Not on call (updates submitted via email)
   i. Has your work shifted at all…?
      • The GPA (outside of IHS & Tribes) is seeing a steady increase in cases; anticipate we will see a lot more COVID-19 cases in the unvaccinated once schools reopen
      • IEH working on restart of IC at HQ
      • DEHS & IEH staff working on Burn Rate Calculations, Ordering Supplies, etc.
      • We were so close to actually getting a survey schedule established too
   ii. Traditional (non-COVID-19) EH-related work
      • Pow Wow survey work
      • Consultation with schools prior to reopening
      • School & Head Start survey work
      • Some late summer food safety survey work
      • Casino/Hotel survey work
      • Healthy homes survey work
      • Justin Bunn finished his radon study in the Lake Andes area (Yankton Sioux Community); overall no significant issues identified
   iii. IEH working on accreditation
   iv. IP
• Working with the two TIPCAP sites & we hope the Winnebago site did get their report submitted
• 2020 Occupant Restraint Report completed
• Working with several sites on conducting Severe Injury Surveillance System (SISS)

g. Nashville
   i. Has your work shifted at all…?
      • Site visit to tribe to survey Head Start canceled at tribe’s request due to increase of COVID-19 cases
      • Two staff families have COVID+ cases which hasn’t happened in many months
      • Area Office is trying to increase vaccination rates (e.g. incentives)
      • OEHE to manage the “impact assessment form” for the Area
      • Area ICS may be re-instated

h. Navajo
   i. Has your work shifted at all…?
      • Slight change focused on ICS becoming fully or partially operational
      • One OEHE office may be used as vaccination clinic site
   ii. Staffing
      • The two GS-7/9 non-supervisory Sanitarian positions in Gallup & Shiprock were re-advertised & recently closed

i. Oklahoma City – Not on call

j. Phoenix – Not on call

k. Portland
   i. Has your work shifted at all…?
      • Area ICS never completely demobilized, but weekly meetings are now occurring
      • Responding to questions related to the latest CDC guidance
      • OSHA Temporary Standard training for all staff
   ii. Responding to wildfire issues as needed

l. Tucson
   i. Has your work shifted at all…?
      • TU Area ICS remained active
      • Travis continues to serve as EMPOC, Safety Officer, Vaccine POC
      • Tribes began to reopen services a few months ago but now moving into more COVID-related work
   ii. New DEHS staff to report in December 2021
m. EHSC
i. Has your work shifted at all…?
   • Many staff have been involved with Area ICS & after scaling back this summer, ICS activity has increased the past three weeks
ii. Using the EHSC platform for the AQ Area Head Start Summit 2021 was a great pilot & collaboration
   • EHSC looks forward to utilizing the tool with other Area programs; especially course registration feature for large regional or annual events
iii. Introduction to IP pilot courses in June & in late August 2021
   • Great deal of interest to attend from across the Areas; had to place people on waiting lists
iv. LPD Program
   • Next Leading Others cohort session 23-27 August
   • LPD Board developing a survey for OEHE managers to understand what their knowledge & awareness is of the LPD Program

3. HQ Announcements
   a. Injury prevention (Holly Billie)
      i. Introduction to IP pilot course – second offering
         • 23-27 August
         • Course is full
   b. IEH (Charles Woodlee)
      i. I-STAR: Env. of Care Dashboards
         • Out for IEH review through next week
         • Final release expected in next three weeks
      ii. ECOMP: BLS report due soon
         • IEH/SOs need to close cases – help supervisors
         • OSHA Record-keepers need to recertify this month. Contact HQ if need certification approval
      iii. Employee Health Program
         • Office of Quality has started work on a policy
         • EHO/IEHO roles should be very limited in support of clinical staff administering an employee health program
         • BE Area has had to consistently advocate that DEHS staff not get involved with healthcare related work they should not be doing
4. Other

a. COSTEP/Extern Symposium (Stephen Piontkowski)
   i. Thanks for supporting the students
   ii. Symposium was a success: 2, 2-hr sessions complete; 99 attendees total [both days combined]; 15 EHOs/ENGs stationed in 8 Areas presented their summer projects, accomplishments, activities, and overall experience

b. NEHA-FDA National Retail Food Regulatory Program (Mike Reed)
   i. Multi-agency initiative to advance conformance with the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards
   ii. More info to DEHS Listserv & Area DEHS Directors forthcoming

c. ARPA question – if the EHSA is receiving an additional ~$9M how will there be equitable distribution of the EHSA funds that get split between SFC & DEHS?
   i. The additional $9M in ARPA funds will be distributed to the Areas proportionately and should not impact what DEHS already receives in EHSA funds (i.e. there should not be a need for SFC to tap into funds EHS and SFC already receive). SFC’s additional needs should be covered by the bulk of the funds each Area gets out of the $9M coming to them as ARPA funds. Received and processing for payment.

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