



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

DEHS Directors' Meeting: 10/01/20

Meeting recording not available

Next conference call December 03, 2020 1:00-2:00PM ET

Alaska:	<i>Not on call</i>	Nashville:	Kit Grosch
Albuquerque:	Carrie Oyster	Navajo:	Donna Gilbert
Bemidji:	<i>Not on call</i>	Oklahoma:	Danny Walters
Billings:	Darcy Merchant	Phoenix:	Kenny Hicks, Vince Garcia
California:	Carolyn Garcia	Portland:	Chris Fish
Great Plains:	<i>Not on call</i>	Tucson:	<i>Not on call</i>
Environmental Health Support Center: Jeff Dickson			
Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Martin Smith, Holly Billie, Charles Woodlee, Mike Reed, Molly Madson, Stephen Piontkowski			

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

- a. Happy new year!
- b. Continuing Resolution through 12/11/2020 – we remain at FY2020 levels
- c. Oct. 15, 2020 RRM Freeze – be sure everything is accurate before then
- d. COERS – be mindful of deadlines
- e. BIE/DOI-Indian Affairs Strategy Team no longer meeting weekly – [see reopening plan](#) – let Kelly know if you want a list of BIE-/Tribally-operated schools in your Area
- f. NIGC weekly calls continue – [National Virtual Training Conference October 6-8](#) – Environmental Public Health and Safety Panel on 7th, with Martin presenting – need to register to listen – IHS invited
- g. CDC has made themselves available to tribes as a resource for both schools and casinos – they've done virtual walk-throughs with schools – let me know if your DEHS staff collaborating with them
- h. IHS Injury Prevention Specialist Fellowship Symposium held this week – 13 Fellows presented their projects virtually
- i. World EH Day was September 26 – I'm working with the EHO PAC and Commissioned Corps Leadership to get September declared EH Month for USPHS
- j. Welcome CAPT Carrie Oyster, Director, DEHS, Albuquerque Area



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2. Area Highlights

School reopening

What training have you provided schools as they have re-opened?

Are any currently open?

What are your challenges and best practices when involved with reopening schools?

Casino issue

Are there any significant changes to updates you provided on the August DEHS Directors' call?

- a. Alaska – *Not on call*
- b. Albuquerque
 - i. Welcome CAPT Carrie Oyster, Director, DEHS, Albuquerque Area
- c. Bemidji – *Not on call* (updates submitted via email)
 - i. EMPOC, CDR Tim Taylor, involved in planning, coordinating & assisting delivery of an influenza clinic at Area Office
 - ii. Involved in marketing, prioritizing & distribution of Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 test kits to BIE & tribal schools & colleges; working closely with tribal clinics that will be conducting this testing
 - iii. Facilitated the addition of 4 Epidemiologist to assist tribes with COVID-19 response (e.g. creating work plans, providing office space & linking them to tribal services)
- d. Billings
 - i. School Reopening – Training
 - i. Formal trainings not provided
 - Staff began the process by submitting CDC recommended COVID-19 compliance information (“School-Admin-K12-Readiness and Planning Tool”) to BIE, tribal, & state schools when the information was first released
 - Once schools received formal guidance from their respective institutions (BIE, State Office of Public Instruction, etc.), staff uses their school sanctioned protocols (if any) to conduct a COVID-19 compliance assessment
 - If a school did not utilize a school sanctioned protocol, they could use CDC guidance
 - ii. Crow Service Unit is only location, thus far, to utilize a CDC “strike team” to conduct virtual/in-person assessments of local reservation schools
 - They utilized the CDC’s “School-Admin-K12-Readiness and Planning Tool”



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- e. California
 - i. [Re-advertising an EHO position in the Ukiah Field Office](#)
 - ii. Selectee for the RDO position to report for duty mid-October
 - iii. Staff resumed routine EH field work at select facilities using infection prevention protocols developed by CADEHS
 - iv. Continue to monitor AQI in California and issue advisories to supervisors with staff performing fieldwork
 - v. Arranged for the distribution of 200 powered air purifiers to 8 THPs in the California Area by NSSC
 - vi. Continue to process T/U requests for infection control supplies and prepare allocation plans for IC supplies distributed by NSSC
- f. Great Plains – *Not on call* (updates submitted via email)
 - i. School Reopening
 - Staff provided technical assistance to schools that have either reopened or plan to reopen as this latest surge of COVID-19 cases recedes
 - Using CDC guidance, GPA Tribal & IHS staff are reviewing reopening plans & providing recommendations as needed; staff have been active in providing on-site school assessments & answered any & all questions sites have related to reopening during the pandemic
 - DEHS staff heavily involved with fielding questions on the new Abbott Binax Now rapid test for COVID-19 which is intended for schools & long term care facilities; this is a relatively recent development for the EMPOC/IEH program & will take a few weeks to insure all sites are using the test as intended; DEHS is working to assist sites get their CLIA waivers & to facilitate proper use & reporting of test results to the applicable authorities
 - ii. Gaming Updates
 - Staff provided technical assistance & training to hotel/casino staff
 - Staff provided comments & recommendations on proposed reopening plans
- g. Nashville
 - i. Providing virtual training in COVID-19 facility preparedness & disinfection, HAZCOM, BBP, Food Service to Head Start/Day Care/Youth Treatment facilities; some open, others have staff in to clean, disinfect & otherwise prepare for children
 - ii. Contacted some schools & provided guidance from CDC
 - iii. Some school administrators difficult to contact so guidance was provided to the Health Director
 - iv. Most casinos open & many were in touch with DEHS regarding reopening; all provided CDC & NIGC guidance & other assistance as requested



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- h. Navajo
 - i. Assisting w Navajo Water Access Mission
- i. Oklahoma City
 - i. BIE school located in Lawton, Oklahoma (Riverside Indian School) is totally virtual at this time. We have offered our services to them during this pandemic response, but have not been contacted so far
 - ii. Haskell University in Lawrence, Kansas is totally virtual and so far have not been able to assist them so far
 - iii. EMPOC currently working with tribes within the Area on the BinaxNOW Covid Testing platform
 - iv. All service units are sending in weekly service unit operation briefs so that these can be forwarded to Area and tribal leadership as requested
 - v. All casinos are currently open. Some larger casinos have more latitude in expanding distance within their gaming units, but some of the small casinos are doing their best to do the same. All are requiring mask use
 - vi. All staff are still currently in a telework status and will more than likely will be so until the end of the calendar year
- j. Phoenix
 - i. School Reopening – Virtual Trainings
 - All Districts continue to provide virtual trainings to school personnel
 - Topics include: Building Safety/Maintenance, Infection Control, OSHA HAZCOM and BBP, Injury Prevention, & COVID-19 intro and general safety precautions
 - Challenges: Network connectivity in remote locations; 3-4 hours in front of a screen can be too much
 - Best Practices: Multiple instructors gives instructors a break, allows for one to monitor chat box, others to answer questions; modules include interactive segments such as polling & Kahoots to quiz participants throughout the sessions; SurveyMonkey for sign-in & evaluation; only schedule one full session/day [back-to-back sessions are doable but not preferred]
 - CDC Consultations: CDC deployed public health advisors at 7 tribal locations to date to provide community based COVID response & technical support
 - ii. Gaming Updates
 - Most open with limited capacity, physical barriers installed & social distancing requirements in place
 - Others continue to remain closed b/c tribes are closed or they may serve as alternate care sites
 - Provide TA & consultation as needed (e.g., virtual trainings provided to managers & staff in some casinos upon request)
 - Conduct virtual inspections or check-ins (e.g. establishment sends documents/logs, photos or videos of conditions to DEHS) or check-ins



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- Some establishments inside casino resorts have reopened (e.g., childcare, movie theaters, restaurants and bars)
- k. Portland
 - i. Schools served by the Area Office currently open for distance learning
 - ii. PAO completed survey of Ft. Simcoe School, but not yet provided training or resources related to reopening at Chemawa or Shoshone-Bannock
 - iii. Vacancy announcement vice LCDR Blackshear forthcoming
- l. Tucson – *Not on call* (updates submitted via email)
 - i. All casinos open & fully operational, routine surveys conducted
 - ii. Pascua Yaqui Schools: Most students are in Tucson Unified School District & are attending school online; PY High School is not open & has no dates
 - iii. Tohono O’odham Nation: Public school district is open & going to school online; BIE schools are not open, they may open in January per the EHO’s reports in Sells
 - iv. Head Starts: PYT is virtual, with about 30-35 kids (home meals provided); TO Nation slated to open in March
- m. EHSC
 - i. Providing support to the Albuquerque Area ICS
 - ii. Not provided assistance or been requested to provide assistance for casino reopening
 - iii. EHSC is part of the workgroup deploying the BINAX Now testing cards to BIE schools

3. HQ Announcements

- a. Injury prevention (Holly Billie)
 - i. Fellowship Symposium was completed in 3 sessions from September 28-30; thanks to those who attended; if you were not able to attend, the recordings can be viewed on the [IP Fellowship website](#)
 - ii. TIPCAP application deadline is 01 October; anticipated earliest start date for new grantees is 01 December but might be pushed to early January 2021
 - iii. IP Specialist call 06 October; for updates & decisions from the call, please reach out to your Area IP representative
- b. IEH (Charles Woodlee)
 - i. Residency
 - Brandon Parker working on thesis
 - Announcement for 2021-2023 cycle open until 19 October
 - This year the university waived the requirement to have taken the GRE
 - Please encourage any staff who may be interested to apply
 - Contact CAPT Woodlee for more information

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