



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

DEHS Directors' Meeting: 11/07/19

Meeting recording available: <https://ihs.cosocloud.com/po16ly2fq674/>

Next conference call January 02, 2020 1:00-2:00PM ET

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Alaska: | <i>Not on call</i> | Nashville: | Kit Grosch |
| Albuquerque: | Brian Hroch | Navajo: | Gordon Tsatoke |
| Bemidji: | Tim Duffy | Oklahoma: | Danny Walters |
| Billings: | Darcy Merchant | Phoenix: | Kenny Hicks |
| California: | Carolyn Garcia | Portland: | <i>Not on call</i> |
| Great Plains: | Chris Allen | Tucson: | <i>Not on call</i> |
| Environmental Health Support Center: Jeff Dickson, Angela Hodge | | | |
| Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Holly Billie, Charles Woodlee, Mike Reed, Stephen Piontkowski | | | |

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

- a. Frequency of these calls
 - i. Proposal and agreement to host a one hour call every two months
 - ii. Next call January 02, 2020
- b. WebEHRS and Title V – briefing from 2019 OEHE Directors meeting
 - i. BLUF: Concurrence at the meeting was that all tribes should adhere to use of WebEHRS as its designed regardless of a tribe's title status
 - ii. Issue: WebEHRS used by some tribes to calculate shares but do not actively manage WebEHRS or their establishment inventory
 - iii. Background: See Kelly's October 11, 2019 email to Area DEHS Directors, "Inactivation of Establishment type 34 (Industrial/Manufacturing) in WebEHRS"
 - iv. Challenges
 1. Tribes that do not maintain WebEHRS
 2. Tribes that use other EH management systems may not wish to use WebEHRS and their own
 - v. Action
 1. Areas should work with tribes now if they use WebEHRS to calculate tribal shares but they are not actively managing WebEHRS
 2. A formal record of decision or decision memo should be issued by DEHS/HQ regarding this issue
- c. HR – briefing from 2019 OEHE Directors meeting
 - i. Major challenge throughout OEHE
- d. Performance measures
 - i. 2016-2020 Environmental Health Performance Measures
 1. FY19 Environmental Surveillance – 31% decrease of poor employee health and hygiene foodborne illness risk factors; *target exceeded*



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2. FY19 Injury Prevention – 8% increase of driver seat belt use; *target exceeded*
3. FY20 Environmental Surveillance – Disseminate model practices and highlight challenges in reducing the poor employee health and hygiene foodborne illness risk factors
4. FY 20 Injury Prevention – Disseminate best practices determined to be most effective and highlight challenges for improving driver seat belt use
- ii. 2021-2025 Environmental Health Performance Measures
 1. FY21 Environmental Surveillance – Percent of food establishments w CFPMs
 - Data pull from WebEHRS will occur in FY20 to establish FY21 target (i.e. percentage)
 2. FY 21 Injury Prevention – Number of people who receive injury prevention training
- e. USPHS open application
 - i. Application window opened November 01 for ALL categories
 - ii. CCHQ still maintains list of priority agencies and organizations that provide direct clinical care
 - iii. USPHS is emphasizing recruiting for Medical officers, Veterinary officers, Dental officers, and Nurse Practitioners officers which means they can be placed any agency
 - iv. Inter-service Transfers and Former Commissioned Corps officers, including former JRCOSTEPs, are also encouraged to apply
 1. If Areas know of a COSTEP that was waiting for the application window to open and they apply to CC, please notify Kelly
 - v. Current number on the *pre-existing* applicant list fluctuates but is around 5 or 6
- f. Vacancy rates
 - i. 29% for EH-related job series (018, 601, 688, 690) (source: CAP-HR vacancy report, August 2019)
 - ii. HQ will continue to work with the CAP-HR reports and determine accuracy of the rates

| Area | Vacancy Rate Overall | Number of Vacancies - EH-Related Series | Number of Positions |
|--------------|----------------------|---|---------------------|
| Alaska | 0% | 0 | 0 |
| Albuquerque | 45% | 10 | 22 |
| Bemidji | 67% | 12 | 18 |
| Billings | 30% | 3 | 10 |
| California | 13% | 1 | 8 |
| Great Plains | 17% | 4 | 23 |
| Headquarters | 0% | 0 | 6 |
| Nashville | 0% | 0 | 1 |
| Navajo | 25% | 9 | 36 |
| Oklahoma | 24% | 4 | 17 |
| Phoenix | 18% | 7 | 38 |
| Tucson | 100% | 1 | 1 |
| Portland | 50% | 3 | 6 |
| Total | 29% | 54 | 186 |



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2. HQ Announcements

- a. MOU on Reducing Lead in Drinking Water (Stephen Piontkowski)
 - i. Throughout calendar year 2019, DEHS collaborated with U.S. EPA on an memorandum of understanding that was finalized and signed by all partners in October
 - ii. Signed by federal, tribal, and non-profit partners like EPA, USDA, CDC, DOEd, BIA/BIE, Head Start, AWWA, ITCA, United South & Eastern Tribes
 - iii. [Memorandum of Understanding on Reducing Lead Levels in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities](#) represents a partnership to encourage schools and child care facilities to test drinking water for lead, disseminate test results, and take appropriate and necessary steps to correct problems
 - iv. An example of such collaboration can be found from the Reno District on pg 46 of our 2017 Annual Report
 - v. Read the [MOU press release](#) and learn more about the [3T's for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water](#)
- b. IEH (Charles Woodlee)
 - i. Residency
 1. No one applied for next cycle
 2. Next application announcement will be fall 2020
 - ii. WebCident replacement
 1. Thanks to Ricardo (Billings Area) for participating in recent in-person meeting with the contractor
 2. Pilot to begin in December 2019
 3. Launch in spring 2020
 - iii. Chapter 9
 1. Should be released very soon
 2. Targeted roll out / marketing plan in development
 3. Includes specific OEHE Director requirements and Charles presented that to them at the OEHE Directors' meeting last week
- c. Injury Prevention (Holly Billie)
 - i. New HQ IP Specialist – LCDR Molly Madson reported in September and will focus on managing TIPCAP



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- ii. Johns Hopkins lock box expansion project
 - 1. They will evaluate the lock box pilot conducted by Phoenix Area and expand the program to other IHS Areas
 - 2. Project to occur over two years with three aims
 - Identify, model implementation projects and process for safe medication and disposal
 - Evaluate
 - Develop guidance that IHS can use and enable implementation of the program with tribes and other Areas
 - 3. Bemidji Area's project may be evaluated
- iii. Please see the last IP Specialist latest call notes for other pertinent IP Program updates (available from IP Specialists or IP SharePoint site)
- d. Cost of Injuries Study (Mike Reed)
 - i. Complete and accepted for publication in Injury Epidemiology
 - ii. [Incidence, deaths, and lifetime costs of injury among American Indians and Alaska Natives](#). *Injury Epidemiology*. Volume 6, Article number: 44 (2019).

3. Area Highlights

What are you spending your time on?

What are your challenges?

What can HQ do to help?

- a. Alaska – *Not on call*
- b. Albuquerque
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 - 1. Trying to fill vacancies
 - 2. Food standardization
 - 3. Child passenger safety technician and instructor certifications
 - 4. Safe routes to school
 - ii. *What are your challenges?*
 - 1. HR, but they have made filling the EHO vacancies their priority for OEHE; this may be an agency issue as well from a continuity of operations perspective
- c. Bemidji
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 - 1. Auditing tribal facility lists in WebEHRS
 - 2. Year-end reporting to new Area OEHE Director
 - 3. Staff recruiting (current vacancy rate = 27%)
 - 4. Duluth field office: received approval to open the office so work will escalate on that project (should host 2 positions)
 - 5. Launching phase 2 of drug diversion program
 - 6. Safety officers hired for White Earth and Red Lake



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- ii. *What are your challenges?*
 - 1. HR; OEHE Director plans to use project technical support funds to hire OEHE HR representative
- d. Billings
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 - 1. Bringing training to staff
 - 2. Developing program evaluation plans
 - ii. *What are your challenges?*
 - 1. Determining scope of work and evaluations for Title I & V negotiations (Title I negotiations occur annually, Title V occurs every three years)
 - 2. Having difficulty hiring an Area EHS
 - iii. *What can HQ do to help?*
 - 1. Determining scope of work and evaluations for Title I & V negotiations (the all feds meeting in ABQ this month would be helpful)
- e. California
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 - 1. Finished setting program performance measures, now collecting the baseline data
 - 2. Working on the two IP special projects
 - 3. 2020 IP mini-grant announcements made
 - 4. Writing SITREPs for public safety power shut-offs
 - 5. Preparing to host a few trainings in 2020
 - ii. *What are your challenges?*
 - 1. Emergency management as it relates to collecting information from the tribes to place in SITREPs
 - 2. Managing 30% vacancy rate
 - 3. Undesirable applicants on panels
- f. Great Plains
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 - 1. Flood responses
 - 2. Hospital accreditation: Rose Bud recently received accreditation; Pine Ridge forthcoming
 - 3. IP technical assistance
 - 4. Staffing: TDYs to hospitals for safety officer work; Jamison Honeycutt reporting to Area as Senior EHS;
 - ii. *What are your challenges?*
 - 1. Supporting accreditation impacting delivery of EH services (e.g. 41% reduction of surveys completed compared to last year)
 - 2. Undesirable applicants on panels
 - iii. *What can HQ do to help?*
 - 1. Help recruiting and hiring competent people (especially related to safety officers)



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- g. Nashville
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 - 1. Staffing: backfilling one position and host civil service extern in 2020
- h. Navajo
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 - 1. Staffing: Announcements for Shiprock, Ft. Defiance, and Gallup; Industrial Hygiene announcement just closed
 - 2. Focus on surveying Head Starts and Establishment Type 80s
 - 3. Re-establishing IEH Program: Hired Yolanda Williams and Mahmoud Diallo as IEHOs
 - 4. Gordon likely to be at the November all feds meeting
 - ii. *What are your challenges?*
 - 1. Navajo Area HR does not place EH positions in CAP-HR so the Area's EH vacancy rate is likely an underestimate in their report
 - 2. Recruitment
- i. Oklahoma
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 - 1. Staffing: Forthcoming announcement for Shawnee, OK
 - 2. All field staff completed FDA Standardization
 - ii. *What are your challenges?*
 - 1. Accreditation and it's draw on EHS staff
- j. Phoenix
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 - 1. Workforce management: CDR Kelli Mohler, Reno District EHO, retired, LCDR Landon Wiggins will be Acting DEHO; forthcoming announcements for Fort Duchesne, Reno, San Carlos, Yuma; and supervisory GS12 (Reno District EHO); COSTEP applicant withdrew (no EHO COSTEPs in Phoenix for 2020); 14% (4/28) vacancy rate
 - 2. Workforce development: 25% of Phoenix Area DEHS staff are new [≤ 1 year] to position; Rob and Andrea presenting medication lockbox project at APHA this week and a couple publications in the works re: opioid prevention
 - 3. Ride Safe and IP mini-projects rolling out
 - 4. Kenny will be at the November all feds meeting
 - ii. *What are your challenges?*
 - 1. Finding targeted technical training for staff that better links to scope of work and specific technical areas (e.g. how to conduct institutional surveys and sanitary surveys); recommend revisit workforce development guidelines/metrics/model training plan, and expanded offering of courses/customized courses



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2. Systems and process improvement: Better defining EHS scope of work for specific bodies of work (e.g. surveys) and improve survey tools (e.g. reviewed the childcare establishment's eSurvey form and created marking instructions for staff; about 12 checklist items deemed outside the scope of work for EH staff)
3. Human Resources: Significant delays in tacking action across all HR requirements (classification, vacancy postings, delivering certs, onboarding, etc.); time period from vacancy announcement requisition to job offer ~ 6-9 months; Area HR is understaffed and work on OEHE positions is often displaced for higher priority HR actions (e.g. clinical, leadership)
 - iii. *What can HQ do to help?*
 1. Human Resources: ideas include establishing a dedicated OEHE HR specialist, advocate for creative approaches...open continuous/open until filled...direct hire authority???
 - k. Portland – *Not on call*
 - l. Tucson – *Not on call*
 - m. EHSC
 - i. *What are you spending your time on?*
 1. Seeking contract for NFPA training course
 2. Developing competency model alongside OIT
 3. Will distribute to OEHE Directors two draft versions of individual development plans they can use with their staff; if you would like to see them please contact Jeff

Next conference call January 02, 2020 1:00-2:00PM ET