DEHS Directors’ Meeting: 12/02/21

Meeting recording available upon request

Next conference call February 03, 2022 1:00-2:00PM ET

**Area** | **Representative**
---|---
Alaska: | Denman Ondelacy
Albuquerque: | Carrie Oyster
Bemidji: | Not on call
Billings: | Darcy Merchant
California: | Carolyn Garcia
Great Plains: | Tim Wildcat
Nashville: | Charles Woodlee
Navajo: | Donna Gilbert
Oklahoma: | Not on call
Phoenix: | Dave Cramer
Portland: | Chris Fish
Tucson: | Not on call

Environmental Health Support Center: Jeff Dickson
Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Molly Madson, Mike Reed, Stephen Piontkowski

1. Director’s Welcome and Update (Kelly Taylor)
   a. Welcome Charles Woodlee, Director, DEHS, Nashville Area
   b. Official CPO tour complete & getting back to Division work
   c. FAAB meeting is today, 02 December
      i. [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#)
         - $3.5B to SFC over 5 years
      ii. [American Rescue Plan Act](#)
      iii. [Build Back Better Act](#) pending
         - $113M allocated to EHSA
      iv. Keep an eye on these & advocate for funds for your Division as applicable
         - [IHS Dear Tribal Leader Letter, 22 November 2021](#)
   d. COVID-19
      i. Unsure how Omicron variant will impact the Division
      ii. Ensure you are vaccinated, including booster
      iii. Be aware of HHS return to the workplace plan
   e. Continuing Resolution FY22
      i. Expires 03 December
      ii. Extended to 08 February 2022
   f. IHS Town Hall with HHS Leadership
      i. 07 December @ 15:00ET
      ii. DEHS on the agenda
      iii. Call info
         - [https://ihs-gov.zoomgov.com/j/1602864902?pwd=bitxRWILVjFCMEF4ZVZwWjc3bE1xQT09](https://ihs-gov.zoomgov.com/j/1602864902?pwd=bitxRWILVjFCMEF4ZVZwWjc3bE1xQT09)
         - Meeting ID: 160 286 4902
         - Passcode: 441786
2. Area Highlights
   a. Alaska
      i. Tribal budget formulation next week
      ii. Cold temperatures in western Alaska are causing systems to freeze
      iii. Planning for return to workplace in January 2022
      iv. Staffing
         • Denman retiring from USPHS in May 2022
         • Will begin new assignment as Director, Project Management Branch, DES, OEHE in February 2022
         • CDR Ferman will be recommended to cover EHS
         • It has been a pleasure to work w DEHS & its talented staff who provide valuable services throughout Indian Country
         • Farewell CAPT Ondelacy who has been a fantastic advocate for DEHS and will be missed (Kelly Taylor)
   b. Albuquerque
      i. Staffing
         • Area IEHO vacancy announcement forthcoming
         • IEHO vacancy announcement forthcoming
         • IPS PD being developed
      ii. USPHS COERs
         • New internal standardized process worked well this cycle
         • Contact Carrie for more details
   c. Bemidji – Not on call
   d. Billings
      i. Updating FY22 sanitaryian dashboards for Title I & V tribes
      ii. Updating CY22 sanitaryian dashboards for direct service tribes
      iii. IP special projects
         • $70K remains
         • Elder fall prevention
      iv. IEHO providing accreditation support to clinics
      v. Staffing
         • Supporting tribal vacancies: Safety Officer, Blackfeet SU vacancy announcement forthcoming
      vi. Conducting establishment assessments as feasible
e. California
   i. Staffing
      - Ukiah Field Sanitarian: reports to duty January 2022; used Pathways
      - Director, OEHE, CAO
         - Announcement closed 29 November
         - Carolyn & Jonathan Rash sharing Acting roles until filled
   ii. Planning for return to workplace
      - Letters to staff ongoing
   iii. Elizabeth Fowler site visit to CA Area next week
      - Tim Shelhamer will escort her on tour throughout the Area
f. Great Plains
   i. Staffing
      - Chris Allen retires June 2022
      - District EHO vacancy announcement forthcoming
      - Pierre SUEHO and Sioux City SUEHO vacancy announcement forthcoming
   ii. IEH
      - Greg Calvert earned CIH last month
      - IEHOs assisting SUs PPE burn rates & fulfilling requests as needed
   iii. IP
      - Area injury profile being developed

g. Nashville
   i. Staffing
      - Kit will return May 2022
      - Riley should return to DEHS January 2022
   ii. Planning for return to workplace
      - Letters to staff ongoing
      - Updating Area Office plan
   iii. SFC funding
      - Very preliminary conversations to create a joint SFC/EHS position using new funds
   iv. Developing DEHS program plan
h. Navajo
   i. Staffing
      - EHO reported to duty in Gallup
      - EHO reported to duty in Shiprock
      - Three vacancy announcements forthcoming
   ii. COVID-19
      - Work ongoing
      - EHS staff supporting contact tracing, vaccinations, & community mitigation
i. Oklahoma City – *Not on call*

j. Phoenix

   i. Staffing
      - LT Hargis PCS to Ft. Yuma SU in November
      - LTJG Park PCS to USCG in February
      - Four EHS vacancy announcements coming soon: 2 at San Carlos, 1 in Parker, 1 in Elko; will be post using Pathways
      - LT Morgan completed OBC in November
      - Three EHS vacancies: 1 coming soon in Parker; 2 in San Carlos

   ii. LCDR Chung assembled & presented a model wastewater treatment survey training including wastewater treatment plants, lift stations, manholes sewer lagoons & individual septic systems based off the e-survey form

   iii. Injury prevention
      - Piloting gun safe installation project w 2 tribes to prevent unintentional fire arm injuries
      - CDR Morones & LCDR Tsatoke taught Pilot 1 of online IP course 2 along with Bemidji & Navajo Areas in November; 23 participants
      - LCDR Ampadu & LT Wrona were featured presenters on community opioid intervention strategies at the Arizona Opioid Conference & the Arizona Sanitarians Conference

   iv. Institutional EH
      - CDR Hansen is hosting quarterly Phoenix Area safety officer webinar on 09 December featuring the new TJC workplace violence standards
      - LCDR Parker is supporting PIMC: they have critical staffing need; he is helping w a variety issues including I-STARs, policy reviews, & OSHA emergency temporary standard

   v. COVID-19
      - 16.8% positivity rate; hospital census has fluctuated between manageable and full; Arizona has the AZ Surgeline that helps off-load patients to valley hospitals
      - CC deployments
        - One EHO recently returned from a mission (he was in Minnesota, Utah, & New Mexico)
        - Three EHOs contacted for deployments this week
        - CC Pharmacists deployments at PIMC for vaccination clinics demobilized after administering approx 2,500 shots
        - EHOs serving as vaccine couriers
        - Request to Veteran’s Administration for nurses at Hopi does not look promising
        - Reopening plans moving forward
k. Portland
   i. Staffing
      • District EHO vacancy announcement at Yakama forthcoming
      • Vacancy announcement for EHS position in the Portland Area Office forthcoming
      • The Area has staffing shortages for patient care positions (e.g. nurses) & is working to fill those in a variety of ways (e.g. requests for CC deployments)
   ii. Planning for return to workplace
l. Tucson – Not on call (updates submitted via email)
m. EHSC
   i. IP training courses
      • Intermediate IP course pilot #1 in November went very well (23 participants)
      • Intermediate IP course pilot #2 in February
   ii. Staffing
      • Jeff Conner reported as IEHO in October; continues to support ABQ Area COVID-19 mission needs
      • DACUM (Developing a Curriculum)
         • EHSC completed DACUM training
         • Purpose is to assure courses are designed for effective presentation skills & effective management of learning behaviors
         • EHSC completed pilot courses w SFC & EHSC staff
         • Contact Jeff if interested in future pilot courses w EHS staff
   iii. Share your training needs w Jeff
   iv. EHSC not traveling to conduct training courses due to COVID-19 travel restrictions

3. HQ Announcements
   a. Injury prevention (Molly Madson)
      i. IP course schedule
         • November 2021: Pilot 1 of online course 2 – complete; 23 participants
         • February 2022: Pilot 2 of online course 2
         • May/June 2022: Pilot 1 of online course 3
         • August 2022: Pilot 2 of online course 3
         • November 2022: Pilot 1 of in-person course 1
      ii. Holly’s retirement
         • Terminal leave begins 11 December
         • Retirement 01 February 2022
         • Tim Wildcat, GPA, will be Acting
iii. IP projects
  • Some projects have been delegated to Area and field staff – for more info contact your Area IPS or rep

iv. TIPCAP
  • First year of 2021-2025 cycle ends December 2021
  • Final Reports due 31 March for July-Dec reporting period
  • Carryover requests for Year 2 should be submitted ASAP

b. NDECI (Mike Reed)
  i. Final Prep for rollout in-progress
    • Rollout target date: 03 January
    • QA/Testing - dashboard validation & user guide
  ii. Development of additional functionality following rollout
    • NCHS data
    • 10 year window (lag by 1 quarter vs. prior calendar year
    • Automating updates (ICD10, notifiable disease definition, monthly data refresh)
  iii. Staff access request via email from Mike Reed in December
    • Criteria
      • Federal employee
      • Direct service
      • District level or above (includes IP coordinators)
    • Need
      • First name
      • Last name
      • Email address
      • Login ID (e.g., Mreed)

c. Due date reminders
  i. 31 December
    • Staffing report
    • Photo contest pics
  ii. 08 January
    • **EH Specialist of the Year Award nominations**
  iii. 24 January
    • Project posters
  iv. 11 February
    • **Gefroh Health & Safety Award nominations**
    • **Smith Injury Prevention Award nominations**

4. Other
  i. None

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