

January 2003

Attendees and Area Announcements listed after minutes.

General Environmental Health Topics

IHS EH Specialist of the Year Award

Kelly sent out an updated file for the IHS EH Specialist of the Year Award. It is also posted on the DEHS website. The only change in criteria this year is in the way the DEHS Directors will vote on the nominees for the national EH Specialist. This year, DEHS Directors will not score their own Area nominee. They will score all other Area nominees though. Deadline for submission of Area nominees is February 14, 2003. That means Area DEHS Directors need to determine their own Area EH Specialists of the Year before that date and have their IHS nominees in to Kelly **by COB February 14**. I haven't decided whether the final scoring will take place before or during the Annual DEHS meeting.

Annual DEHS Meeting

The next Annual DEHS Meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 4 – 6, 2003, in San Antonio, Texas. I have not yet sent in the requests for the meeting, nor have I worked out the details for the hotel and meeting space. There is some question as to whether or not this meeting will be taking place in San Antonio, partly in conjunction with the Annual SFC Meeting, as planned. I need to work on this immediately, and will let everyone know what happens. In the mean time, please mark your calendars for that date, and I will let you know where it will be held.

COSTEPs

Kelly said she had been trying to figure out how many EHO and Injury Prevention COSTEPs Areas could count on HQ reimbursing them for this year. It's impossible to get a firm commitment, but the best I can do, is to say HQ can more than likely reimburse Areas for the number of EHO and Injury Prevention requests they sent in, except for those Areas requesting more than 3 COSTEPs (AB, AK, OK, Nav). My attempt to commit to reimburse Areas for the requested number of EHO and Injury Prevention COSTEPs was based on the list sent in to HQ in November. If all Areas were reimbursed for the number they requested, and those Areas that wanted more than 3 were limited to 3, that came to 25 Area COSTEP requests. It seemed likely that we could accommodate that number. During the call, Phoenix changed their request from "0" to "3". We will attempt to reimburse for the requested number, but as always, you should be prepared to absorb the costs. The issue is that HQ is trying to encourage Areas to pursue more long-term training for individuals and at the same time, is trying to fund identified recruitment activities, and all these activities get reimbursed through the same account. We need to be cautious in the number of COSTEPs we try to commit to for each Area, so as many requests as possible can actually be reimbursed. If Areas

still want the number above 3 that they originally requested, they should be prepared to pay for them without reimbursement from HQ. I hope that the Areas are using EHSC's Recruitment webpage to identify potential COSTEPs resulting from recruitment visits to accredited schools. Alan and/or I will be going over to DCP in the near future to pick out some applications and we will forward their names to you. The following chart shows the requests by Area by the end of this discussion.

AREA	NUMBER OF COSTEPS REQUESTED
AB	3
AK	7
ALB	3
BE	2
BI	1
CA	2
NAS	2
NAV	4
OK	5
PH	3
PO	0
TUC	2
HQ	1
TOTAL	35 (4 of these are specifically identified as Injury Prevention)

2003 Promotion Process

Kelly said the Agency Recommendation Promotion Board had met and ranked the EHOs up for temporary 0-4, 0-5, and 0-6 promotion. The officers were put into quartiles which were sent to DCP by the December 20, 2002 deadline. There were 15 officers up for 0-6, 11 up for 0-5, and 3 up for 0-4. The Category Promotion Boards will meet between February and June, 2003.

Data Issues

January 9, 2003 the ITSC will be moving WebEHRS outside the firewall. They had to straighten out several security issues that had to do with log-ins before they could schedule this. After the move, we'll have to wait 2 weeks before we can start adding new user accounts. That will put us into the last day of the WebEHRS classes that are being taught in Albuquerque (January 21-23). If you still haven't signed up, do so. Contact Bobby if you need to get enrolled. The first class has 17 or 18 students, and the second class has around 12. There was a question as to whether students in the second class could move to the first. Bobby said that as long as the class doesn't go over 20, that would be alright, but he should be notified first.

Injury Prevention Topics

Injury Prevention Program Development Fellowship

There were 22 applications received for the new track of the IHS Injury Prevention Specialist Fellowship Program. They will be evaluated by a team of Injury Prevention Practitioners and notified of their acceptance by January 15, 2003. We had a very good response for this first Class of 2003.

Institutional Environmental Health Topics

WebCident Occupational Incident Reporting System

Kelly forgot to bring up this issue in the HQ part of the conference call, but she was reminded to do so during the Oklahoma Area Announcements. WebCident is the new occupational incident reporting system that replaces the IHS 516 form that was used to collect data on injuries, illnesses, or other incidents that occurred to patients, visitors, or employees at IHS healthcare facilities. WebCident is moving us to web-based data collection, management, and analyses. Beginning January 1, 2003, WebCident will be available for use. That does not mean everyone is expected to start using it beginning January 1. That does, however, mean that we will begin implementing it. It will take some time before all facilities are on-line. Area Public Information Officers received a press release about the January 1 launch of WebCident and there was a detailed article in the November issue of the IHS Primary Care Provider describing the program. I sent out an email to the IEHO with a "cc" to DEHS Directors encouraging the IEHO to schedule a conference call to discuss specific implementation plans. We should have discussed implementation plans way before now, but I'll go with "better late than never" on this. Several Areas have been preparing material that can be shared in advance of that call. Some DEHS Directors have expressed a desire to be included on that conference call, so as soon as it is scheduled, we'll let everyone know.

Upcoming IEHO Vacancies

There was a general discussion about upcoming vacancies in the Institutional Program that the IEH residents should know about. It's not too soon to be discussing vacancies with the two students, Brian Hroch and Gary Carter. They are scheduled to complete their requirements in June, 2003, and are anxious to begin speaking with DEHS Directors and Area IEHO about placement opportunities. The students will consider all appropriate IEH positions; not just Area Institutional positions. Mike Welch mentioned the upcoming Whiteriver Safety Officer position in Phoenix Area.

Position Paper on Mold

Gary Carter mentioned that he was working with the IEHO on an IHS DEHS position paper on mold. A draft should be ready for review by the DEHS Directors and IEHO in the next couple weeks.

Vacancy Table

Please be sure to keep the Vacancy Table on the DEHS website current. The table is located at www.dehs.ihs.gov.

Participants and Area Announcements

Aberdeen: Dave Compton. Aberdeen hasn't seen the WebCident press release yet, but will keep an eye out for it.

Albuquerque: Fan Robinson and Mike Lewis. Fan said Albuquerque is already getting ready for the Area Consult scheduled for the first full week in May. They have selected a person for the District EHO/Injury Prevention position in Santa Fe. She will let us know who it is when it is official.

Anchorage: Not on call.

Bemidji: Diana Kuklinski. The Bemidji SU EHO position was readvertized and they hope to make a selection next week. Diana had an issue about the National Indian Gaming Commission and environmental health and safety plans for casinos. Tribes are supposed to be developing plans to address environmental health and safety issues like emergency preparedness and food. Diana would like to know if anyone has a sample from a casino that has already developed one so she can assist her tribes with their plans. Please contact Diana if you can help.

Billings: Not on call.

California: Paul Young. No announcements.

Nashville: Susan McCracken. Craig Shepherd left for CDC; his first day there will be January 6. There's going to be a position open at Poarch Creek soon. This is a compacted tribe, so the EHO would be independent of IHS. Susan will get the announcement on the DEHS website.

Navajo: Chuck Freeman. No announcements.

Oklahoma: Kevin Meeks. Kevin reminded HQ that WebCident should be discussed. Effective January 1, 2003, implementation of WebCident in OKC Area has been made mandatory in all IHS healthcare facilities. Richard Turner has been very busy training all the SU staff in its use.

Phoenix: Mike Welch. They filled the Phoenix SU EHO position in December with Dacia Quick, who will be reporting to duty January 19. She will be working in the Western District Office with Vince Garcia. Mike wanted to follow up with Brian and Gary on the upcoming Whiteriver Safety Officer vacancy.

Portland: Al Knapp and Linda Tiokasin. No announcements.

Tucson: Not on call.

Environmental Health Support Center: Bobby Villines. No announcements.

Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Darren Buchanan, Brian Hroch, Gary Carter, Alan Dellapenna.

Next Call

The next conference call is scheduled for February 6, 2003, 12:00 PM Eastern Time. There is a possible conflict with that date, so I will have to confirm with you if it will in fact happen then. Please plan for that date until further notice.

Conference call numbers are the same for each call:

Dial in Number: **1-888-323-7711** (for all calls)

*Pass Code: **90841** (for all calls)