

May 2003

Attendees and Area Announcements listed after minutes.

General Environmental Health Topics

Head Start Funding Update

The Head Start funding to the Areas will be going out soon. This year the money will be sent out in the same proportions as last year, based on the number of Head Starts in the FY 2001 WebEHRS dataset. There is \$150,000 to be distributed to the Areas for the provision of technical assistance to grantees. There's no word yet on what will happen for FY 2004 concerning the agreement between IHS and the American Indian Alaska Native Programs Branch of the Administration for Children and Families. If we do in fact end up with an agreement for next year, and DEHS gets to continue its Head Start funding, the division of funds to the Areas will be different. Areas will get funding based on the use of the e-Survey reports. Areas are highly encouraged to use e-Surveys for their Head Start reports if they want to continue receiving funds for technical assistance to Head Starts. Granted, there are a lot of assumptions for next year's funding, but if all goes well, consider this your warning of future funds distributions.

Strategic Initiative Plans

Every action item under the four strategic initiatives of the DEHS Strategic Plan has been assigned lead coordinators. Now it's time to begin work on addressing these items. Coordinators for each item will need to get together by phone, email, fax, or whatever means to come up with a completion date before the next conference call. After you have notified me of your completion dates, you should begin work to address your action items. Each strategic initiative has an overall coordinator. The overall coordinators will make sure each of the action item leads are doing their jobs, lend assistance to the action item leaders, and generally facilitate the work being done.

Billet Guidance Document

Prior to the call, Kelly made changes to the billet guidance document based on the comments she received. The only additional comments offered during the call related to the fact that there actually was no EHO IV (non-supervisory) billet and people wanted to know how the civil service grades fit into this guidance document. Because there is no EHO IV (non-supervisory) billet, Kelly will delete that column. This document is for commissioned officer billets. But because civil service position descriptions are used in advertising vacant positions, this document could be helpful in classifying the vacant positions. Kelly will send the final version to Paul McSherry and clarify how it will be used.

IHS of the Year Criteria Revision Workgroup

Mike Welch had sent the latest version of the IHS EHS of the Year Criteria to everyone after receiving comments on the last conference call. Because Mike wasn't on the call to update everyone about the status of the criteria, he will have to let everyone know at some later date if there were any more comments that were incorporated. Once Kelly gets the final version, it will be published on the DEHS website.

FEDS Database Update

As discussed during the DEHS Directors meeting in San Antonio, Facilities has a database of environmental deficiencies that EHS has not traditionally accessed. Because EHS can take care of some of these deficiencies if they only know what's in there, we have been discussing how to give EHS access to that database. Facilities and EHS have established a process to link the FEDS database with WebEHRS. Kelly sent out instructions from Darren about how DEHS Directors can associate health care facilities in WebEHRS to health care facilities in FEDS. Once Directors associate the appropriate facilities, they will then be given access to the deficiency descriptions for those facilities, and field staff will be able to see those deficiencies within their geographical locations and can refer those deficiencies to the appropriate authorities for remediation.

EHSC FY 2004 Training Course Update

Prior to this call, Bobby Villines had sent all DEHS Directors the list of courses that will be offered during FY 2004 and asked for final comments during the call. He discussed his intent for the courses and received no suggestions for changes. The Environmental Health Technical Course will be similar to the one SFC held for District Engineers. The agenda for this one will be developed by District Staff and EHSC will only help with the logistics. The list below will represent the course offerings for FY 2004.

Bobby mentioned four FY 2003 courses that had not received enough nominations to fill them up. These courses (two IEH/Facilities courses – Industrial Hygiene/Indoor Air Quality and OSHA for Health Care Facilities and two Injury Prevention Courses – Introduction to Injury Prevention and Advanced Injury Prevention) will more than likely have to be cancelled. Bobby said that for the Injury Prevention courses, it was beginning to appear that the Areas were doing such a good job presenting them locally, that the time may have come to discontinue the national courses. Kelly mentioned that this was actually the first offering of the Advanced IP course and no Areas had held it locally.

List of EHSC-sponsored Environmental Health Courses for FY 2004

10/15-16/03	Emergency Response Orientation	Nashville
10/21-23/03	Basic Water Skills Course	Albuquerque Area
10/27-31/03	FDA - HACCP Course	Minneapolis

11/3-5/03	Playground Safety Course	Salt Lake City (tuition)
12/8-12/03	40 Hour HAZWOPER Course	Phoenix (tuition)
12/16-18/03	Advanced Epidemiology	Anchorage
3/30-31/04	Risk Communication	Seattle
6/7-10/04	FDA - Food Code TTT	Oklahoma City
6/15-17/04	Env. Health Technical Course	Rockville

COSTEP Update

None of the COSTEPs had received orders yet. Some had received letters of acceptance. Several Areas were not on the call and/or were not prepared to give an update at this time.

AB:	Requested two COSTEPs. Had a problem with one concerning qualifications, but that issue has been resolved. Both received their letters of acceptance.
AK:	Requested five COSTEPs. Not known if they have received acceptance letters yet.
AQ:	Requested three COSTEPs. Only one has received a letter of acceptance.
BE:	No report.
CA:	Requested two COSTEPs. Neither had received their letters of acceptance yet.
NV:	Requested three COSTEPs. Nobody had received their letters of acceptance yet, but at least one was asked for her fax number so DCP could send it.
OK:	Requested four COSTEPs. Had a last minute substitution on one, but the other three had received their letters of acceptance and had faxed them back to DCP.
PH:	No Report
TU:	Requested two COSTEPs. At least one had received her letter of acceptance.

Vacancy Table

Please be sure to keep the Vacancy Table on the DEHS website current. The table is located at www.dehs.ihs.gov and can be edited through the DEHS Directors' WebEHR accounts.

Participants and Area Announcements

Aberdeen: Dave Compton. No announcements.

Albuquerque: Fan Robinson. No announcements.

Anchorage: Keith Cook, Tom Coolidge. Pete Wallis is in Kuwait and will be returning in a week or two. Mary O'Connor left for Kuwait last week.

Bemidji: Not on call.

Billings: Not on call.

California: Paul Young. DCP has already started the process of moving all Commissioned officers out of DCP in preparation for the Human Resources consolidation effort.

Nashville: Susan McCracken. Nashville's OEHE Workshop is next week. James Ludington will represent Headquarters.

Navajo: Ken Secord, John Smart. Two Service Unit Sanitarian positions will be coming soon. One in Many Farms, which is the Chinle Service Unit, and one in Shiprock. Hopefully the announcements will be out next week. If so, Ken will put them on the DEHS website. New Mexico has initiated an MOU with IHS to fund IHS hospitals out of their HRSA Bioterrorism and Hospital Preparedness funds. Navajo will use an MOU with Arizona as well. All of the hospitals on the Navajo Reservation will receive funding, just like those off reservation. A copy of that MOU will be distributed to all the Directors in case someone wants to try to do something similar.

Oklahoma: Kevin Meeks. Lawton Indian Hospital will be recruiting for a Safety Officer GS-9 or 11 or both. If you know of EHOs in the Areas with an Institutional background, it could be a good assignment for them for two or three years.

Phoenix: Not on call.

Portland: Al Knapp. No announcements.

Tucson: Mark Pike and Quanah Nail. No announcements.

Environmental Health Support Center: Bobby Villines. Announcements were covered in the General Environmental Health Section.

Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Darren Buchanan, Merritt Lake. Kelly's and Darren's announcements were covered in the General Environmental Health Section.

Next Call

The next conference call is scheduled for June 5, 2003, at 12:00 PM Eastern Time. If you can not be on the call personally, provide an alternate who can fully participate in the discussions.

Conference call numbers are the same for each call:

Dial in Number: **1-888-457-9037** (for all calls)

*Pass Code: **72889** (for all calls)