

KALHD/KDHE PHEP Advisory Team

Meeting Minutes

11/3/2020

Attendees

Dennis Kriesel

Tamara Wilkerson

Denise Kelly

Nancy Griffith

Jennifer Hermon

Betha Elliott

Cindy Mullen

Dana Rickley (joined 10:11 am)

Cristi Cain (joined 10:15 am)

Steve Maheux (joined 10:42 am)

Meeting Start

Dennis called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

Ideas to support LHDs during COVID-19

Denise noted the purpose of this is due to hearing from LHDs on individual issues but there being a desire for a systematic or global approach. That perhaps with regional coordinators we could identify what all the LHDs could use help with from KDHE.

Dennis mentioned the challenge of individual investigations and if there's a way to change the approach to be less burdensome on the public health system for disease investigation.

Betha asked about staff turnover and about the team make-up. She noted the political nature of the pandemic and the stress of dealing with it. Dennis explained the PHEP Advisory Team make-up and that KDHE provided the updates on local health officer/local health administrator turnover figures. Betha also brought up an email from Jason Kennedy (to the KALHD Administrator listserv) that discussed contact tracing only identifying 18% of the cases being found via contact tracing, and 53% of those being households in his county and whether KDHE can refocus pandemic response efforts on those areas most impactful.

Betha noted they wouldn't have as many contacts if the schools weren't participating, and the challenges with so many of the public lying about their exposure. This is the worst she's ever seen it in terms of pushback against the public health system.

Dennis brought up mask exceptions for students, noting the political pressure from parents, questions about the science of masks and disease spread (and if there was now evidentiary support to allow such exceptions), and so forth.

Cristi noted the issues with commissioners deviating from the guidance and undermining the local health officers and local health administrators.

Dana spoke about her county, noting they are still having daily meetings with a mix of involved departments, agencies, and levels of government. This communication effort has been going on since March, and this has helped a great deal with community issues. In terms of isolation/quarantine with schools they use a Google Document that is shared with involved parties to track students, and she explained how they coordinate when sports teams are being evaluated for possible quarantine. Dana noted a lot of caseload has been shipped to KDHE lately given she only has three staff working investigations and they are exhausted, and that help is greatly appreciated.

Betha asked Dana how many school districts she has in her jurisdiction. Dana said they just have one.

Dennis noted that if the status quo is being maintained regarding case investigation and contact tracing, KDHE onboarding even more disease investigators would help if they can strive to ensure no rerouting back to the LHDs; the volume going to KDHE will likely just increase as the disease continues to spread as it is unlikely the locals can really onboard the needed staff.

Betha noted the challenges with vacation time and staff losing their time if they don't use it. Betha noted the rerouting of the disease investigation cases last week was not handled very well in terms of communication about "the pause" in the investigation. Cristi agreed this was a big problem and apologized for KDHE's communication issue regarding the rerouting/pause situation.

Betha noted her biggest cases are church-related and things like weddings, and a lot of pastors and church groups are lying to the LHD. Betha and Dana noted most of their school cases seem to be catching COVID outside of school. Dana noted her churches are still social distancing and seem to be doing a good job, but bible studies at people's homes have been an issue, as have things like hunting lodges. Out-of-state traffic also is a source of spread. Dana noted she tells organizers things like there is a preference for a 25% capacity limit but that it is ultimately up to them to make the decision.

Cindy said things are not much different in her area. Staff and commissioner issues have been a problem in her region. She encouraged her LHDs to have their commissioners watch the KAC webinar on PHEP and COVID that Dennis presented but she's unsure many of them have taken the time to do so. Ness County has been an area of concern; a bonus was requested and denied. Burnout is a big thing.

Steve said some of the biggest challenges aren't solvable by a local or the state health department. Political struggles mean they are battling uphill and he's not sure what can really solve that. He thought the PHEP webinar was a step in the right direction but there's only so much we can do. Steve noted consistent messaging is important; he gave examples with schools and when to transition between in-person, hybrid, and remote learning, but going into the "red" but it not being due to schools can cause confusion as they don't want to trigger a transition when the schools aren't actually responsible or where the problem lies.

Cristi noted Rebecca Adamson has been hired as an additional contractor to assist with supporting LHDs. Lougene Marsh is continuing to assist as well. Cristi wanted to know about letting the regional coordinators know. Cindy noted while she tries to get in on the 3:00 pm LHD webinars not all her LHDs in the region do so. Cindy noted even the KALHD listserv appears to be overwhelming to her area LHDs as well, but email is probably the best.

Dennis noted he would write-up steps for how to make a filter to manage the KALHD listserv emails. He also told Cristi if she has a support team announcement he can push it out to the KALHD and Regional Coordinator listservs.

It was also suggested a one-pager with the support team details can be made and circulated.

Review current workplan: any changes for 2nd and/or 3rd quarter

Denise said she and Nancy were looking over what was due in the 2nd and 3rd quarter in the various work plans. They know everyone is busy and preparedness dollars are hard at work. Are we requesting an LHD or region to complete an item that is valued and is a document needed for collection?

Discussion commenced around the large LHD workplan as a guide.

Item #1, on attendance, Denise stated the reports could be pulled rather than submitted by the departments. Cindy noted everyone should be reminded to register on KS-TRAIN.

On item #6, KS-HAN, Denise suggested the pandemic could be used to meet this requirement. Jennifer noted it was done in Q1 but a drill would be very helpful as it would apply to everyone; she doesn't want people to think there won't be any drills this year. So the idea would be to try and do the drill and then follow up from those who appeared to not get the HAN; Jennifer wants to test HAN to see how many people are receiving the message and that's the main goal. Denise indicated the requirement would stay but no report needed.

On item #9, Denise noted they've hired someone at KDHE that can pull reports based on the hashtag and thus get the information without the LHDs turning it in. Betha noted that the time period has elapsed already for the campaign; Denise indicated the report itself isn't due until 6/30/2021 so some may not have reported yet and this would save them that step.

On item #11, item B, participate in an annual exercise or real event, and Denise thinks COVID can be used for this. She asked what a good deadline for the AAR/IP would be (currently is 4/30/2021 for an exercise to be done by). Cindy asked what is required of the small health departments on this item and Jennifer noted small departments aren't required to do this (it is a medium and large requirement). Denise noted, for the time being, we'll leave this one alone and not change the deadlines. Steve noted he does not expect any of his counties to do an exercise; it isn't a high priority given the pandemic and so something around COVID is anticipated and given that the due date is somewhat moot since COVID is happening now. They discussed how testing may count as medical dispensing.

On item #13, website, Denise noted Preparedness staff could go and check the websites/social media rather than have the LHDs report.

On item #15, item A, there seems no way around reporting it that Denise could see. On item B, maybe December isn't the best time to have mass dispensing in and Denise suggested changing to June. On

item C, the COOP, KDHE does really need it. Jennifer noted next year's exercise is based on COOP plans and she's concerned that there is time to focus on the COOP plans so that everyone is prepared to exercise it. Cindy suggested pushing the COOP out from December to end of March. Nancy suggested June 30th to avoid first-quarter grant submission pressures interfering. Denise encouraged all LHD and regional coordinators at this meeting to push on the COOP plans. Cindy noted they've always gone through these as a region together. Plan is to change the deadline to end of June. For item D, Denise noted to postpone to the end of June for reporting there as well.

On item #16, there aren't many people taking this course. Denise would like to have a conversation at some point to find out what would be helpful to new administrators. Denise asked about removing the requirement. Betha asked about reaching out to new administrators. Dennis noted what he does when he adds new administrators to the listserv and linking them KALHD's orientation manual. Jennifer gave an update about the training. Jennifer said she'd give class information for Dennis to share when he adds new administrators to the KALHD Administrator listserv. Denise felt that sounded good and the requirement can be dropped from the workplan.

On item #17, Denise plans to keep the requirement but the reporting can be pulled from KS-TRAIN.

On item #21, which doesn't apply to small or medium (just large LHDs), Denise asked how this looks to the attendees. It is to complete two trainings to address gaps based on the FSE or real-world event. She was curious if it should be required this year, and if so what due date. Steve said if there was a list of opportunities it would make this easier to do. If there's enough time to knock the requirements out it's a good workplan item. Jennifer noted if the AAR is turned in then the gaps are identified, and she thinks the trainings to meet this are scheduled. Denise noted the deadline will be set as June and can revisit if it is realistic at our next Advisory meeting.

On item #22, Denise noted her plan to keep this on, due in March.

Denise noted no workplan needed for the smalls from the second quarter due to these changes.

Next year workplan

Dennis mentioned an email about doing the LHD budget narrative for PHEP given it is already in KGMS. Tamara noted this is being addressed for the next grant year and should get easier at that point.

Betha brought up the search issues as a region bouncing between the numbers of the various plan sizes, and if the numbers could be standardized, such as the first 18 are small only, then 19-22 are medium, and so forth. Denise stated that is something that can be looked at for the next year.

A discussion ensued regarding the value of KGMS and workplan involvement given a lot of LHDs seem to work on their plans with their regions. Denise indicated that will be thought about more.

Dennis and Denise expressed support for doing things as done for last year. Dana thanked Denise for all the work that has made things easier. Dennis quickly explained the process: KDHE Preparedness drafts the initial workplans, PHEP Advisory Team reviews and gives feedback, KDHE makes agreed-upon changes, KALHD schedules a meeting for all the LHDs and Regions to participate and ask questions or request changes, KDHE Preparedness finalized workplans, and KALHD Board votes whether to give concurrence on behalf of the member LHDs. Plan is to use the same process for SFY 2022.

Denise asked for folks to really work on ideas for workplan activities before the next Advisory team meeting. Dennis noted those can be emailed to Denise and Dennis at any time. Jennifer said training requests and ideas would be helpful before next week's TPW.

Recap of KAC webinar on PHEP

Dennis noted the webinar on PHEP and COVID he conducted for KAC on 10/28/2020 had 72 attendees out of 104 registrants. As of this morning, the recorded version on YouTube lists 61 views.

Discuss plans for KAC webinar in 2021

Dennis noted that as part of KALHD's PHEP contract they arrange for a webinar through KAC in the first half of each calendar year. For 2020 Andrew Adams and Carl Lee presented in April on Capability 4 (Public Information and Warning), Capability 8 (Medical Countermeasure Dispensing & Administration), Capability 13 (Public Health Surveillance & Epidemiological Investigation), and Capability 11 (Non-Pharmaceutical Intervention). He noted that it might be good to target some different capabilities but still do a capability-oriented webinar in 2021, and pitched Capability 1 (Community Preparedness) and Capability 2 (Community Recovery). Denise noted we need presenters for that topic and for PHEP Advisory Team participants to consider if they'd like to do the 2021 webinar.

Other discussion (if needed)

Denise went over a spreadsheet that shows the counties/regions that have outstanding Q1 items under PHEP (regional), LHD Preparedness, and the COVID grant. Denise noted normally KALHD and the regional coordinators are contacted to follow-up with those who need to turn things in.

Denise suggested KDHE send an email to each of the outstanding counties, telling them what is outstanding. They would copy in the coordinator and Dennis with KALHD. They'd have until the Sunday after Thanksgiving to either state they will not be submitting something or get it submitted, and with them to confirm the email and that they are working it out by November 9th.

Betha asked about the COVID supplemental outstanding progress reports, as those are not in KGMS. Nancy noted there was a lot of confusion regarding the COVID grants in general.

Dennis expressed support for KDHE's email plan. Denise asked about copying in Dennis and the regional coordinators. Cindy noted she would really appreciate being copied in. Dennis said he thought it would be helpful and didn't expect any real backlash to including KALHD or the relevant regional coordinator.

Denise also noted she had suggestions on the regional reports that she'll email to the group.

Adjournment

Dennis adjourned the meeting at 12:11 pm.