

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE (CDPC)
JUNE 9, 2015 MEETING – ACADEMIC RESEARCH C, ROOM 110 – 3:00 PM**

Attendees:

Rennette Apodaca, Greg Block, Kristian Chervenock, Connie DeBlieck, Ben Diven, Katrina Doolittle, JoAnne Dupre, Olga Holguin, Louis Huber, Michael Jasek, Norma Noel, Mike O'Larey, Andrew Peña, Janet Witte; Alexis Crader, Rebecca Gleason, Courtney Immel, Emily Lailhengue, Katherine Selph, Leslie Smith, Claire Stringam

I. Call to Order, Introductions, and Opening Remarks

The June 9, 2015 meeting of the Communicable Disease Preparedness Committee (CDPC) was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Dr. Katrina Doolittle. Introductions were held for members and for health students who attended as class to learn more about community disaster planning. NMSU preparedness includes planning for a mass distribution of vaccines in the event of a communicable disease outbreak, and students would assist by providing support services. In previous summers, students from the Emergency Medical programs assisted Campus Health professionals during Warped Tour campus concerts, when people need treatment for heat exposure and injuries.

II. Minutes

The minutes of the December 2, 2014 CDPC meeting were approved. Members had reviewed the draft minutes and provided comments via email.

III. March quarterly meeting was cancelled based on no new business.

IV. Old Business: Continuity of Operation Plans

Each department/organizational unit at NMSU is responsible for maintaining a Continuity of Operations Plan (CoOP). The CoOP template is available on the NMSU website. The plan is used to develop a description of essential functions, connections within the university, and contacts for external dependencies such as vendors and support entities. CoOPs need to be updated whenever there are changes in key personnel and lines of succession. The CoOP can be a useful communication tool to help educate new employees and share knowledge that the department has acquired. In preparing the CoOP, one should identify the important tasks that may not be familiar to others, and record the contact information, phone numbers and emails of people associated with those tasks. Information in the CoOP can be quickly accessed by the person who needs to fill an essential position during an unexpected situation. One of the biggest challenges for every organization is to identify the essential positions and functions;

this committee helps by bringing people together from essential units to build connections and prepare plans for dealing with unexpected health-related situations.

About half of the groups that are identified as essential have submitted their updated CoOPs. CDPC leaders have conducted training for Business Affairs, and that group is in the process of updating. A reminder will be sent to the research groups with animal facilities, since emergency planning for animal care is a federal requirement. Completed CoOPs were received from University Communications, EH&S, Library and ICT. Three other units (Housing, Campus Dining, and Intercollegiate Athletics) have submitted draft CoOPs for review, and these need a signature from the division director (Dean or VP). A workshop can be provided for anyone who would like assistance.

A member commented that the contact person for DACC Health and Public Service needs to be changed. Chair Doolittle will contact the new dean to identify a representative.

V. New Business

- 1. Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).** Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent MERS infection. MERS is a viral respiratory illness (Coronavirus) that was first reported in Saudi Arabia and has since spread to several other countries.

Dr. Diven reported that NMSU has five students in South Korea, one of whom is sending emails with daily updates. The coronavirus outbreak is confined to the hospital where the index case occurred and the spread is to hospital workers and visitors. This MERS outbreak has not spread outside of the hospital, and does not pose a public health threat at this time. MERS is an example of the way a disease outbreak can spread internationally by an infected person traveling on a plane. The index case was a man who traveled from Saudi Arabia to South Korea and became ill after traveling.

Mr. Chervenock reported on the impact to emergency response planning here at NMSU. South Korea is a popular place for NMSU students in the Study Abroad program, and we have students studying Korean language and culture on two campuses this summer, one in southern South Korea and the other closer to Seoul. Staff from International and Border Programs follow messages and posts related to these types of incidents around the world, and works closely with Campus Health, EH&S, Central Administration, and CDPC members. The program has an International Crises Management Plan which is working well; when an incident is identified, the team goes to work to identify who may be affected and who needs to be involved. Mr. Chervenock communicates with Campus Health, and in this event the nurse supervisor, Carol Nevarez, sent messages to the students in South Korea to provide them with appropriate information. The NMSU students are doing well and are confident that they will not be affected adversely. Interestingly, another university that has students in the area near Seoul has pulled out its students. International and Border Programs has a plan in place, and does not need to evacuate NMSU students. In the past eight years, only once has an evacuation been

needed, when students were evacuated from Japan during the tsunami/nuclear event. It is good to have the communication and partnerships on campus to help monitor and work together.

2. Two incidents with potential rabies exposure

Dr. Doolittle described two recent events in which it was helpful to have established plans and inter-office campus communications. The first incident involved a notification about a bat bite to a student traveling with an academic group in Mexico. Details were not immediately available, so the International Programs office was able to provide contact information for the travelers. The people in the academic group had received pre-exposure immunizations through the occupational health and safety program for animal workers and were handling bats using proper protective equipment. Due to a concern about the possibility of exposure to rabies virus, two individuals were offered post-exposure vaccinations.

A second incident occurred while wildlife researchers were handling a tranquilized bear. The sedated bear momentarily awoke and bit a researcher, then went back to sleep. The researcher had received pre-exposure vaccinations, and was given post-exposure medical care.

Both of these incidents involved communications with NM Department of Health and the state veterinarian to coordinate the reporting and follow-up actions. By state law, any animal that may carry rabies must be captured after a bite incident, and usually killed for diagnostic testing of the brain. Not everyone is aware that this is a state requirement, and the communications between NMSU personnel and state officials were important to establish procedures for animal incidents. The coordination with state Department of Health officials is another example that shows our systems are working well. CDPC members have participated in emergency planning training through this group, and as part of other groups such as Dr. Kelly Hamilton and the Southwest Border Food Safety and Defense Center, that help provide connections and beneficial interactions here at NMSU and at the state level.

3. Update from International and Border Programs / Study Abroad

Mr. Chervenock presented an overview of the increasing numbers in NMSU international programs. About 400 students actively participate in Study Abroad; about 150 students are in Aggies Go Global non-credit research and community service internships; and IBP monitors all independent travelers such as faculty, grad students going to conferences, and grad students not affiliated with a program, about another 500-600 people each year; altogether about 1200 travelers and growing. Study Abroad expects to grow by another 150 students by this time next year.

With more travelers, more incidents can be expected just as part of normal activities. This group and the International Crises Travel Plan are good resources to have in place. We also have really good insurance; it is mandatory for students, and faculty can utilize it as

well their employee insurance. The insurance value was recently tested when a student that was completing a teaching course in another country had a serious health issue. The insurance company proactively communicated with the hospitals and helped the family with airfare and housing. It was good to see that the insurance company was responsive during this event.

Incoming student numbers are also significant. We have about 1200 international students on campus and 150 incoming first-semester students. Part of the International and Border Programs is the Center for English Language programs, with Columbia and Ecuador two of the largest participating countries for teaching training.

Members discussed that increased student numbers bring an increase in challenges to Campus Health. The sending countries do not screen people for suitability for international travel, and some travelers arrive with chronic, serious diseases that need medical attention. This committee helps to coordinate responses and bring issues to attention. At times, some groups create an almost overwhelming situation for Campus Health. International and Border Programs works with their partners in the sending countries to set benchmarks for health testing and supply the appropriate medical documentation. Education Abroad programs should not be seen as an opportunity for a “medical vacation”.

4. Items from members

- 1) Southwest Border Food Safety and Defense Center will hold a management-level training on July 8-9, available to anyone interested. Details for the event and registration will be distributed via email to CDPC members. The training will be beneficial to management in Auxiliary Services, Dining Services, and others. In a food-related outbreak at one of our campus venues, we will need to coordinate with each other and with Department of Health to manage the situation. The location for the training will be in Wooten Hall on the NMSU main campus.
- 2) News about the current outbreak of avian influenza was discussed. The USDA is monitoring flocks of chickens and turkeys in the Midwestern US, and millions of birds on poultry farms have been euthanized in efforts to control the spread of this strain of avian flu. This area and southwestern states have not had reports of illness. People who raise poultry should watch for signs of illness in their flocks. Everyone should follow good food preparation practices, to cook poultry thoroughly and wash hands and surfaces after handling raw meat. The heat of cooking destroys influenza virus, so illness is not spread through cooked food.
- 3) Meningitis outbreaks at universities – no reports since December. Any illness that transmits easily in close populations is a concern to this committee, so we can discuss preparedness issues.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

Next quarterly meeting: September 9, 2015