

First Working Group Meeting Summary

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

May 21, 2010

Discussion on vulnerabilities/risks: What are the key focus areas for vulnerability and risk caused by climate change?

Kim Hoover, PADEP, provided an overview of adaptation to climate change. She introduced the two co-chairs, Dr. Ian Greaves from Temple University and Dr. James Logue from the PA Department of Health (PADOH). Dr. Logue discussed a number of issues, including databases and the PADOH Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) Program. The EPHT program, which began in 2002, is funded by CDC. The databases, which are maintained by PADOH and other state/federal agencies, cover environmental media (water, air, soil), cancer registries, chronic diseases, hospital admissions, etc. Other topics covered included:

1. There are grant opportunities from CDC and NIH.
2. Public opinion needs to be addressed.
3. Stakeholders from academia, USGS, federal agencies. Others are Office of Environmental Advocate and Mid-Atlantic Health and Children group. Rob Altenburg from PADEP will reach out to these.

Discussion on resources and literature:

- EPA climate change web site - "Climate Change and Health Effects"
- CDC Center for Env. Health - "CDC Policy on Climate Change and Public Health"
- NIH Report – "Executive Summary"
- Other states, esp. California report

Discussion on vulnerabilities:

- Mold in buildings as a result of flooding
- Disease trends. We need to be ready for emerging issues.
- CDC lists key weather events, health effects and populations most affected – it was agreed this would be the template.
- EPA's who is at risk? – Elderly, very young, disabled, poor or living alone.

Thoughts on priorities:

- Sea level rise is at bottom of list
- Heat stress – how to measure it; existing methods to evaluate
- Floods & extreme storms
- Rising temperatures
- Drinking water
- Vector-, food- and water-borne diseases
- Increase in ground-level ozone, airborne allergens, fine particulates PM2.5

Drastic and subtle health effects – data from real-time ER. The University of Pittsburgh is developing a model for asthma. Look at resources, data sources and content. Communications function within the Health Tracking program has resources for how to communicate the risks.

Direct and indirect issues. Population is a measure/different sections of population. Business as usual vs. adapt with changes occurring.

Next steps – send resources and data to Jim Logue to compile. jlogue@state.pa.us

**Future Meetings are confirmed on last Wednesday/Tuesday of the month:
July 27, Sept 29, Oct 26 from 10:30am – 12:30pm
Rachel Carson Building, 12th floor conference room, Harrisburg, PA**