

Second Working Group Meeting Summary

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

July 27, 2010

Discussion on efforts already addressing climate change as it relates to public health and safety: Identify what efforts exist and information sources.

A number of existing federal/state/regional efforts, potential collaborators, and information sources exist:

- The PADOH Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) Program, which is funded by the CDC and aims to correlate environmental databases with public health databases.
- The Drought Task-Force, which is coordinated by PEMA and DEP to address drought issues in Pennsylvania.
- Ongoing USGS studies of climate change and data collection that could be utilized to study climate change. (For example, "inundation mapping," which combines land surface elevation data with flood models to determine what will be flooded and to what extent in different scenarios.)
- West Nile Program (and database).
- Real-time Outbreak Detection System (RODS), a database that collects real-time data about chief/presenting complaints reported by patients in Emergency Rooms that can be connected with a database that collects information about sales of over-the-counter medications in any given area.
- DEP Bureau of Air Quality, which forecasts and monitors ozone and fine particulate matter on a daily basis.
- Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4).
- Philadelphia's model for a warning system/tracking system for heat stress.
- Individuals/entities identified in the outline (see below) as those who can implement mitigation strategies for environmental public health concerns are also potential information sources.

Related to existing efforts are existing potential funding sources like state agency funds and federal grants that may (and likely will) in the future require components that address climate change in order to secure funding. Examples of state funding sources include: DEP, DOH, PEMA, Dept. of Agriculture, DPW, Dept. of Aging, and PennDOT.

Review of outline developed by Jay Devasundaram and David Marchetto for Heat Stress as a vulnerability to climate change:

- Identifies vulnerable populations and circumstances that exacerbate vulnerability to heat stress/heat stroke.
- Identifies adaptation/mitigation strategies that different entities (partners) could adopt to address these vulnerabilities. Some of these may become recommendations that the group would like to make in their report, and/or they could be incorporated into educational materials.
- Identifies potential sources of information, which include the internet, state agencies, and databases (either new or existing).
- Addresses questions about funding sources and the need to educate the public about the information collected and strategies identified.
- Offers a feedback-loop model as a method to track climate impacts on public health and safety and evaluate the effectiveness of adaptation/mitigation strategies in a systematic way. The West Nile Program has successfully utilized a similar multi-agency approach that could be used as an example.

Next steps –

Suggestions on how to improve the outline:

- Elaborate the outline to include specific tools that partners can use. (For instance, what specific services should a cooling station offer?)
- Ensure that strategies are flexible and encourage local or regional entities to coordinate resources and efforts in their area for maximum value and efficiency.
- Include pets and domesticated animals as a vulnerable population.

Discussion of additional priorities to address:

- Flooding
- Drought
- Disease Vectors

Curtis Schreffler of USGS volunteered to draft outlines for flooding and drought hazards for the group to review.

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