Meetings and Conference Calls

Title: mHealth Summit
Date: December 3 – 5, 2012
Staff Representative: Andrew Roszak and Sara Rubin
Member Representative: N/A
Highlights: The mHealth Summit is the largest gathering of individuals interested in the intersection of technology and healthcare. Several sessions showed the impact of text messaging and mobile applications on the healthcare field, including several aspects of preparedness. In particular, a few sessions highlighted efficient ways to use technology for medication adherence reminders, improvement of prescription processes, and triage of ill persons. Many of the technologies showcased may be relevant for the Antiviral Dispensing Project, Nurse Triage Line Project, or other preparedness projects at NACCHO.

Title: International Society for Disease Surveillance (ISDS) Meeting/Biosurveillance Workgroup Meeting
Date: December 3 – 4, 2012
Staff Representative: Laura Biesiadecki
Member Representative: N/A
Highlights: Staff attended the ISDS and NACCHO Biosurveillance Workgroup Meeting. The workgroup meeting provided an opportunity to integrate preparedness-related biosurveillance activities with other NACCHO activities. Laura presented updates about the ongoing work with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Title: National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) Open Forum
Date: December 5 – 7, 2012
Staff Representative: Resham Patel
Member Representative: N/A
Highlights: NNPHI hosted the 7th Open Forum Meeting for Quality Improvement in Public Health. The event drew 275 attendees from over 40 states, and attendees represented public health professionals from state and local health departments (LHDs), public health institutes, academia, and public health partner organizations and funders. In addition to members of NACCHO’s accreditation and quality improvement programs, a NACCHO preparedness staff member attended to present with a CDC representative on the linkages between the Public Health Accreditation Board national accreditation and national preparedness programs, most notably NACCHO’s Project Public Health Ready (PPHR) and CDC’s Public Health Emergency Preparedness capabilities.

Title: Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Seasonal Leadership and Training Summit
Date: December 5 – 7, 2012
Staff Representative: Debra Robinson, Justin Snair, Stacy Hosler, Tahlia Gousse, Alyson Jordan
Member Representative: N/A
**Highlights:** NACCO MRC Staff and representatives from the Division of Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps held the first of three MRC Seasonal Leadership and Training Summits at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA. NACCHO provided scholarships to 200 MRC unit leaders to attend the three-day summit. Unit leaders and partners participated in a selection of training workshops, break-out sessions, and opportunities for leadership discussions. NACCHO will be holding the remaining summits in February and June.

**Title:** Roundtable on Science and Technology for Sustainability  
**Date:** December 6, 2012  
**Staff Representative:** Sarah Keally  
**Member Representative:** N/A  
**Highlights:** The Roundtable on Science and Technology for Sustainability was hosted by The National Academies and included representatives from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, General Electric, Shell Oil, Smithfield Foods, University of Texas, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This bi-annual roundtable, established in 2002, provides a forum for sharing views, information, and analysis related to harnessing science and technology for sustainability. Members of the roundtable discussed sustainability considerations for the future of animal research, critical materials for energy sustainability and emerging technology, adaptation, resilience, and sustainability as objectives for energy systems, and resilient and sustainable infrastructure. There was a large focus on the aging electric power infrastructure (e.g. power lines, power stations) and how that could be sustained long-term while incorporating changes to prevent major losses in natural disasters.

**Title:** Practitioner’s Advisory Panel Conference Call  
**Date:** December 7, 2012  
**Staff Representative:** Laura Biesiadecki  
**Member Representative:** N/A  
**Highlights:** Harvard University School of Public Health invited NACCHO to participate in a research study. This research is intended to engage public health preparedness and response practitioners in: 1) developing the critical incident registry (CIR) prototype for assessing CDC’s Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) capabilities to support systems improvements and evaluating its effectiveness; 2) evaluating the usefulness and ease of implementation of the PHEP CIR in public health preparedness practice; and 3) identifying and addressing challenges to the widespread implementation of an effective PHEP CIR model. During this introductory call of the advisory panel for the study, participants reviewed the intent of the research, provided feedback and discussed plans for the in-person meeting which will take place in January.

**Title:** Anthrax Vaccine Pilot and Public Health Stakeholder Engagement Meeting  
**Date:** December 12, 2012  
**Staff Representative:** Sarah Keally, Jack Herrmann  
**Member Representative:** Andrew Pickett  
**Highlights:** Preparedness team staff attended this Pre-Event Anthrax Vaccine Pilot and Public Health Stakeholder Engagement Meeting in Crystal City, VA. Representatives from DHS’ Office of Health Affairs and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) led the meeting. Participants represented several different state health departments and LHDs in emergency preparedness roles, focusing on the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the group to a potential pilot program to vaccinate emergency responders against anthrax prior to exposure and to discuss the feasibility, logistics, and evaluation criteria of the pilot program if it were to be implemented. There was also much discussion around other agencies that should be included in the discussion and the risks and benefits of the vaccine versus the antibiotic prophylaxis regimen. The day-long meeting concluded with a discussion of the program’s next steps.
Title: ASTHO Performance Evaluation and Improvement Workgroup (PEIW) Call
Date: December 12, 2012
Staff Representative: Rachel Schulman
Member Representative: N/A
Highlights: This month’s ASTHO PEIW call focused on PEIW’s involvement in the CDC Division of State and Local Readiness evaluation of PHEP performance measures. CDC is evaluating the performance measures to obtain data to inform changes and improvements to the measures for the next budget period, and to inform a broader evaluation strategy moving forward. Representatives from CDC shared the research questions for the evaluation and described the three phases of the project, each of which will address a specific subset of the PHEP capabilities. CDC will consult with PEIW during each of the three phases of the evaluation to discuss overall themes related to the capabilities and to obtain feedback relative to particular research questions. These consultations are part of a larger effort to engage multiple stakeholder groups in the performance measure evaluation process.

Title: Poison Control Center Simulation Exercise Planning Meeting
Date: December 12 – 13, 2012
Staff Representative: Andrew Roszak and Sara Rubin
Member Representative: Greg Bogdan
Highlights: This planning meeting brought together many stakeholders, including NACCHO, CDC, ASTHO, United Way/2-1-1, American Association of Poison Control Centers, and many other state and local organizations, emergency management, and health departments. The purpose of the meeting was to begin planning a simulation exercise that will occur in El Paso, TX late February. The results of the simulation exercise will help inform the ways in which 2-1-1 and poison control centers can be used to develop a national nurse triage line for use during an influenza pandemic.

Title: CDC Access to Medications Related to Disasters Meeting
Date: December 14, 2012
Staff Representative: Andrew Roszak
Member Representative: N/A
Highlights: The focus of this one day conference was to identify the barriers and potential solutions to disaster-related medication access. Since the launch of the DHS Ready Campaign, emergency planners have urged people to “Make a Plan and Get a Kit.” In those instructions, DHS advises people who need regular medications to have “extra” medication on hand. Over 133 million people have at least one chronic medical condition, and one in three Americans take prescription drugs for a long-term illness. However, people with pre-existing chronic conditions face multiple barriers to accessing their prescription medications before, during, and after disasters. These barriers can exacerbate pre-existing, chronic medical conditions, increasing the vulnerability of a previously stable population and the number of preventable emergency room visits and decreasing the resiliency of a community. While there are many critical barriers that exist in day-to-day access to medication such as health disparities, cost, and insurance, several options were explored, including utilizing existing mechanisms, such as extending the availability of vacation exemption for medications and modifying the policies around the Emergency Prescription Assistance Program.

Title: CDC Project Officer’s Meeting
Date: December 17, 2012
Staff Representative: Jack Hermann, Scott Fisher, Laura Biesiadecki, Debra Robinson
Member Representative: N/A
Highlights: NACCHO’s preparedness team project directors went to CDC to meet with project officers from NACCHO’s CDC-funded projects. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss progress on current projects and plans for future year activities.
**Title:** Gain-of-Function Research on H5N1 Workshop  
**Date:** December 17 – 18, 2012  
**Staff Representative:** Sarah Keally, Rachel Schulman  
**Member Representative:** N/A  
**Highlights:** The Gain-of-Function Research on H5N1 Workshop was hosted by the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. Its purpose was to provide a forum for sharing perspectives on research that aims to increase the transmissibility, pathogenicity, and/or the range of affected host species for highly pathogenic H5N1 flu viruses. Six panels of representatives from multiple countries and disciplines discussed issues such as the risks of conducting or not conducting the research and how such research should be conducted, overseen, and funded. The participants also discussed and exercised a proposed U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) framework for making funding decisions about such research.

**Title:** National Health Security Preparedness Index (NHSPI) Steering Committee Meeting  
**Date:** December 18, 2012  
**Staff Representative:** N/A  
**Member Representative:** Michael McClendon  
**Highlights:** Representatives from the NHSPI Steering Committee met to discuss and receive updates on the development of the NHSPI. Booz Allen, a national contractor, is now a member of the model design committee. Dr. Jonathan Links from Johns Hopkins presented an update on the model design. There were many questions about what the proposed model will and will not do, what data will be collected from states and LHDs, and how this information will be reported to Congress and other interested stakeholders. The first version of the model will be released to the states for review and comment in March 2013, with the official version scheduled to come out late fall 2013. The committee also discussed possible website domain names, reviewed logo design, and identified potential national meetings at which the NHSPI could be discussed and socialized.

**Public Health Preparedness Workgroup Updates**

**Public Health Preparedness Committee (PHPC)**  
**Chair:** Dave Cox; **Staff:** Jack Herrmann and Resham Patel  
Per the earlier Preparedness Committee decision, the PHPC planned to participate in the December Preparedness Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) conference call. However, the December PPAG call was canceled. The PHPC will participate in the January PPAG call.

**Medical Reserve Corps Workgroup (MRC)**  
**Chair:** Bobbi Alcock; **Staff:** Tahlia Gousse  
The MRC workgroup held a call on Dec. 10. The workgroup discussed the preliminary findings of the Branding and Marketing Survey distributed to the MRC network. The survey closed Dec. 14 and all of the survey findings have been compiled and will be discussed in the next meeting. Upon discussion of the results, the workgroup will decide what branding and marketing materials to develop and how to make them accessible to the greater MRC network. Sarah Keally, Program Analyst and NACCHO staff liaison for the SNS Workgroup, was also on the call to discuss a collaborative project with the Public Health and Emergency Management and SNS workgroups Strike Teams Project. Details for the Strike Teams Project are not yet finalized; however the MRC Workgroup is excited to participate.

**Pandemic Influenza Workgroup**  
**Chair:** Christine Brooks; **Staff:** Sara Rubin  
The December meeting was canceled.
Preparedness Outcomes and Measures Workgroup  
Chair: Karen Smith; Staff: Samantha Morgan and Rachel Schulman  
The Preparedness Outcomes and Measures Workgroup held a call on Dec. 10. Karen Smith, Workgroup Chair, and Jack Herrmann, Senior Advisor and Chief of Public Health Preparedness at NACCHO, provided an overview of workgroup’s goal of understanding how states are applying PHEP performance measures at the local level by conducting a survey. John Theofilos and Nikki Maxwell from CDC also joined the call to discuss CDC’s own evaluation of the PHEP performance measures and how this project aligns with the workgroup’s survey. They decided that the audience for the survey will be NACCHO’s PPAG. The group also discussed potential research questions for the survey, a list of which was sent out to workgroup members for comment after the call. After the research questions are confirmed, the workgroup will begin developing survey questions. Representatives from CDC will also follow up regarding ways that they would like to engage the workgroup in their performance measure evaluation project.

Project Public Health Ready (PPHR) Workgroup  
Chair: Mark McDonnell; Staff: Resham Patel  
In December, the PPHR workgroup met by conference call to discuss the proposed re-recognition criteria, which emphasizes Goals 2 and 3 of the PPHR criteria and elements that ensure LHDs are continuing with their continuous quality improvement processes. The 2013 re-recognition criteria are scheduled to be finalized and released in January. Workgroup members also briefly discussed enhanced guidance for regional applicants, as well as next steps for the proposed fee structure.

Public Health and Emergency Management Workgroup  
Chair: Terence Hayes; Staff: Justin Snair  
The December meeting was canceled.

Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Workgroup  
Chair: Joshua Carlyle; Staff: Sarah Keally  
The SNS Workgroup held a conference call on Dec. 10. The workgroup discussed ideas for two policy statements, Veterans’ Affairs (VA) and Veterans’ Health Administration (VHA) collaboration with local SNS planning efforts, the next steps for the local technical assistance review section development of the SNS SharePoint site, reviewing applications for Model Practices 2013, and NACCHO Annual 2013 abstract submissions. Aaron Eagan from VHA shared his contact information with the group and explained he is looking to see where there are gaps in the US among local VA facilities and LHD planning efforts for the SNS. CDC would like to share a pediatric dosing video by the Food and Drug Administration with the group during the next meeting on Jan. 14.

Ad Hoc Advisory Groups

Administrative Preparedness  
Staff: Samantha Morgan and Scott Fisher  
No update for December.

Preparedness Policy Advisory Group (PPAG)  
Chair: Chris Hoff; Staff: Resham Patel and Samantha Morgan  
In December, PPAG group members were asked to complete an assessment of their experience with the advisory group thus far. This assessment will be used to make improvements to the structure and content of the group’s calls and tasks, and to better align with NACCHO’s other advisory groups. PPAG leadership also met by conference call in December to discuss the preliminary results of the assessments, membership, and agenda items for early 2013.
Project Updates

Advanced Practice Centers (APCs) (Staff: Laura Biesiadecki)
The APC project continues to facilitate the closeout of the eight APC sites, including the processing of final reports and invoices and migrating products and tools to the APC website. One of the APC staff members from Mesa County, CO presented a seminar at CDC on Dec. 12, discussing local leadership in regards to Emergency Support Function #8 – Public Health and Medical Services. Additionally, the staff is developing a manuscript to share outcomes and lessons learned over the course of the APC program.

Antiviral Dispensing Project (Staff: Sara Rubin)
The Antiviral Dispensing Project continues to move into the operational stage, which may lead to policy development. In addition, project staff is organizing a webinar scheduled for February that will highlight the role of community health centers—federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), specifically—during a pandemic. Speakers will discuss how FQHCs and health departments can work together in times of crisis. Additionally, three sessions from this project will be presented at the 2013 Public Health Preparedness Summit in March.

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Project (Staff: Scott Fisher and Jack Herrmann)
NACCHO submitted comments based on feedback from PPAG members to ASPR on draft patient decontamination in a mass chemical incident guidance on Dec. 6. In addition, ASPR developed an article on their response to Hurricane Sandy, which will be included in the January issue of the NACCHO Preparedness Brief. Planning is currently underway for a Jan. 28 webinar focused on the Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasures Enterprise Strategy (PHEMCE) and Implementation Plan.

Biosurveillance (Staff: Laura Biesiadecki)
NACCHO is continuing to work with the DHS Office of Health Affairs to schedule and conduct recurring teleconferences with key local biosurveillance stakeholders to provide feedback on DHS’s National Biosurveillance Integration Center (NBIC) products and services. DHS has recently released the NBIC strategic plan here: https://www.dhs.gov/publication/nbic-strategic-plan.

Medical Reserve Corps Project (Staff: Debra Robinson)
NACCO MRC Staff and representatives from the Division of Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps hosted the first of three MRC Seasonal Leadership and Training Summits at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA, Dec. 5—7. The leadership training summit brought together 200 MRC unit leaders or unit designees for comprehensive training in topics like disaster risk reduction, sustainability, unit activity reporting, growing leaders from within and partnerships, in addition to launching the new Factors for Success. The summit also provided an opportunity to identify approximately 25 new story ideas from “stories from the field” for upcoming MRC publications.

Debra Robinson, Director of the MRC Project, and Alyson Jordan, MRC Communications Specialist, attended the Fairfax County (VA) MRC’s “Introduction to Interpreting for Emergency Responders” training on Dec. 12 to capture stock photos and B-roll footage for the development of program and marketing materials.

Nurse Triage Line (NTL) Project (Staff: Sara Rubin)
The NTL Project staff is currently preparing for the Poison Control Center/2-1-1 Simulation Exercise that will take place in El Paso, TX in February. Project staff will meet with the West Texas Regional PCC, 2-1-1, and local health/emergency management departments during a site visit in January. Additionally, four sessions from this project will be presented at the 2013 Public Health Preparedness Summit in March.
Project Public Health Ready (PPHR) (Staff: Scott Fisher)
PPHR continued with its fall review. Reviewer teams assessed and scored additional evidence submitted by applicants after the review meeting. Reviewers submitted their new scores and comments to NACCHO. PPHR staff then compiled and prepared each application for review teams to discuss on final conference calls scheduled for early January. PPHR staff also sent official recognition materials to two applicants that were provisionally recognized in the spring 2012 review cycle and passed their provisional reviews in November. PPHR issued its 2013 criteria, which will be used by applicants applying in fall 2013. PPHR staff also worked to finalize the 2013 regional criteria and associated guidance and 2013 re-recognition criteria; these documents are scheduled to be released in early January. PPHR staff continues working with states interested in pursuing PPHR in the future and providing technical assistance to those states that will be submitting applications in spring and fall 2013.

Public Health Preparedness Law Project (Staff: Andrew Roszak)
This project will identify where gaps exist in the legal authority of public health officials to carry out radiation control measures and epidemiological studies, and develop strategies to address these identified gaps. The project will also serve to improve the understanding and use of the law by LHDs as a tool for effective all-hazards preparedness. Workgroup members for the Radiation Legal Preparedness project have been identified and invited to participate. In January and February, the group will participate in two webinars, designed to set the stage for the eight-hour workshop that will occur in advance of the 2013 Public Health Preparedness Summit in Atlanta in March.

Radiological and Nuclear Preparedness Project (Staff: Andrew Roszak)
NACCHO has been working with CDC and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to facilitate a two-day meeting entitled “Nationwide Response Issues after an Improvised Nuclear Device Attack: Medical and Public Health Considerations for Neighboring Jurisdictions: An IOM Workshop.” The presentations and discussions at this workshop are intended to assist state, local and regional emergency planners and healthcare professionals create more robust nuclear response plans for their communities, regardless of their distance to a target city. The workshop will take place on Jan. 23—24 in Washington, DC. Registration is free, but space is limited. More information is available at: http://iom.edu/Activities/PublicHealth/MedPrep/2013-JAN-23.aspx.

Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) (Staff: Sarah Keally)
NACCHO has been working with ASTHO and Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters to plan two upcoming webinars in early 2013 for LHDs to learn about new guidance for Whole Community Inclusion at Point of Dispensing Sites (PODs) and how it can be incorporated into local plans. A website to accompany Whole Community Inclusion Planning resources and the guidance document is currently under development. The ignite session, Connecting the Dots between SNS and Collaborative Partnerships: The 12 Most Valuable Lessons Learned, will be presented at the 2013 Public Health Preparedness Summit in Atlanta on March 12, and lead staff have been working with the presenters to provide technical assistance for the development of a highly interactive session.

Government Affairs Update (Staff: Laura Hanen)

Funding Update
In the final days of the 112th Congress, the Senate and House passed and the President signed the “American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012” (H.R. 8) to avert the so-called “fiscal cliff.” A White House fact sheet on the new law is available here. The package included a two-month delay in cuts to defense and non-defense spending as required by the Budget Control Act of 2011. The 113th Congress, seated on Jan. 3, must address the sequester and raising the debt ceiling by March 1 and the remainder of FY2013 federal funding by March 27 when the current continuing resolution expires.
Congress continues to debate a supplemental funding package for Hurricane Sandy relief. On Dec. 28, the Senate passed $60 billion in Hurricane Sandy emergency funds. The House Appropriations Committee released a smaller $27 billion emergency supplemental bill, but the House has yet to vote on the package.

112th Congress Fails to Reauthorize PAHPA
On Dec. 19, the House passed a revised version of the Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act (PAHPRA/H.R. 6672) by a vote of 383-16. The revised version of PAHPRA was the product of negotiations between the House and Senate. NACCHO and its national public health partners sent a letter to Senate leadership urging immediate passage. Despite the last ditch effort by the House, the Senate failed to take up PAHPRA before adjourning. NACCHO will continue to push for PAHPRA reauthorization in the 113th Congress. While PAHPRA’s authorization expired on Oct. 1, 2011, preparedness programs have and will continue to be funded.

White House Declares December as Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience Month
On Nov. 30, the White House issued a declaration that December is designated “Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience Month.” The focus of activities was to elevate awareness of protecting critical infrastructure including health and public health as one of the 18 critical infrastructure sectors.

HHS Issues 2012 PHEMCE Implementation Plan
On December 9, HHS released the 2012 Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasures (PHEMCE) Implementation Plan that outlines expected developments for the next few years for anthrax, smallpox, pandemic flu, botulism, and other bacterial and viral threats. HHS created an implementation plan fact sheet.

Future Activities/Meetings/Conferences/Workshops

ASTHO SPHR Meeting
HSC Meeting (San Diego)
Survive and Thrive (San Antonio)
Radiation Preparedness Workshop (Washington, DC)
Smallpox Vaccine Guidelines Development (Atlanta)

January 15 – 16, 2013
January 16 – 17, 2013
January 17 – 18, 2013
January 23 – 24, 2013
February 1, 2013