



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

Occupational Health & Safety Surveillance Advisory Committee

Date: Monday, April 18, 2011
Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Location: Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE)
Building A, Rachel Carson Conference Room
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
Denver, CO 80246

MEETING MINUTES

Present:

Occupational Health & Safety Surveillance Program Staff

- Lisa Miller (Committee Chair)
- Amy Warner
- Meredith Towle

Committee Members:

- Angela McElyea, American Society for Safety Engineers (ASSE), Tetra Tech EAS Group Health & Safety
- Barry Spindler, Colorado DOLE, Workers' Compensation Division
- Cecile Rose, National Jewish Health
- Gene Hook, Denver Environmental Health
- Holly Hedegaard, CDPHE Health Facilities and Emergency Medical Services Division
- Karen Mulloy, Denver Health Center for Occupational Safety and Health
- Lorann Stallones, Colorado State University
- Mary Chase, CDPHE Vital Statistics Unit
- Michael Richen, American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) Rocky Mountain Section, Boulder County Public Health
- Randy Baker, United Steel Workers, Joint Safety & Health Committee
- Roxana Witter, Colorado School of Public Health
- Yvonne Boudreau, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

Phone Attendees:

- Steve Reynolds, CSU, High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health and Safety

Absent:

- Jim McMillen, Pinnacol Assurance
- Meghan Meagher, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Denver Regional Office

Notes & Action Items:

1) **Welcome & Introductions**

Members encompass the spectrum from those who have been part of strategic planning for the start-up of the CDPHE's surveillance program, to those who are newly engaged in this effort. It is apparent that members will collectively offer the program broad experience and knowledge about occupational health and safety issues from many sectors. Program staff and Committee members were immediately at ease with open discussion, and readily shared their interest in contributing to the development of the

surveillance program. Comments were very positive about the need for a successful occupational health and safety surveillance program at the CDPHE.

2) Orientation & overview of state-based surveillance program

Meredith provided an overview about the main objectives of the surveillance program (per NIOSH Guidelines), the history and atmosphere of occupational health and safety in Colorado, review of the core Occupational Health Indicator (OHI) data required by the program, and funding sources. Also discussed were select program activities to date. Feedback included:

- The CDPHE occupational health program in the 1990's also included occupational asthma surveillance and case investigation. Re-instating this surveillance focus is of interest to the Committee.
- When describing Workers' Compensation claims cost data, showcasing the 'average and median cost per claim' would also be important statistics.
- The NCCI (National Council on Compensation Insurance) would be a good source of claims cost data.
- Discussed the need for trend analysis on the apparent decreases in workers' compensation injury/illness claims. Potential factors influencing WC reporting are:
 - Changes in Colorado's Workers' Compensation laws
 - Outsourcing of manufacturing jobs may reduce injury claims
 - The threat of layoffs may increase claims
 - Some employers may triage potentially reportable injury/illness
- One potential factor in under-estimating work-related injuries/illness in hospitalization data is that our hospitalization data at the CDPHE is a snap-shot in time and does not include corrections to payer source. Workers may be discharged using their private insurance, and it is not until the workers' compensation claim is processed that the hospital charges are transferred to workers' comp.
- Suggestion to revisit the project of evaluating migrant health clinic data (i.e. Salud Family Clinic).

ACTION ITEMS

- Members may continue self study of the handout of data sources used in generating the Occupational Health Indicator (OHI) surveillance data, and the complete OHI Data report available on-line (<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/OH/OHIs%20Colorado.pdf>). They are invited to contact Program staff with any questions.
- Need to understand where U.S. level hospitalization data comes from. Is it the AHRQ's Health Care Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) sample-based data?
- There is interest in calculating regional statistics for the occupational health indicators.

3) Review and discussion of By-laws

Overall, members were comfortable with the duties of this Committee. A few substantive changes were made to the by-laws:

- Include "safety" along with "health" in the name of the Advisory Committee and the Surveillance Program. This is consistent with work in the field and is reflective of the fact that many of our data metrics are associated with safety (injuries, amputations, burns, etc.)
- Include verbiage about "identifying and mitigating hazardous conditions" as part of the duties of this Committee and the Program. Although not directly monitored with a specific surveillance measure, this is ultimately how data will be put to action for prevention.

- Revise language to eliminate the concept of members voting to continue other members' terms, to discourage substitute participants, and to allow for invited guests to attend meetings.
- Include provisions to allow decision making by e-mail or follow-up conference calls outside designated meeting times.

ACTION ITEMS:

- The By-laws will be revised with changes proposed and approved through e-mail communication with members.

4) Feedback on program activities and priorities

Due to time constraints, this discussion was largely tabled for the next session. There was some discussion on the short-term program activity to revise Colorado's lead reporting statute. Members were in favor of this activity.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Solicited suggestions regarding who else should be invited to this Advisory Committee included a representative of the construction industry, and one for emergency responders. CDPHE staff will consider these suggestions and will consider including representatives as special guests.
- It was suggested that the committee meet again towards the end of July to discuss proposals that CDPHE may make to the Colorado Board of Health.

5) Next meeting is anticipated late June/early July. Date and time will be determined by online survey.