
Human and Animal Health Implementation Team Meeting #21

Date: Friday, October 18, 2013
Time: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
Place: CASA Offices, Edmonton

In attendance:

Name	Stakeholder group
Leigh Allard	Alberta Lung Association
Marilyn Craig	Alberta Energy Regulator
Merry Turtiak	Alberta Health and Wellness
Joe Kendall	Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Long Fu	Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency
Opel Vuzi	Health Canada
Laurie Cheperdak	Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Ruth Yanor	Mewassin Community Council
Al Schulz	Chemistry Industry Association of Canada
Robyn Jacobsen	CASA
Michelle Riopel	CASA

Absent

Name	Stakeholder group
Dawn Friesen	Alberta Health and Wellness
Brenda Woo	Health Canada
Ila Johnston	Parkland Airshed Management Zone
Judy Huntley	Bert Riggall Environmental Foundation

Action Items:

Action items	Who	Due
20.2: Forward studies done by the Lung Association to Robyn.	Leigh	ASAP
21.1: Prepare rationale for each incomplete recommendation related to the implementation of the CHHMS for the team's review at their next meeting.	Merry	October 30

The meeting convened 9:00 am. Quorum was achieved.

1) Administration

a. Review meeting objectives and approve agenda

- The meeting agenda and objectives were approved by consensus.
- The minutes were approved as written.

b. Review Action Items from Meeting #20

Action items	Who	Due
19.1: Provide an inventory of current animal health initiatives and projects.	Joe	Done
<i>Joe indicated that Alberta Agriculture is participating in the Three Creeks issue. Since the inventory of inputs in the CHHMS has been completed, the team will not pursue this action item any longer.</i>		
20.1: Follow-up with Merry on what should be included under “Public health Complaints”	Struan	Done
20.2: Forward studies done by the Lung Association to Robyn.	Leigh	On-going
<i>Leigh will confirm what has been shared. Robyn hasn't received anything.</i>		
20.3: Contact Gil Kaplan at the University of Calgary Institute for Public Health to find out about recent initiatives	Struan	Done
<i>This work has been included in the inventory.</i>		
20.4: Contact Warren Kindzierski at the University Of Alberta School Of Public Health to find out about recent initiatives, including the development of the Environmental Public Health Surveillance System.	Dawn	Done
<i>The mandate of the program has shifted to the Alberta Public Health Information Network (APHIN). There is a beta version on water that is currently being tested and the intent is to eventually cover all media.</i>		
20.5: Contact the University of Lethbridge Public Health program to find out about recent initiatives	John	Done
<i>John is no longer a team member so it is difficult to follow-up. It is assumed that the research Struan conducted for the inventory would have included any relevant work.</i>		
20.6: Contact Nicola Cherry/Jeremy Beach at the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Clinic (U of A) to find out about recent initiatives.	Ruth	Done
<i>Recent initiatives are currently focussed on occupational health.</i>		

2) Recent Team History

Michelle presented the history of the team. Some highlights from the presentation included:

- 1997: “Executive Framework for a Human Health Monitoring System”
 - o Outlined the goals of the system and recommended the establishment of an implementation team.
 - o Goals of the system:
 1. To ensure the availability of timely, high quality data while respecting issues of privacy and confidentiality;
 2. To ensure that information about human health relative to air quality is made available to the public and decisions-makers; and
 3. To encourage studies and pilot projects on human health, especially lung health, and to correlate results with ambient air quality data and other relevant data.
- 1998: “Human Health Project Team Final Report to the CASA Board of Directors.”
 - o Proposed the Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System (CHHMS) as a way to achieve the goals of the system
- 1999: “Human Health Monitoring Framework Implementation Plan”
 - o Currently, there are 5 outstanding recommendations from this report, all related to the implementation of the CHHMS.
- 2003: “Animal Health Project Team Final Report and Recommendations”
 - o Currently, there is one outstanding recommendation to expand the proposed CHHMS hotline to include animal health complaints.

- 2007: “Human and Animal Health Team Final Report to the CASA Board”
 - o Recommended that the team should be disbanded.
 - o Rather than disband the team, the government caucus asked for more time to determine if there were other options for implementing the CHHMS
- At the March 2008 Board meeting, the Board approved 2 consensus recommendations:
 - o Accept ARTSSN as a means to implement CHHMS, and withdraw the recommendations of disbanding the team (consensus) and implementing the hotline (non-consensus)
 - o AHW will report on ARTSSN implementation to CASA Board.
- At the December 2011 Board meeting, AHW updated the Board regarding ARTSSN and the Board decided that ARTSSN did not fulfill the intent of CHHMS
- In 2012, the team reconvened to discuss possibilities for implementing the CHHMS.

3) Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System (CHHMS)

The team reviewed the goals of the CHHMS and discussed current initiatives that directly/indirectly support the implementation of the CHHMS. Key points in the discussion included:

- There are certainly islands of knowledge and the coordination function described in the CHHMS would be of value. However, the landscape has changed since the goals of the CHHMS were developed in 1997.
 - o Our ability to manage and access data is vastly different, due to technological advancements, including social media.
 - o Government used to take a much more siloed approach. Now, there is a responsibility and a duty to collaborate across ministries and to engage in multi-stakeholder processes.
- The science linking health and air data is lacking. A “standard” for analyzing data and linkages would be helpful.
- The Alberta Public Health Information Network (APHIN) could be considered a pilot project on human health (CHHMS goal 3). However, long-term funding is an on-going issue.
- The Alberta Real Time Syndromic Surveillance Network (ARTSSN) also supports goal 3 of the CHHMS, as a way to correlate health concerns with ambient air quality data.
- The Environmental Public Health Operational Strategy (EPHOS) is a cross-ministry initiative dealing with linking science and health effects data. It supports goal 2 of the CHHMS, but is bigger than just air quality.
- The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) supports goal 1 and 2 of the CHHMS and is also launching a pilot project on odour.
- Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency (AEMERA) collects ambient environmental data and wants to establish themselves as a trusted source of data in Alberta. They are investigating causal relationships and how to deal with emerging issues. They work with other government agencies to look at all the monitoring systems in Alberta.
- The Alberta Open Data Portal makes all data the provincial government collects available to the public. This would support goals 1 and 2 of the CHHMS.
- The Interactive Health Data Application (IHDA) displays Alberta-centered health data in an interactive map display. This would support goal 1 of the CHHMS. It was noted that the application is disease focused.
- The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) participates in research initiatives. They also collect data and conduct monitoring. Their work is mostly complaint-related and therefore reactive. They often work with other agencies on particular issues and on-going initiatives.
- Health Canada supports goal 2 with the AQHI – they provide funding to Alberta. They have also launched a pilot project to take the AQHI to hospital waiting rooms. Health Canada also has many outreach initiatives.
- The Lung Association funds research on the effects of pollution on health.

- The CASA secretariat developed the inventory of inputs to the CHHMS through research and interviews with the identified relevant parties. CASA also has specific task groups dealing with health issues on both the Electricity Team and the Odour Team.

4) Next Steps

The team discussed the appropriate role for a CASA team in any on-going work. Key points made during the discussion included:

- A significant portion of the original intent of the team now overlaps with other CASA initiatives, including the Electricity Framework Review and the Odour Management team. A primary consideration should be to ensure that the health considerations are coordinated across the teams.
- The way the Government of Alberta does business has changed and health considerations are integrated into all their work. The GoA does have concerns about their capacity to participate in all the on-going CASA initiatives and their current priorities are the Odour and Electricity teams.
- Health should be a priority in all of the work we do, but it doesn't seem that the Human and Animal Health Team is currently the best venue.

There was consensus agreement to recommend to the Board that the Human and Animal Health Team be disbanded.

- To ensure that health considerations continue to remain at the forefront of CASA discussions, the following advice will be given to the Board:
 - o Any updates on on-going initiatives to the CASA Board (from industry, government, or NGOs) should include a specific focus on health considerations and linkages to other initiatives. If possible, presenters should address how their initiative supports the implementation of the CHHMS goals.
 - o Industry, government, and NGOs should make presentations to the Board on any new initiatives focused on health considerations.
 - o To ensure that animal health concerns are included in CASA work, project managers will ensure that existing and new teams have an explicit discussion on how to include animal health concerns in their work.
- The team discussed how to deal with outstanding recommendations. The CHHMS won't be implemented the way it was originally imagined but there is lots of on-going work that supports the implementation of the goals. There was general agreement that each recommendation will be deemed "not applicable" with rationale for how the intent of the recommendation is being achieved elsewhere.

Action Item 21.1: Merry will prepare rationale for each incomplete recommendation related to the implementation of the CHHMS for the team's review at their next meeting.

5) Next Meeting

The team's next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 5 from 12 pm to 3 pm.

Agenda Items:

- Discuss incomplete recommendations and agree on how to close them off.
- Agree to wording for 1 recommendation to disband the team and some additional advice to the Board
- Plan the presentation to the Board on December 12.