

Final Minutes



Indoor Air Quality project team meeting #13

Date: May 28, 2008

Time: 10.00 – 3.30

Place: CASA

In attendance:

Name	Stakeholder group
Meaghen Allan	Northern Lights Health Region
Dean Befus	The Lung Association
Stephani Carter	Green Alberta / Canadian Green Building Council, Alberta Chapter
Ian Peace	RAPID
Ludmilla Rodriguez	Capital Health Region
Janine Ross	Alberta Environment
Roger Steele	Building Owners and Managers Association
Merry Turtiak	Alberta Health and Wellness
Jennifer Allan	CASA

With regrets:

Name	Stakeholder group
Roy Clough	Alberta Employment and Immigration
Alex Joseph	EnerVision
Brenda Woo	Health Canada

Stephani Carter chaired the meeting, which convened at 10.20 a.m. Quorum was achieved.

Action Items:

Action items	Who	Due
13.1 Follow up with CAHPI to find out about their mandate, roles and report to the team	Jennifer	Next team meeting
13.2 Look into the possibility of partnering with Stats Canada and report back to the team	Jennifer	Survey subgroup meeting
13.3: Talk to Sharon about options for public consultation and have information available	Jennifer, Sharon	Next team meeting
12.1: Stephani to provide contact information for HVAC, woodwork and millwrights association to Jennifer.	Stephani	Next team meeting
11.6: Asish to contact Tim Lambert regarding his initial idea of companies involved in chemical management plans	Merry, Brenda	Next team meeting
11.7: Roy to contact the government group handling changes to the Building Code about membership and to inquire if industry is represented on that group.	Roy	Next team meeting

11.9: Ian to provide contacts for life and property insurance companies with regards to membership.	Ian	Next team meeting
10.2: Asish to keep in touch with the City of Calgary in regards to possible team membership.	Merry	Next team meeting.

1) Administration

- a. Approval of the agenda: Agenda approved by consensus
- b. Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting: Minutes of the March 14 meeting #12 were approved by consensus.
- c. Action items follow-up:

12.1: Stephani to provide contact information for HVAC, woodwork and millwrights association to Jennifer.	Stephani	Carry forward
12.2: Jennifer to forward examples of CASA team's strategic plans / sets of recommendations.	Jennifer	Done
12.3: Dean to send Jennifer information on strategic planning processes he's been involved with.	Dean	Done
12.4: Jennifer to draft an agenda for a workshop meeting and distribute to the team for comment.	Jennifer	Done
12.5: Jennifer to update the work plan and distribute to the team.	Jennifer	Done, distributed at team meeting
12. 6: Stephani, Ian, Anand, Ludmilla, Roger and Janine will hold a teleconference to start designing the expert survey.	Stephani, Ian, Anand, Ludmilla, Roger, Janine	Done
10.1: Anand to keep in touch with the CAPHI in regards to possible team membership	Anand	Deleted
10.2: Asish to keep in touch with the City of Calgary in regards to possible team membership.	Asish	Merry will inquire if Asish was in contact with the Synergy group.
10.9: Asish to find out more about the 1987 process and results and forward to Jennifer.	Asish	Deleted
10.10: Merry to find out more about the AB Annual Survey and forward to Jennifer.	Merry	Done
11.6: Asish to contact Tim Lambert regarding his initial idea of companies involved in chemical management plans	Asish	Merry can followup.
11.7: Roy to contact the government group handling changes to the Building Code about membership and to inquire if industry is represented on that group.	Roy	Carry forward

11.9: Ian to provide contacts for life and property insurance companies with regards to membership.	Ian	Carry forward
11.15: Jennifer to circulate IAQ decision tree for government buildings	Jennifer	Done
11.16: Tannis to provide Health Canada decision tree, if there is one.	Tannis	Done.

Discussion during action items review:

- Is the Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors a team member we'd like to continue pursuing?
 - Residential challenges are largely behavioural, which is difficult for us to affect change.
 - Do they just do monitoring? Or also outreach, education? It would be useful to know their mandate
 - Health inspectors refer to home inspectors when they notice something wrong with a privately-owned building. In Edmonton, the city has home inspectors on staff. Other municipalities do not and the health regions have to seek out independent firms.
 - Homes are a significant part of health; there will be a need to assess environmental exposures as more research is drawing the links between gene expression and environmental exposure (gene by environment)
 - Inspectors are a useful source of information
 - Inspectors inspect to the building code. Many problems occur when a building is not to code

Action item 13.1: Jennifer will follow up with CAHPI to find out about their mandate, roles and report back to the team.

The 1998 Annual survey of Albertans asked if people were concerned with indoor air quality. About 30% answered yes, which was unchanged from years previous. The question has not been asked since.

- d. CASA Update: One other team is discussing IAQ issues – the Clean Air Strategy team. That team is looking toward larger strategies to manage air quality in Alberta over the next 20 years. The team is still deciding how to handle specific issues they identified, such as indoor air quality.

2) Update from survey subgroup

At the last team meeting, a subgroup was struck to design an expert survey to help identify priorities for Alberta. There was a need to seek technical, expert advice for this task.

The survey subgroup had a teleconference and identified target audiences and possible questions for the survey. The purpose of the survey is to help the team identify priorities that are important to Alberta and where the IAQ team can affect change.

The target audience of experts was split into two groups: proactive (deal with issues beforehand such as legislators, architects) and reactive (deal with issues after they happen, such as remediation).

The questions were:

1. demographic question asking area of expertise
2. Asked to rank the IAQ issues and pollutants identified by team, with space for “other”
3. Asked ‘What action would you suggest the CASA IAQ team pursues in regards to your number one priority?’

Discussion / Comments:

- Demographic questions:
 - Difficult to ask people to respond as an individual, not an organization – particularly if we ask for their name. It is a difficult line for many to walk.
 - Demographic questions asking their level of expertise are common and expected:
 - ‘How comfortable are you with the subject area?’
 - Ask the respondent to self-identify as an expert, novice, somewhere between
 - If we state our targets for each group, then state how many we received, that will be understood by anyone reading our results. It shows we did our due diligence.
 - An option to ask the person to self-identify as part of a group: could be field of expertise, or industry/government/NGO. General categories would be useful.
 - We could ask people if they handle occupational health & safety; public health or residential
- Confidentiality:
 - We may not want to identify the person. Even identifying the organization can inadvertently identify the person.
 - If people would like the results, we could ask them to leave their name with the caveat it will only be used for that purpose.
- Method
 - Response rate is likely going to be fairly low in recent experience in IAQ surveys.
 - We may not meet the minimum numbers for sampling in order to generalize
 - However, we’re seeking expert opinions, not the general public – do we need a large sample to use the information?
 - Perhaps focus groups or one-on-one interviews would work in that case. Such formats are more flexible. Different methods could work for different groups, as long as the questions are comparable.
 - We could hire someone to conduct the interviews.
- Maybe we could work with StatsCanada. That would increase the response rate and provide expertise. However, StatsCan might not be provincially based, but it’s worth looking into.

Action item 13.2: Jennifer to look into the possibility of partnering with Stats Can and report back to team.

- There was strong support for doing a pilot study first.

The survey subgroup will consider these comments and develop a proposal for the team. This will include which method they feel is most appropriate (survey, interviews, focus groups), sampling and possible questions.

3) Exploring the four priority activities and our TOR

The team divided into two breakout groups to explore the team's activities and how will 'add up' to a set of recommendations (strategic plan for the future and implementation) to improve IAQ in Alberta.

The questions for each group were:

1. What is it?
2. What is the purpose?
3. What is the output?
4. What steps are needed to complete the task?
5. How could this possibly inform our recommendations?

Group 1: IAQ Priorities and Review of standards, guidelines, etc

Develop a list of IAQ Priorities for Alberta

1. It is a list of IAQ Priorities in Alberta
2. To identify and recommend actions for change and recognize what is currently working / good.
3. Generation of listings of issues / contaminants
4. Step 1: Define a process for gathering information;
Step 2: gather information (survey, focus group, interviews)
Step 3: Evaluate information
Step 4: Create recommendations to implement and put into report.
5. Give us an action path forward on as to what are the priorities to work on

Discussion:

- Public consultation:
 - The team will have to discuss if and when we want public consultation. We could get public input into the list of priorities, or we could validate our list with the public.
 - The public is a stakeholder in IAQ, but their knowledge base is limited. Education would be a key factor in the consultation. Much of the literature on public awareness and IAQ issues shows people are concerned with what they can do, rather than contaminants, etc.
 - It is important to avoid group think by a team of experts. We don't know what the public wants.

Action item 13.3: Jennifer to talk to Sharon about options for public consultation and have information available.

Generally, the team saw the IAQ Priorities list as a first step toward scoping the work for the team and identifying important areas to make recommendations.

Review of standards, guidelines, codes, etc

1. Reviewing the standards, codes, guidelines, etc related to IAQ in Alberta as they relate to our IAQ priorities
2. Identify possible gaps / improvements and what is good currently, once the IAQ priorities have been defined.
3. Report outlining the various guidelines and standards etc in place already and what is missing and our recommendations
4. Step 1: Define process to gather information

Step 2: Gather information

- separate into occupational (commercial and industrial) and public health (residential)
- compare to other provinces, national and international
- hire an outside expert to gather standards, guidelines etc information for our team; the team will evaluate the information gathered

Step 3: Identify possible gaps / improvements

5. A report of the facts and our recommendations

Discussion:

- Separating into public health and occupational is useful because different standards, codes, etc will apply to each, even for the same pollutant
- What about employee provided housing? If the residence is on site, it is occupational; if it is off-site, then health authorities have jurisdiction
- We will have to be very clear when we engage someone to do the review. Basing the review on our priorities is a good way forward.

Group #2: Decision tree and Science Symposium

Convene a symposium on IAQ issues:

1. Science symposium with academic and non-academic focus
2. Education and outreach; board and stakeholder awareness; fulfill the expectation for a science symposium (CASA Board); inform our recommendations and report writing
3. Proceedings; knowledge transfer; board and stakeholder awareness
Metrics: attendance, feedback forms
4. Symposium subgroup has a workplan and detailed series of steps
5. Group to suggest and/or comment on draft recommendations; inform report writing

Develop a decision tree

1. Reactive mechanism to deal with an issue using simple steps, to take the concern to the appropriate agency for action.
2. to provide direction; map the process; identify, describe responsibilities, identify gaps
3. decision tree, possibly multiple decision trees depending on the audience
4. subgroup to develop a decision tree and report to the IAQ team
5. tool to discover gaps and leads to recommendations

Discussion:

- It's possible to have one decision tree that will work for everyone. This group isn't in a position to change the decision trees within an organization, but we can help people find the right agency. The tree would start at the very beginning (i.e. someone calling the Lung Association) and end at the appropriate agency. It's the 'upstream' portion before a call reaches a health authority or employment and immigration. It is up to the agency to direct their call internally.
- How will we communicate this to the Board? It could be ready before the final report.
 - Generally, team members should communicate with their stakeholders and Board members during the process. If there is something that someone won't be able to live with, it is better for the team to know before it goes to the Board. The Board will have to approve the decision tree before it is widely used.
- One of the first questions should be asking if they are in a private or public residence

- Ideally, we'd like to be able to close the loop so all concerns have a destination. Sometimes, all we can do (especially for private residences) is direct people to information.

The team formed a subgroup to get started on the decision tree. They will come back to the team with a proposal for comment.

4) Update from symposium subgroup

The subgroup met recently to discuss feedback from the Board, the program, speakers and event planner. The Board asked the team to consider Red Deer as a location. The previous symposium was held in Lake Louise and the two previous were held in Red Deer. The team felt Red Deer would be difficult for international speakers to travel to Red Deer. Edmonton and Calgary is more of a draw. The team previously decided to hold the event in Calgary, however if it is expensive Edmonton would be fine.

The subgroup also completed a scoring process for the two proposals they received for an event planner. Both scored very closely. One is an individual, the other is a firm. The subgroup was confident both would do an excellent job. The team agreed to hire the firm for capacity considerations.

The Board also directed the subgroup to consider holding an event for the public. The subgroup agreed this is an excellent idea and is considering an evening talk or noon address. There are various options.

The subgroup would also like the team to help identify possible sponsors and speakers. Our chances of securing a sponsor or speaker is greater if there is a personal connection.

5) Categorizing IAQ issues / pollutants for survey

The team brainstormed a list of issues and pollutants at previous meetings. The challenge now is to categorize or narrow the long list to help the survey subgroup. The key factors should be the severity and frequency of impacts, but equally important is the ability of this group to affect a change. Some pollutants have mechanisms in place or are driven by personal exposure, there may be little our team could do for a specific pollutant.

The public would be able to relate to issues, better than pollutants. Targeting specific pollutants is difficult because there are numerous sources, issues and jurisdictions involved. Some can be confusing, such as VOCs because there are many types of VOCs with different impacts and sources.

There was a suggestion to look at sources instead of issues or pollutants. Recommendations would then be targeting the source of IAQ problems directly. The tools the team decides to recommend could be suited to the source: e.g. education for behaviour-related sources. This would be more useful for government to implement than pollutant-specific recommendations.

Issues and contaminants associated with the source could be easily identified from the source. There are health effects of pollutants regardless of the source, if we can eliminate or reduce a small number of important sources, exposure would be lessened. This is likely more efficient than starting with a pollutant and tracing all of the sources.

The team agreed with this approach and brainstormed various sources of IAQ concerns, thinking from both a commercial and a residential point of view. The team then categorized the sources into five categories (see below).

Occupant Activity: The category focuses on the daily habits of occupants that affect IAQ.

- Air fresheners
- Candles
- Smoking
- Perfumes
- Cooking oil
- Pets
- Moisture
- Makeup, nailpolish
- Personal care products

Building Construction and Design: The category deals with the building itself

- Carpets
- Counter tops
- Glues
- Paints
- Floor covering
- Attached garage
- Moisture
- Design

Furnishings and Equipment: This is focused on what is in the building, rather than the building itself

- Furniture
- Photocopiers
- Printers
- Dry cleaning

Outside sources: This recognizes that outdoor air can influence indoor air

- CO, VOCs
- Odour
- Firepits
- Car exhaust

Maintenance (routine and scheduled): How occupants or managers maintain a building affects IAQ

- HVAC (can be a source if not properly maintained)
- Cleaning products

The team recognized this list isn't exhaustive, but felt these five categories were indicative of the types of sources of IAQ issues. The next steps will be to identify the issues under each category, and the pollutants associated. The survey subgroup will use this source classification as the backbone of the survey (or focus group, interview).

6) Signup sheets: IAQ Experts for survey and speakers for symposium

The team didn't have time for this agenda item. Jennifer will distribute the signup sheets via email.

7) Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 4.00 p.m.