

DRAFT Minutes



Human and Animal Health Implementation Team Meeting #18

Date: Friday, January 27, 2012
Time: 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Place: CASA Offices, Edmonton

In attendance:

Name	Stakeholder group
Marilyn Craig	ERCB
Joe Kendall	Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Laura McLeod	Alberta Health Services
Merry Turtiak	Alberta Health and Wellness
Ruth Yanor	Mewassin Community Council
Dawn Friesen	Alberta Health and Wellness
Robyn Jacobsen	CASA
Celeste Dempster	CASA
Ila Johnston	Parkland Airshed Management Zone
Opel Vuzi	Health Canada

Action Items:

Action items	Who	Due
18.1: Provide an updated list of implementation status of all recommendations.	Robyn	Before next meeting
18.2: Fill the gaps in membership before the next meeting.	Robyn	Before next meeting
18.3: Poll for dates for a half day meeting in the first two weeks of March.	Robyn	ASAP
18.4: Draft a status report for the CASA Board meeting and forward it to the team for their review.	Robyn	Before Feb 24
18.5: Find out if there's any money left in the HAHT budget.	Robyn	Before next meeting

Dawn Friesen convened the meeting at 1:00 pm. Quorum was not achieved.

1) Administration

a. Review meeting objectives and approve agenda

The meeting agenda and objectives were approved by consensus.

2) Review of CASA Board Meeting, Dec. 1

Alberta Health and Wellness provided a summary of the presentation given at the December Board meeting on the Alberta Real Time Syndromic Surveillance Net (ARTSSN).

Comments made by HAHT members during the discussion included:

- The focus of data collection in ARTSSN seems to be on communicable diseases, not on environmental effects.
- ARTSSN can point to acute occurrences, but not chronic circumstances.
- It was noted that it could be difficult to add new elements to ARTSSN and that the team should consider what could be done in addition to ARTSSN.

At the December 1 Board meeting, it was concluded that ARTSSN may not necessarily fulfill the intent of the Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System (CHHMS). The Board agreed to reconvene the HAHT to:

- Coordinate with Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Health Services on what could be done to fulfill the intention of the team's recommendation;
- Revisit their Terms of Reference and membership; and
- Update the Board in March 2012.

3) Review Terms of Reference

Robyn reviewed a basic timeline of events for CASA initiatives on Human and Animal Health. (See attached).

The team reviewed the elements of the Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System (CHHMS) and discussed what initiatives currently fulfill the objectives of each element:

- Human Health Symptoms/Public Health Complaints
 - Health Link
 - Physician Database
 - Administrative Databases (hosted by Alberta Health and Wellness)
 - ERCB Hotline
 - Alberta Environment Hotline
 - The HAHT recommended that an Environmental Health Hotline be established. This has not been implemented for various reasons. Mainly, as Health Link was established as a province-wide point of contact for people to make inquiries about health concerns. This may in part fulfill the original intent of the Health Hotline.
- Human Health Effects of Air Emissions
 - CEHEAPs (Community Exposure and Health Effects Assessment Program)
 - HEMPS (Human Exposure Monitoring Program) in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
 - ARTSSN (looks at acute events)
 - Academic Research into the connection between health and air quality – Alberta has well-known researchers based at the U of A (Warren Kindzierski) and U of C Gil Kaplan).
- Extraordinary Emissions Events
 - Emergency Management Response Protocols established by various levels of government. Some protocols are specific to industry (i.e. oil and gas)
 - In addition, there are a variety of sources that can be used to track occurrences leading up to the event (ex. BlueSky, Air Quality Health Index)

- Human Health Monitoring
 - Alberta Health and Wellness has various program and projects which monitor human health.
 - Surveillance initiatives by Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Health Services.
 - Research programs which look at the connection between human health and air quality at Alberta universities.
- Ambient Air Monitoring
 - Federal monitoring initiatives – National Air Quality Management System
 - Proposed Government of Alberta Clean Air Strategy
 - CASA’s Ambient Monitoring Strategic Plan
 - CASA Data Warehouse
 - Ambient Air Quality Objectives (including the priority setting processes)
 - Regional planning initiatives under the Land Use Framework
- Ongoing Activity – Correlation and analysis of inputs such as health and environmental data
 - This is the part of the CHHMS that has not been implemented. Making any progress on this could be very resource intensive.
- Issues/Actions Identification
 - The HAHT recommended that a multi-stakeholder process be established and this has not been implemented. The establishment of an advisor group was a non-consensus recommendation in the 2007 HAHT report.

It was noted that when the ARTSSN pilot project was originally suggested to the team, it was felt that ARTSSN had the potential to fulfill the goals of the CHHMS. Particularly, it was thought that ARTSSN could be the mechanism to ‘correlate and analyse inputs such as health and environmental data’. Based on the most recent update on ARTSSN, this is not the case. ARTSSN does not fulfill all of the original goals of the CHHMS.

The following points arose during the discussion:

- Alberta Health and Wellness is very supportive of advancing the goals of the CHHMS and feels that implementation needs to be shared by all partners. Resourcing could be an issue if the onus is placed on one stakeholder.
- It was noted that HAHT may need to examine different ways to achieve the CHHMS than was originally proposed.
- It was suggested that focussing on partnerships with industry and academia could be beneficial.

The team started to discuss some “unfinished business” that could be reviewed by the HAHT, should they continue to meet:

- Review the original goals of the CHHMS. Are these goals still valid?
- If the ‘hopper’ schematic is not viable, what is a viable path forward? What else can be done to achieve the goals?
- If the ‘hopper’ is still a valid way to achieve the goals of the CHHMS, what would it take to link all the input together? (The “on-going activity”.) Could we commission someone to do a business case/feasibility study?
- Review the current public information/complaint lines in Alberta, including evaluating their strengths and weaknesses to identify gaps.
- Request some more in-depth information on the Health Link database. Is there valuable information that the team could use to fulfill some of its goals?

- Have previous recommendations been implemented? If not, are they still relevant? And what is the path forward for completing implementation?

Action Item 18.1: Robyn will provide an updated list of implementation status of all recommendations.

4) Review Team Membership

The team discussed the gaps in team membership and who should be invited to future meetings:

- First Nations
- Intensive Livestock Working Group
- Alberta Environment (Long Fu or Laurie Cheperdak)
- Alberta Veterinary Medical Association
- Energy industry
- Alberta Lung Association
- Alberta Airsheds Council

It was also suggested that representatives from other jurisdictions may be interested in participating as active or corresponding members. Adding new representatives to the team could be considered during the development and/or revision of the Terms of Reference.

Action Item 18.2: Robyn will try to fill the gaps in membership before the next meeting.

5) Next Meeting

- Meeting objectives:
 - Review the original goals of the CHHMS to determine if they are still relevant and discuss the potential path forward.
 - Review the implementation of recommendations. For recommendations that are not complete, discuss their current relevance and the path forward.

Action Item 18.3: Robyn will poll for dates for a half day meeting in the first two weeks of March.

The team agreed to provide a status report to the Board at their March meeting.

Action Item 18.4: Robyn will draft a status report and forward it to the team for their review.

Action Item 18.5: Robyn will find out if there's any money left in the HAHT budget.

6) Update from Performance Measures Committee

Every year, the Performance Measures Committee is tasked with following-up on the implementation status of CASA recommendations from four years previous. These recommendations are rated and any that receive a low score are placed in the low-rated recommendation matrix for further follow-up. The Performance Measures Committee brought forward two such low-rated recommendations (relating to animal health) to the HAHT to obtain a status update. The HAHT was able to provide the following information:

1998 – Flaring and Venting Team

Recommendation 32. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development improve the collection of animal health data respecting the impacts of solution gas flaring.

Response from HAHT:

In 2006, the Western Interprovincial Scientific Studies Association (WISSA) produced a study looking at Animal Health Effects Associated with Exposure to Emissions from Oil and Natural Gas Field Facilities which included 33,000 cattle in BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Alberta Environment took a leadership role in funding this study. There is not much interest in taking this further (in reference to WISSA study).

The Alberta Veterinary Surveillance Network (AVSN) provides active surveillance which follows syndromic reports on cattle. The AVSN receives updates from vets. Information related to air quality is part of this. The AVSN is being expanded to include small ruminants and poultry (in development) and swine (currently a pilot project). The AVSN is part of the Canadian Animal Health Surveillance Network for laboratories, supports national surveillance and provides continuous and timely notification of important diseases as they occur.

It was noted that vets are not always able to tell if a symptom or death was specifically caused by air quality. More work needs to be done to help vets be able to make these links. This will improve the quality of data collection.

2003 – Animal Health Team

Recommendation 4. The AHPT recommends that research be encouraged, supported and funded by the Alberta Government in the following areas:

- Chemistry, toxicity, interaction and cumulative effects of mixtures of pollutants.
- Effects of air pollution on reproduction and immunology.
- Identification of biomarkers.
- Exposure level assessment.

Response from HAHT:

The HAHT will be reviewing the implementation of all the recommendations from this report. Robyn Jacobsen will pass along this information to the Performance Measures Committee as it becomes available.

The HAHT also committed to provide comments on two other low-rated recommendations which will be emailed to the team for review by the Performance Measures Committee.

Human/Animal Health Timeline

- March 1997 The Human Health Resource Group recommends the "Executive Framework for A Human Health Monitoring System" and the development of a multi-stakeholder project team to develop and implementation plan. The Board approves the Framework as a working approach to be tested through the Fort Saskatchewan Monitoring Project. They also approve the formation of the project team.
- November 1998 The Human and Animal Health Project Team presents their report the CASA Board. The Board accepts the 4 recommendations in the report and a subgroup of the project team is formed to develop specific recommendations to implement the proposed Framework for a Human Health Monitoring System
- June 1999 The Human Health Project team presents the "Human Health Monitoring Framework Implementation Plan" to the CASA Board. This also includes notes and a figure of the "Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System."
The Board accepts the proposed framework, and recommended that the appropriate government departments consider funding and implementation. The Board also approves the formation of an Operations Steering Committee to oversee the operation of the proposed framework.
- March 2003 Board reviews a draft Terms of Reference for the Animal Health Project Team. The team is asked to revise the document.
The Board reviews and approves the report and 6 recommendations from the Animal Health Project Team.
Recommendation 6 is to form the Human and Animal Health Team.
- September 2007 The Board reviews the final report from the Human and Animal Health team. The report contains one consensus recommendation and 2 non-consensus recommendations.
Rather than disband the team, the government members suggest a review of existing mechanisms to determine if there are other options.
- March 2008 The CASA Board accepts a project being piloted by AHW - the Syndromic Surveillance Network - as a means of implementing the Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System. AHW commits to updating the Board in June 2009.
- April 2010 The HAHT receives an update from AHW in April 2010. The team decides to remain in abeyance, as they await further information. AHW commits to providing an update to CASA on the SSN project at least every six months.

September 2011 AHW provide a written update to the Board.

December 2011 The Board agrees to reconvene the HAHT to coordinate with Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Health Services on what could be done to fulfill the intention of the team's recommendation. It is also suggested that the team revisit their terms of reference and membership and update the Board at the March 2012 meeting.