

Minutes



Human and Animal Health Implementation Team Meeting #19

Date: Friday, March 16, 2012
Time: 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Place: CASA Offices, Edmonton

In attendance:

Name	Stakeholder group
Brenda Woo	Health Canada
Long Fu	Alberta Environment
Merry Turtiak	Alberta Health and Wellness
Leigh Allard	Alberta Lung Association
Dawn Friesen	Alberta Health and Wellness
Marilyn Craig (by phone)	ERCB
Ruth Yanor	Mewassin Community Council
John Squarek	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
Joe Kendall	Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Laura McLeod (by phone)	Alberta Health Services
Robyn Jacobsen	CASA
Celeste Dempster	CASA

Absent

Name	Stakeholder group
Ila Johnston	Parkland Airshed Management Zone
Judy Huntley	Bert Riggall Environmental Foundation
Al Schulz	Chemistry Industry Association of Canada

Action Items:

Action items	Who	Due
19.1: Provide an inventory of current animal health initiatives and projects.	Joe	ASAP
19.2: Develop a description of inventory for the CHHMS.	Robyn	Before next meeting
19.3: Poll for dates for the week of April 23.	Robyn	ASAP

Ruth Yanor convened the meeting at 12:15 pm. Quorum was achieved.

1) Administration

a. Review meeting objectives and approve agenda

- The meeting agenda and objectives were approved by consensus.
- Some revisions to the minutes were discussed. It was agreed that the minutes would be approved with these changes.

b. Review Action Items from Meeting #18

Action items	Who	Status
18.1: Provide an updated list of implementation status of all recommendations.	Robyn	Done
18.2: Fill the gaps in membership before the next meeting.	Robyn	Done
18.3: Poll for dates for a half day meeting in the first two weeks of March.	Robyn	Done
18.4: Draft a status report for the CASA Board meeting and forward it to the team for their review.	Robyn	Done
18.5: Find out if there's any money left in the HAHT budget. • <i>There is \$220 in the team's budget.</i>	Robyn	Done.

2) Review Implementation of Recommendations

The team reviewed the implementation of recommendations from all 4 previous reports. For recommendations that were not complete, the team discussed their relevance and what, if anything should be done to advance progress on that work. See details of the review attached.

3) Review Goals of the CHHMS

Robyn reviewed the goals of the Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System (CHHMS):

- To ensure the availability of timely, high quality data while respecting issues of privacy and confidentiality;
- To ensure that information about human health relative to air quality is made available to the public and decisions-makers; and
- 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.

Comments made during the discussion included:

- It would be difficult for us to commit to “ensuring” the availability of data.
- It was generally felt that there is high quality data, it's just a question of whether or not it's available and who its available to.
- There is some continuing research work at the Institute of Public Health Environmental Research Group (University of Calgary) and the School of Public Health (University of Alberta). CASA doesn't currently do much to encourage studies and pilot projects.
- Since these goals were developed in 1997, it was suggested that there has been progress made in research and an environmental scan would help to identify any gaps that still exist.
- It was felt that these goals were very ‘visionary’. More objectives-based goals would make it easier to develop a plan.

- There was some question as to whether the CHHMS is doing what it needs to do. An inventory of all the ‘moving parts’ would help to develop a better picture of what’s going on.
- Fulfilling the intent of the “On-Going Activity” would be very resource intensive and there was some question as to whether or not it could even be done.
- It would probably be beneficial if some of the inputs were linked/coordinated. This is what the “On-Going Activity” component was supposed to do, but maybe there’s something more manageable that can be done.
- Alberta Health and Wellness does some coordination and internal prioritization.
- It was suggested that one piece of work for a CASA team could be to review the current public information/complaint lines in Alberta, including evaluating their strengths and weaknesses to identify gaps.
- Alberta Health Services indicated that they had recently completed an environmental scan. It may contain information that could contribute to the team’s future work.

4) Next Steps

There seem to be two possible parts to the future work of the team. One is completing any unfinished business and the other is considering new work that could be undertaken.

The team agreed that a useful next step would be to develop an inventory of the input to the CHHMS, the agencies that contribute to the CHHMS, and how they currently link/coordinate with each other. Secondly, the team could consider an environmental scan to find out what research is currently being done and identify gaps.

Action Item 19.1: Joe will provide an inventory of current animal health initiatives and projects.

Action Item 19.2: Robyn will develop a description of inventory for the CHHMS.

Other possible areas of future work:

- Environmental scan to identify progress research on human health and air quality, and to identify gaps in the research.
- Review the current public information/complaint lines in Alberta, including evaluating their strengths and weaknesses to identify gaps.

5) Next Meeting

Action Item 19.3: Robyn will poll for dates for the week of April 23.

Human Health Project Team – Final Report to the CASA Board ~ November 1998

Recommendation 1

The CASA Board reaffirms its approval of the proposed Framework for a Human Health Monitoring System (first give in February 1997)

Status

Complete. In November 1998, the Board agreed by consensus to this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

The CASA Board endorse the formation of a multi-stakeholder subgroup of the HHPT, under the joint leadership of Alberta Health and Alberta Environmental Protection, to develop specific recommendations, timelines, and work plan to implement the proposed Framework for a Human Health Monitoring System.

Status

Complete. In November 1998, the Board agreed by consensus to this recommendation.

Recommendation 3: The CASA Board incorporate a review of the implemented Human Health Monitoring System into CASA's periodic strategic planning activities.

Status

Not applicable. In November 1998, the Board agreed by consensus to "Regularly review implementation on the human health monitoring system." Since the human health monitoring system was never fully implemented, the Board cannot fulfill this recommendation. The Board does receive regular updates on the state of the monitoring system.

At their March 16, 2012 meeting, the HAHT agreed that this recommendation was no longer relevant.

Recommendation 4: The CASA Board endorse the proposed timelines to complete Appendices K (Evaluation Report) and L (Subgroup report on Implementation) to this report before the June Board meeting and to submit them for approval at that time.

Status

Complete. In November 1998, the Board agreed by consensus to this recommendation.

Human Health Project Team – Human Health Monitoring Framework
 ~ May 1999

<p>Human Health Symptoms, Public Health Complaints</p> <p>Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW) to establish a 1-800 phone-in line and data base to record Human Health Symptoms and Public Health Complaints as described in the May 18, 1999 Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System (CHHMS) with the assistance of Regional Health Authorities (RHAs).</p> <p>Status <i>Complete.</i> It was proposed that Health Link satisfies the intent of this recommendation. At their March 16, 2012 meeting, the HAHT agreed that this recommendation was partially implemented through Health Link and this was satisfactory to consider the recommendation complete.</p>
<p>Human Health Effects of Air Emissions</p> <p>AHW to access information on existing, new and emerging health outcomes attributed to contaminant exposures or events and include this in the data base as described in the CHHMS with the assistance of RHAs, Alberta Environment (AENV) and the Energy and Utilities Board (EUB).</p> <p>Status <i>Complete.</i> This component of the CHHMS is implemented and no new activity is required.</p>
<p>Extraordinary Emission Events</p> <p>AHW, with the assistance of AENV, EUB, RHAs and industry, to establish a coordinated system to record Extraordinary Emission Events and include this in the data base established under 18 above, as described in the CHHMS.</p> <p>Status <i>Complete.</i> This element of the CHHMS is fully implemented and functioning. Existing information and notification protocols may need to be reviewed and enhanced if necessary.</p>
<p>Human Health Effects Monitoring</p> <p>AHW, with the assistance of RHAs, to enhance and refine the monitoring of Human Health Effects to add to the database (described above), as described in the CHHMS.</p> <p>Status <i>Complete.</i> This component of the CHHMS has been implemented.</p>
<p>Ambient Air Monitoring</p> <p>AENV and EUB, with the assistance of AHW, RHAs and CASA, to enhance and refine the Ambient Air Monitoring System to complement Human Health Effects Monitoring, to add to the database, as described in the CHHMS.</p> <p>Status The Ambient Air Quality Monitoring component of the CHHMS has been implemented and is currently being updated.</p>

<p>Ongoing Activity</p> <p>AHW to establish a system to manage and monitor the established data base with its six components on an ongoing basis as described in the CHHMS. The data base is reviewed on an ongoing basis to provide an early warning of health effects due to emissions, or links between emissions and human health symptoms or effects, and determine the health status of the population. This will require the cooperation of AENV, RHAs and CASA.</p> <p>Status The ongoing activity function of the CHHMS has not been implemented, although functionally there is informal agency cooperation.</p>
<p>Issues/Actions Identification</p> <p>AHW to establish a formal process to review human health issues identified through Ongoing Activity under 23 above as described in the CHHMS. A scientific advisory committee (SAC) will be needed to provide scientific oversight on this and subsequent steps.</p> <p>Status Although issues are identified and actions are taken (many in consultation with stakeholders), the issues and actions identified component of the CHHMS has not been implemented and a SAC has not been established.</p>
<p>Investigation</p> <p>AHW, with the assistance of AAENV, EUB and RHAs to undertake Investigations identified in 24 above, as described in the CHHMS. Oversight to be provided by SAC.</p> <p>Status A formal process of investigation has not been implemented.</p>
<p>Further Problem Identification</p> <p>AHW, overseen by the SAC, as described in the CHHMS, to evaluate the results of investigations and ongoing activities in order to: (a) choose a health decision, and environment decision, or both or (2) initiate special monitoring. In either case, AHW to advise stakeholders and communicate to public.</p> <p>Status <i>Complete.</i> Although the SAC was not established, Alberta Health and Wellness evaluates the results of investigations and on-going activities.</p>
<p>Special Monitoring</p> <p>AHW, overseen by the SAC, to initiate special monitoring required under 26 above, as described in the CHHMS.</p> <p>Status <i>Complete.</i> Although the SAC was not established, Alberta Health and Wellness, working with stakeholders, currently implements Community Exposure and Health Effects Assessment Programs. These programs attempt to describe the population and personal distribution of exposure to airborne chemicals and particulates within specific regions of Alberta. Using a personal exposure model, the relative contribution of various exposure sources and pathways to airborne chemicals is estimated and associations between exposure to airborne chemicals and human health effects are described.</p>

Communications Strategy

CASA or AHW or stakeholders develop a communications strategy to inform stakeholders and the public, at each step, of steps proposed and taken, responding to public input and keeping them informed, notifying RHAs about environmental health complaints not based on air pollution, and producing regular reports on air quality and human health, as described in the CHHMS.

Status

Complete. CASA, Alberta Health and Wellness and all involved stakeholders develop a comms strategy. Future work might include a review of this strategy to ascertain if it is still relevant.

Multi-stakeholder Management

AHW in partnership with CASA to establish a multi-stakeholder management group that will function as an Operations Steering Committee as described in the CHHMS. This is distinct from the data management required to operate the system.

Status

This option has not been implemented.

Feedback

New information will continuously feedback into on-going activity. AHW should coordinate feedback as part of the CHHMS.

Status

This option has not been implemented. An evaluation process should be built into the CHHMS and coordinated by Alberta Health and Wellness.

Animal Health Project Team – Final Report and Recommendations

~ March 2003

Recommendation 1

The AHPT recommends that the following two documents be printed and be made available according to the distribution plan (see Appendix F): the Herd and Environmental Record System to livestock owners; and The Community Monitoring Brochure to landowners living in proximity to emission sources.

Status

Complete.

Recommendation 2

The AHPT recommends that the proposed complaints/response line, which is part of the approved Human Health Monitoring System, be expanded to enable documentation of and response to animal health complaints related to air pollution.

Status

The Alberta Veterinary Surveillance Network (AVSN) provides active surveillance which follows syndromic reports on cattle. The AVSN receives updates from vets and air quality information is a part of the reporting. It is being expanded to include small ruminants and poultry.

Recommendation 3

The Animal Health Project Team recommends that the Surface Rights Board develop and implement an awareness campaign so landowners are more aware of the Board's existence, its mandate and its responsibility for compensation regarding animal health issues.

Status

Complete. The SRB developed a website. Further work for the team could be to review the website and provide feedback.

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.

Status

Complete. At their March 16 meeting, the HAHT agreed that it would be very difficult to track implementation of this recommendation and therefore, it should be considered complete.

The Western Interprovincial Scientific Studies Association (WISSA) Cattle Study was referenced, which considered some of the areas of the research that are suggested in the recommendation.

Recommendation 5

The AHPT recommends that its recommendations for improving the credibility of research be considered by any organization undertaking major research projects on the effects of air pollution on animal health.

Status

Complete. At their March 16 meeting, the HAHT agreed that it would be very difficult to track implementation of this recommendation and therefore, it should be considered complete.

Recommendation 6

The AHPT recommends that a Human and Animal Health Implementation Team be established to:

- Review and implement, if still appropriate, the recommendations from the Human Health Project Team (see Appendix G).
- Implement recommendations from the Animal Health Project Team.
- Organize a workshop(s) to disseminate information about HERS to the farming community.
- Receive information about current and future research in the areas of human and animal health.
- Provide input into current and future research.
- Identify emerging issues in the areas of human and animal health, and recommend actions to address those issues.
- Provide information support to other project teams.
- Periodically evaluate, review and make any needed changes to the Herd and Environmental Record System and the Community Monitoring Brochure.

Status

Complete. The Board approved the formation of the team at their March 2003 meeting and approved the Terms of Reference at their March 2004 meeting.

Human and Animal Health Project Team – Final Report to CASA Board

~ August 2007

<i>Consensus Recommendation</i>

Recommendation 1

The Human and Animal Health Team recommends that the CASA Board of Directors disband the team.

Status

At the September 2007 Board meeting, rather than disband the team, the government members suggest a review of existing mechanisms to determine if there are other options.

At the March 2008 Board meeting, the CASA Board accepts a project being piloted by AHW - the Alberta Real-Time Syndromic Surveillance Network (ARTSSN) – as a means of implementing the Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System.

<i>Non Consensus Recommendations</i>

Recommendation 2

Alberta Health and Wellness, working with Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, Alberta Environment and the Regional Health Authorities implement the Environmental Health Hotline of the Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System.

Recommendation 3

Alberta Health and Wellness, working with other regulators, non-governmental organizations and industry, establish a multi-stakeholder advisory committee to the Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System. This committee will:

- advise on strategic planning and/or direction of the Comprehensive Human Health Monitoring System (CHHMS).

- influence on the priority setting process of the CHHMS.
- ensure effective communication between stakeholders and Albertans with regard to the CHHMS,
and
- audit/evaluate the frameworks activities and outcomes.