



Task Force of Border Health Officials (TFBHO) Meeting

Brown-Heatly Building, Public Hearing Room
4900 N. Lamar St., Austin, TX 78751

March 8, 2019

Member Name	Yes	No	Professional Representatives (non-members)
Esmeralda Guajardo, MAHS	✓		
Hector Gonzalez, MD, MPH	✓		(by phone)
Steven M. Kotsatos, RS	✓		
Josh Ramirez, MPA, CPM	✓		
Eduardo Olivarez	✓		(by phone)
Chris Haggstrom, Interim Director	✓		
Robert Resendes, MBA, MT (ASCP)	✓		
Emilie Prot, DO, MPH	✓		
Lillian Ringsdorf, MD, MPH	✓		
State Representative Bobby Guerra		✓	Represented by Julian Whitacre
Senator Eddie Lucio		✓	

Attendees Present

Francesca Kupper, John Villarreal, Dr. RJ Dutton, Jeffrey Koss, Sebastian Laroche, Nancy Ejuma, Anthony Patterson, Henry Presas, Julian Whitacre, Jennifer Shuford, Stephen Pont, Felipe Rocha, David Gruber, Dr. John Hellerstedt, Imelda Garcia, Monica Gamez, Karin Hopkins.

Agenda Item I: Call to Order, Welcome, Chair Remarks, Meeting Logistics and Roll Call

Chair Guajardo called meeting to order at 9:18 a.m. Chair Guajardo welcomed everyone to the Task Force of Border Health Officials (Task Force) Meeting. She expressed the need for an efficient meeting and asked Ms. Kupper to initiate the roll call.

Ms. Kupper read open meeting guidelines and completed roll call to confirm a quorum. A quorum was established. Dr. Gonzalez and Mr. Olivarez confirmed their attendance by phone.

Agenda Item II: Approval of December 7, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Chair Guajardo asked Task Force members to review the December 7 meeting minutes. Dr. Gonzalez requested that presentation made at the December 7, 2018 meeting be added as addendum so that presentations can be utilized as a resource. Mr. Villarreal asked for clarification regarding the issue and stated that he would embed the presentations into the document. Dr. Gonzalez made a motion to accept the meeting minutes and Mr. Kotsatos seconded motion. Task Force members attending by phone also accepted the minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.



Chair Guajardo spoke of Dr. Hellerstedt's response to the November 1, 2019 Report and mentioned that he'd do so in the afternoon. She suggested that the TFBHO create an action plan for each of the 18 recommendations beginning with Maternal and Child Health. She asked Ms. Kupper to address the issue and Ms. Kupper asked members to review the related templates within their packets, moving on to the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item III: Discussion of TFBHO Maternal and Child Health Priority Recommendations Objectives and Action Plan (Part 1)

Chair Guajardo explained that Maternal and Child Health was chosen because it had specific recommendations to initiate the process. Ms. Kupper explained how to prioritize and achieve action steps and objectives to move forward. The Maternal Child Health topic will be handled as a group and continued with template for Goal A and asked for member's thoughts on identifying objectives.

The points stated below include thoughts from members regarding Maternal Child and Health topics:

Goal A - The Task Force recommends that it be designated as the advisory committee for the Office of Border Health's Community Health Worker (CHW) Training Center to ensure curricula addresses border health needs, is culturally competent and includes resources and services available in local communities.

- Review of Maternal and Child Health-related deaths in border counties:
 - Infant and maternal mortalities
 - Drownings – border crossings, pool party-related deaths (early heat leading to earlier than usual pool parties in border communities)
 - Community Health Workers (CHWs) to teach safe co-sleeping habits (including pillow-top mattresses/large blanket incidents), resulting from lack of separate cribs, beds, etc.
 - Pre-natal care issues (promotion of getting pregnant women into pre-natal care in early stages of pregnancy)
 - Gestational Diabetes issues
 - Bullying topic as a behavioral health issue
- OBPH Training Center Discussion:
 - TFBHO designated as the Training Center's Advisory Committee
 - Process for Training Center curricula development
 - Use border data as a guide for trainings, initiatives, curricula; initiate quarterly advisory group meetings with Training Center staff
 - Clarification on state-to-state approved trainings (Texas/New Mexico)
 - Training Center deliverables and curriculum development
 - Zika training to be part of pre-natal care
- Work with medical societies leading to better access to public health for teens
- Define categories/definitions at Operation Lone Star (data collection)
- Vector-related conferences with binational components

The discussion lead to the following Objective-driven Action Steps (presentations for June 7 Meeting):

- CHW Certification Program Presentation (curriculum development/approval process)



- Curriculum development/approval process
- CEU requirements for CHWs/CHWIs
- List of current curricula and assess gaps/needs for other training topics
- Interstate operability (Texas/New Mexico)
- OBPH Training Center Collaboration with CHW Certification Program Presentation on prospective process
 - Discuss how Training Center goals and priorities are set/define role
 - Data assessment to include gaps/needs in border regions (between Local health departments and DSHS Regional staff), resulting in data-driven curricula for border regions (1115 waiver partners/available data) and next steps
- OBPH Region 11 Manager to present on Teen Pregnancy Symposium
- Coordinate with Regional Education Centers (work with SHACs – School Health Advisory Councils), colleges/universities, extension agents, faith-based groups, teen advisory boards
- Possible Texas Youth Action Network Presentation

Agenda Item IV: **Break** commenced at 10:30 a.m.

Agenda Item V: **Discussion of the TFBHO Maternal & Child Health Priority Recommendations Objectives and Action Plan (Part 2)** commenced at 10:40 a.m.

The Maternal Child Health topic continued to be handled as a group. Members identified goals B and E. Mr. Olivarez requested that Zika testing be part of pre-natal care assessment in certain border counties. Dr. Dutton mentioned that there are multiple recommendations that are legislatively-related to current bills that have been introduced, noting that the discussion of some goals/priorities may be challenging to move on than others in terms of agency response in light of the current legislative session. Dr. Prot and Chair Guajardo expressed interest in Goal E. Ms. Kupper shared that taking a local inventory of local initiatives focusing on teen issues on the border might suit well as a short-term measure. Members agreed and moved forward with Goal E.

Goal E - The Task Force recommends that the state provide resources necessary to continue and build on local initiatives focusing on teen health issues along the border.

- Identify teen-related local initiatives on the border to coordinate with as partners (*Members mentioned moving this objective to Goal D*)
 - Regional Education Centers (assessment from School Health Advisory Councils through school systems to identify teen-related public health topics)
 - Collegiate partners along the border (UT, Texas A&M, UTRGV, UTEP, Texas Southmost College, Texas State Technical College, South Texas College)
 - Medical societies (first steps to determine a sampling of providers that deal with teen health/consent issues in clinics, immunization access, etc.) (*assigned to Dr. Prot and Mr. Olivarez*)
 - Agrilife Extension service and other women and children's community prevention, wellness and outreach efforts (Texas healthy Mothers and Babies)
 - Faith-based organizations (Valley Interfaith, Catholic Diocese, etc.)



- Request that OBPH Region 11 Manager present on the South Texas Adolescent Summit (elements of Teen Pregnancy Symposium)
 - Collaborate with Region 1 due to their experience with working teen-related initiatives
- Inquire about Operation Lone Star data collection regarding direct teen access to health care services to define data categories in a more detailed fashion (*assigned to Dr. Prot*)
- Coordinate with Regional Education Centers (work with SHACs – School Health Advisory Councils), colleges/universities, extension agents, faith-based groups, teen advisory boards
- Possible Texas Youth Action Network Presentation
- Coordinate with women’s health and family planning services (Women’s Family Planning Association of Texas, local providers and school prevention programs)

Agenda Item VI: **Lunch** commenced at 11:30 a.m.

Agenda Item VIII: **Discussion of Remaining TFBHO Priority Recommendations Objectives and Action Plans** commenced at 12:30 p.m.
(*agenda item VIII moved due to timing*)

Chair Guajardo resumed the meeting at 12:30 p.m. and offered members the option of continuing with Recommendations or break-up into sub-committee groups. Dr. Ringsdorf mentioned that managing the rest of the Maternal and Child Health might work as a group, since some of the recommendations can’t move forward without legislative action. Chair Guajardo agreed and asked that perhaps ex-officio members staff might be able to elaborate on related bills at the next meeting. Mr. Whitaker shared that once bills were numbered, he’d be able to share more information regarding bills introduced by Representative Guerra.

Dr. Ringsdorf made a motion for workgroups to work on action steps, objectives and recommendations to report on during the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ramirez. Esmer asked if Dr. G and Eddie for comments. Chair Guajardo reminded members that there is the agenda is quite full and that presentations will have to be concise and continued to the agenda item VIII in the interest of time management, allowing Dr. Hellerstedt to present at the originally scheduled time of 1:30 p.m.

Agenda Item IX: **Timelines, Next Steps, Announcements and Consensus of 2019 meeting dates**

Chair Guajardo mentioned that Friday, June 7 is the next meeting date and asked if anyone new of major events taking place in Austin that week. Members asked if meetings had to take place on Fridays. Mr. Villarreal expressed that the meeting venue had been reserved for the rest of the year based on previously approved dates. He continued be stating that members can feel free to suggest or move the dates around without confirmation until a venue was secured for newly proposed meeting dates. Members suggested that 2020 dates be researched to ensure that meeting dates don’t interfere with major events in Austin (South by Southwest, Formula One Racing, Austin City Limits, etc.).



Chair Guajardo summarized that agenda items for the next meeting were set as a result of the objectives and action steps. Ms. Kupper confirmed the presentations from the Community Health Worker Program, Office of Border Public Health, South Texas Adolescent Summit and stated that TFBHO workgroups also had to report on their findings from each of the topics members' agreed to research. She also suggested that a legislative update would be a good idea. Mr. Whitaker agreed and provided a brief update on bills that were filed:

House Bill 1428 (Texas Aim Grant Program)

House Bill 1429 (Records of maternal deaths and how soon they're released)

Ms. Kupper congratulated members on the success of their first TFBHO webcast meeting and encouraged members to view the webcast. She also stated that viewer data would be available and suggested that webcasting may lead to more public and partner participation.

Agenda Item X: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Dr. Dutton mentioned that reference documents regarding Border Public Health were within member packets. Dr. Gonzalez thanked Dr. Dutton for the additional information and expressed that such programs have made positive impacts along the border.

Dr. Prot mentioned that Region 11 hosted the South Texas Tropical Medicine and Vector-borne Diseases Conference. It was well-attended and had binational interest with partners from Tamaulipas, Mexico. She plans to work with Dr. Tyler to better understand flea-borne diseases on possums, cats and other mammals and issues regarding animal-control/trapping policies and data in local areas for Typhus and other diseases. Mr. Olivarez expressed interest in Hidalgo working with Cameron County and Dr. Tyler regarding trapping and stated how canine rabies is under control but skunk-related rabies was still a concern in south Texas. He also mentioned a TNR (trap, neuter, release program) for cats as well.

Agenda Item VII: DSHS Response to November 1, 2018 Report
(moved from agenda item VIII due to timing)

Chair Guajardo welcomed Dr. Hellerstedt. He thanked members for having him present on report analysis and response of the TFBHO November 1, 2018 Report. He expressed how Border Public Health issues are complex and deeply rooted on the importance of the border region and to the entire state. He mentioned how a vibrant international border involves distinct national health systems from two different countries and two tribal nations, eight major sister cities and other smaller towns and communities that share common needs along the Texas-Mexico border. The following synthesizes his findings:

- Science shows how the border is a single epidemiological and health security zone
 - Share innovative solutions to public health challenges shared with Mexico regarding healthy water, air quality, and mosquito-borne diseases
- Impressive work from TFBHO, despite only existing for just a little more than one year
 - Completed strategic planning and formed five border health workgroups



- Working on initiating action plans
- Met statutory deadline for submitting first biennial report
- Developed recommendations to guide public health activities along the border for years to come
- Many bills are currently under consideration that are pertinent to TFBHO recommendations
 - Monitoring progress of DSHS budget and the various bills that relate to public health
- TFBHO Priorities: Infrastructure, Communicable Diseases, Environmental Health, Chronic Diseases, and Maternal and Child Health align with DSHS mission, goals, and division activities. Progress on several initiatives led by Office of Border Public Health (OBPH):
 - Mosquito surveillance expansion:
 - One-time funding from the U.S.–Mexico Border Health Commission:
 - Currently expanding border mosquito surveillance including oviposition trapping, egg-based species identification, and insecticide testing through a contract with the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV).
 - Surveillance efforts focused on south Texas:
 - Additional funds being used to expand surveillance in Cameron and Hidalgo counties
 - Extend surveillance along border to include El Paso County
 - Border Infectious Disease Surveillance (BIDS) expansion:
 - Working with U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission to secure additional funding to expand the CDC Border Infectious Disease Surveillance (BIDS) program under DSHS Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Cooperative Agreement
 - New five-year ELC Cooperative Agreement (August 1, 2019 - July 31, 2024)
 - Texas may apply for additional funds to enhance infectious disease prevention activities including:
 - Improved surveillance and coordination of care for infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistant organisms
 - Improved exchange of surveillance data and other public health information with binational and border partners
 - Improved coordination to enhance investigation and control of outbreaks and other public health concerns
 - Increased subject matter expertise for vector control and other disease control measures
 - OBPH Community Health Worker (CHW/Promotores) Training Center
 - One of 42 CHW Training Centers in Texas
 - OBPH now has 13 certified CHW instructors
 - The OBPH CHW Training Center will:
 - Establish a central DSHS liaison to coordinate and collaborate with the different CHW training groups
 - Develop bilingual, DSHS-certified training curriculum and trainings
 - Assist in facilitating yearly CHW conferences
 - Highlight to date “Zika 101 Trainings” (May-June 2017):



- Border-wide educational campaign what Zika is, how it spreads, and how to prevent it
- Trained 80 of 87 CW Instructors across the Texas Border
- Trained more than 600 of the 823 CHWs across the Texas Border
- In 2018, OBPH collaborated with DSHS Maternal and Child Health Section to train LHD-hired staff (CHWs and case managers) on Zika-related client-centered counseling, including contraception methods, and Zika-related issues in infant's first two years of life
 - OBPH CHW Training Center collaborated with Prism Health-Dallas to certify HIV prevention curriculum focusing on Hispanics
 - Currently reviewing another curriculum based on reporting child abuse with elements of human trafficking
- DSHS contract with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service:
 - Provide one- and three-day vector-borne disease trainings with CEUs
 - Provide six pesticide licensing courses annually in Hurricane Harvey-impacted jurisdictions
- DSHS provides:
 - Annual training conference for epidemiologists, sanitarians and others involved in foodborne outbreak investigations
 - Regional zoonosis control staff conduct trainings specific for Animal Control Officers and for Local Rabies Control Authorities
 - Region 11 hosts Annual South Texas Tropical Medicine and Vector Borne Disease Conference
- DSHS working with the Texas A&M CHW Training Center to develop CHW/CHW Instructor trainings to address tobacco use and cessation in vulnerable populations, including pregnant women.
- DSHS Diabetes Prevention and Control Program (related to Chronic Disease Work Group recommendations):
 - Partnership meeting on January 8, 2019, in El Paso:
 - Identifying priorities related to type 2 diabetes and hypertension; and to facilitate discussion for enhancing referral systems (included health systems, academic centers, border health experts)
 - Diabetes program works with partners to expand and implement the CDC-recognized National Diabetes Prevention Program.
 - The initial target areas are Greater Houston, Austin and the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex (potential expansion to El Paso and other border communities)
- DSHS to partner with local health departments in border regions:
 - Region 8 and OBPH to implement initiatives to reduce heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and related-risk factors.
 - Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch implementing initiatives to reduce tobacco-related chronic disease
 - Provided funding to Tobacco Prevention/Control Coalitions and Behavioral Health Solution of South Texas to enhance state and local tobacco control efforts



- Promoted youth tobacco prevention/cessation services in Hidalgo County; Cameron and Willacy counties will be added in FY 2019

Maternal and Child Health:

- DSHS Community Health Improvement (CHI) Division Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Section will:
 - Continue to fund the CMS/Title V border efforts related to Zika during the duration of the grant period and into any no-cost extension periods
 - Grant staff will survey and assess the need for continuation of funds
 - LHD CHWs/promotores and case managers will continue to provide education and navigation services for women and families impacted by the Zika virus

Teen Health:

- Goals of Texas Youth Action Network include promoting positive youth development and quality adolescent well checks.
- Future efforts may include expanding program statewide with a focus on border regions

Dr. Hellerstedt concluded his presentation by stating that some TFBHO are actionable while others are not, depending on legislative and policy-related issues. DSHS will continue to seek funding opportunities for public health projects with a focus on the Texas border (i.e. CDC grants to expand Border Infectious Disease Surveillance (BIDS) programs, chronic disease prevention, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program nutrition promotion and obesity-prevention component (Snap-Ed) funds for healthy eating and active living). Assessing the sustainability of such efforts is a key element of long-term planning. If certain initiatives can't be sustained, they should be carefully evaluated to ensure long-term positive impacts for border regions. He also referenced the importance of being strategic and forward-thinking so energy isn't continuously consumed by the need to react to the current crisis *du jour*. He thanked members for their hard work and dedication to the areas they serve with thoughts of long-term impacts having long-term effects for years to come.

Chair Guajardo thanked Dr. Hellerstedt and he stressed the importance of Border Public Health and how it's all about people and trustful relationship establishment to assist and help communities. He also mentioned that the public health partners are just as important as local health departments and expressed that "the work we do matters."

Dr. Gonzalez also thanked Dr. Hellerstedt and offered his support. Dr. Hellerstedt thanked Dr. Gonzales and all of the members for their hard work and dedication and reminded members of the role to provide data and facts but being neutral regarding different pieces of legislation. Mr. Whitaker also offered Representative Guerra's support, since he sits on the Public Health Committee.

Mr. Olivarez also thanked Dr. Hellerstedt's executive staff, OBPH and various partners across the state. He also mentioned the long-term prevention/recovery efforts and how outcomes of natural and man-made events effect communities as leaders of public health. Dr. Hellerstedt agreed and stressed that public health is just as important as public security and how we need to look at many prevalent issues as health security.



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Chair Guajardo asked if any other members had other comments and thanked Dr. Hellerstedt again for his continued support, along with the work of OBPH to get us to this point. Dr. Hellerstedt thanked members for educating him on border public health.

Agenda Item XI: Adjourn/Thank you

Chair Guajardo asked if any members had any announcements prior to adjourning the meeting. Mr. Olivarez reminded members of the 2019 South Texas All Hazards Conference on March 27-28. He also mentioned that on May 16, the STARZ Conference (State of Texas Active Response to Zika), both of which will be held at the McAllen Convention Center. Chair Guajardo thanked Mr. Olivarez and Task Force members for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.