PCC Meeting

July 15, 2024, from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm

In-Person and Via TEAMs

# Meeting Minutes and Notes

# **Attendance**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Representatives** | **Agency/Division/Program** |
| Chief Jim Elliot | Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) |
| Dr. David Fleeger | Texas Medical Association (TMA) |
| Ginny Lewis Ford | Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) |
| Greg Bennett | United Way of Texas |
| Michelle Havelka | Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) |
| Stephanie Duke | Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) |
| Dr. Carlos Plasencia | DSHS Region 6/5S, Regional Medical Director |
| Eduardo “Eddie” Olivarez | Representative from an Urban Local Health Department |
| Jeff Hoogheem | DSHS/RLHO/CHEPR Director |
| Dana Birnberg | DSHS/RLHO/CHEPR PMU Director |
| Aimee Wong | DSHS/RLHO/CHEPR PMU |
| Michele Risko | Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) |
| Ray Browning | Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) |
| Christine Kaunas | Texas A&M University Health |

# Discussion Item #1 Beginning Remarks

* Welcome and introductions

# Discussion Item #2 – PCC Business by Ginny Lewis Ford

## Quorum

* Quorum not met.
* The next meetings will be October 21st, 2024, 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm, both in person in M-100. More information and calendar holds will be sent via email.

**Questions/Discussion:**

### None

# Discussion Item #3 – Boil Water Notice: Overview: Michele Risko and Michelle Havelka, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ),

* A Boil Water Notice (BWN) is a notice to boil water prior to human consumption for 2 minutes at a rolling boil and to do this before washing hands and face, brushing teeth, drinking, etc.
  + Done as a precaution, the water MAY have been contaminated with disease causing organisms.
  + Federal requirements:
    - Turbidity: insufficient surface water treatment, very uncommon
    - Microbiological: confirmed E. coli presence
  + State:
    - Low distribution pressure
    - Water outage (0 pressure situation)
    - Disinfectant Residual (inadequate chlorine residual)
    - Other (unique situations)
* Frequency of BWN across the last 5 years and reasons for increase
* Logic tree for deciding when a BWN is necessary
* How and when to notify TCEQ (immediately) and consumers (within 24 hours)
* How the BWN must be issued
* How to use water during a BWN according to CDC guidelines and how to rescind a notice

**Questions/Discussion:**

### What are we encouraging water systems and communities to do to be more prepared? (When storms and power outages occur) Is there a state requirement for that (plan) or is TDEM working with them?

* There is a state requirement to have an emergency preparedness plan. It is a twofold process that came about after Ike, legislative sessions 81 and 82, a bill was passed requiring what is called an emergency preparedness plan to provide alternative power.
* It is specific to power and that is for Fort Bend and Harris Counties.
* Following winter storm Uri, in the 87th legislative session it was expanded to all counties. The plan is submitted to the TCEQ, and we check it to make sure they have used an option available.
* Houston has 8 options available, everyone else has 14 options... It may reduce the number of BWN as generators would be on site, they would kick on immediately, but there are a lot of different options beyond generators.

### Is that an annual requirement or do you just check them annually?

It is a one-time requirement unless they need changes and there are certain things in the rule that trigger them to update, like having new requirements, a new water plant, if they have a new arrangement with a different water system. After this situation (Hurricane Beryl), we find that their plan failed, they would have to replace it.

### Do you do random audit checks to ensure the plan functions as reported, or do they just send you the plan?

They send the plan, but there are requirements to exercise their generators and things of that nature. There are two separate things, the plan and operations and maintenance requirements kept up by record review.

### Is there a minimum requirement for boiled water notices or is there a timeline?

Since the Public Water System Supervision Program is about protection of public health, there is no timeframe for how long it can go on. It can go on indefinitely if there is a risk to public health. That is our number one priority (Public Health). There are rules on how much capacity a facility needs to produce for connection per hookup and those compliance issues are enforced. TCEQ checks those capacities and when we investigate, we recalculate the capacity based on the population. If they reach 85% capacity, they must report it to TCEQ.

### Are there enough teeth to make sure that these sorts of things are reported as we grow so rapidly throughout the state?

We are limited by being a state organization. We work with state organizations such as the Texas Water Development Board to make sure that the water plants have sufficient state water and the Public Utility Commission because the vast majority are regulated as utilities. All three of our rules should apply and all three of three should work as a multipronged approach to combat some of the issues.

### If the capacity issue is legitimate and there is a concern about growth, lack of infrastructure to provide a consistent, healthy water supply, at what point can the state say you guys have to stop issuing meter permits?

There is nothing that allows TCEQ to stop measuring meters. TCEQ does not permit or not permit meters. We approve plans and specifications for compliance with our rules.

### Do the Texas Utility Commission, TCEQ, and the Water Development Board have meetings to discuss water supply and quality of water issues?

TCEQ has monthly calls with them and regularly discusses people who are struggling and some of the issues.

### What are some of the ways to bring in community partners or communicate this information before it derails? How would they contact someone to get some technical assistance from a public health perspective?

TCEQ offers several services including financial, grant applications, water development applications, managerial/board training, creating policies and procedures. Texas Water Development Board helps including numerous funds.

### What can we do when water systems go down and people do not have potable water? Who can we tap into and partner with to make sure those things are set up at the local level? (referencing natural disasters)

HB 3810 was for TCEQ to get the notices and pass them along to TDEM where they would help with staging resources. If the local level is unable to obtain the resources, that is when the state steps in. TCEQ does not have shower trailers and certain resources so TDEM would step in and fill in their organizations.

### Are there any educational resources or one on ones that TCEQ does with local government or elected officials to let them know what happens in a natural event?

Most of our education goes to the water systems. We do not talk to the elected officials, we talk to the water systems, about education and awareness; about having them know who they are counting, who their state and local officials.

### Given that the water systems can you explain why some water systems are able to prioritize vital sectors and others may not?

Every water system is uniquely different. Some are surface water and have one major plant that produces everything for everyone. There are areas like El Paso that have 200+ wells plus two seasonal surface water systems and from day to day. They operate their system differently and can flow water from one area to the next making them extremely versatile. Others may have to turn their entire system off to fix a leak because they have no isolation valves. It is very technically difficult to just serve one portion of a system. Water systems also rely on gravity to get water to a place, the electricity is there to fill the storage tanks, but gravity is naturally going to occur.

# Discussion Item #4 – Disaster Day: A Community Approach to Preparedness: Christine Kaunas, Texas A&M and Ray Browning, TEEX

* **Disaster Day is the nation’s largest student-led interprofessional emergency response simulation**
* **Disaster City is a 52-acre site, where simulation of any type of disasters occurs.**
  + **Discussed types of disasters that have occurred**
  + **World’s largest fire and disaster training school**
* **Discussed the academic disciplines of the students participating**
* **Discussed organizations outside TEEX and Texas A&M participating in the event, including local, state, federal, NGO, and corporate partnerships**
* **Discussed resources that are utilized during Disaster Day**
* **Discussed Triage activities and transportation of simulated patients**
* **Showed a video: In the Face of Disaster**
* **Discussed Operation Border Health Preparedness and how they send their students to the operation**
* **Received a nation Award of Excellence and Interprofessional Education and Collaboration**

## ****Questions/Discussion:****

### If someone wants to become more involved with Disaster Day, whether that is in an ancillary role or as a partner, how can they plug in?

* They can contact Christine Kaunas at: [CKaunas@tamu.edu](mailto:CKaunas@tamu.edu)
* Christine would be extremely interested in talking to anyone that would like to participate
* Ray can field a lot of the technical disaster questions

# Discussion Item #5 – Region Update: Dr. Carlos Plasencia, Region 6/5 Medical Director, DSHS

* COVID-19 case counts update including variant changes
* Houston wastewater COVID-19 prevalence and possible issues due to Hurricane Beryl
* ER visits for COVID-19
* MPox cumulative cases going up this year
* MPox vaccination importance
* H5N1 Avian influenza, still in workers that are working with infected herds – no change in recommendations from CDC
  + Still passing through contact: PPE is important
* Dengue as an emerging public health issue for the US
* Highlighted some of the issues facing the Public Health Regions (PHR)
* Discussed Beryl response in PHR 6/5 and the assistance of PHR 7, 8, and 11

## ****Questions/Discussion:****

* None

**Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM)**

Jim Elliot -

* TDEM had a hurricane exercise on June 25th, 26th, and 27th. There were 3 sessions in a seminar format offered over the course of three days and we had 1600 participants
* Presently, TDEM is still active in the state Emergency Operations Center
  + TDEM has a map of cooling centers: [Texas Local Seasonal Relief Centers and Shelter Information](https://tdem.texas.gov/cool)
* The future direction of the Preparedness Division is going to have a heavy focus on continuity of operations at enterprise level and in partnership at varying degrees developing different strategies.

## Texas Medical Association (TMA):

Dr. David Fleeger –

* Seeing un uptick COVID-19 and in Flu A and B already
* Very little concerns filtered to them from Hurricane Beryl

**Urban Local Health Department**

Eddie Olivarez -

* Working with DSHS team on a vector control task force
* Working with Operation Border Health
* Working on school registrations and vaccinations

**Texas Association of Regional Councils**

Dr. Ginny Lewis Ford

* Nothing to report

**United Way of Texas**

Greg Bennett-

* Working with local partners on a wide range of services and support for Hurricane Beryl

**Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)**

Michelle Havelka-

* Public drinking water conference in August: [TCEQ Public Drinking Water Conference - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/conference.html)
* Working recovery efforts with the Hurrican Beryl response

**Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)**

Stephanie Duke-

* No updates

# Closing Remarks and Topics for Next Meeting

* Thank you to all for participating
* Reminder to please provide suggestions for content in future meetings.