

**NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CHEMICAL EXPOSURES  
CHEMICAL EMERGENCIES**

**Conference Call Summary  
10/02/09**

**Call Objectives:**

- Welcome and introduce members of the Work Group
- Reach a shared understanding of the vision and goals for the *National Conversation* and the Work Group's role
- Review and suggest any refinements to the Work Group charge
- Decide on next steps and assignments

| Upcoming Meeting/Call             | When & Where                                      | Suggested Agenda Items  |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> In Person Meeting | November 13, 2009<br>Baltimore, MD<br>9:30 – 4:00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Refinement of Charge</li><li>○ Discussion of the need for subgroups</li><li>○ Consider having a DHS rep give an overview at the Nov meeting</li></ul> |

**I. Action Items**

| Work Group Charge  | Who         | Completed by |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| Develop a repository of background information and the roles and responsibilities of the relevant agencies (ATSDR mission, Natl Response Framework, etc.) to share with the Work Group | Montrece R. | On-going     |

| Scheduling Regular Call Times            | Who        | Completed by                             |
|--|------------|--|
| Send 'always unavailable' times to Dana  | WG members | Fri, Nov. 6<br>(completed)               |
| Propose regular call times to Work Group | Dana G.    | Wed, Nov. 11<br>(completed) <sup>1</sup> |

| Compiling Background Resources  | Who        | Completed by |
|---|------------|--------------|
| Send any resources or reports that might inform or impact the Work Group's work to Montrece | WG members | Fri, Nov. 6  |

<sup>1</sup> Possible call times were discussed at the November 13 meeting, and it was determined that there was no time when all group members are regularly available. Therefore, Dana will follow up to poll members' availability for specific dates.

| <b>November Meeting</b>   | <b>Who</b> | <b>Completed by</b> |
|---|------------|---------------------|
| Circulate information to the Work Group on November meeting logistics | Dana G.    | Completed           |

## **II. Agreements Reached**

The Work Group made the following decisions:

- To develop a mechanism for sharing information and background materials to consider in shaping the appropriate framework for the Work Group's report. To identify a specific set of materials to help structure the discussion and the work of the Work Group, including but not limited to
  - Information on Infomatrix
  - OSHA Best Practices for Hospital First Receivers
  - Congressional Staff Report on ATSDR.
  - Community stories
  - National Response Framework
- To consider having a DHS rep give an overview at the Nov meeting
- To consider sharing specific information on governmental agencies' existing efforts and programs at the November meeting

## **III. Call Summary**

### 1. Overview of Vision and Goals for *National Conversation* and the Work Group's Role

#### *Overview:*

The Chair, Dr. Andrea Kidd-Taylor, opened the call by outlining the overall vision and goals of the National Conversation. An overview of the National Conversation processes also was provided, including the roles of the Leadership Council (LC) and the Work Groups (WG) in the overall architecture of the National Conversation. As described, the WGs will develop their respective charges, and the LC reviews and approves them, making sure the collective charges will produce recommendations for developing an overall Action Agenda – the full set of recommendations put forth by the National Conversation effort. Based on their respective charges, the WGs develop and finalize reports containing recommendations. These reports will provide the information and ideas from which the LC will construct the Action Agenda, and the WG reports will be attached in their entirety to the Action Agenda.

The WGs focus on one of six topics broad in nature, with some overlaps, and include Monitoring, Scientific Understanding, Policies and Practices, Serving Communities, and Education and Communication – in addition to the Chemical Emergencies Work Group. Other elements of the National Conversation include: sector based meetings, community meetings, tribal meetings, meetings with other stakeholder groups, and the development of a Community Conversation Toolkit, which will be useful for community leaders who want to convene conversations throughout the country. National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) staff will manage information for this project. To supplement the discussions of the Work Groups and the Leadership Council, web-based dialogues also will be developed. The Work Groups will help develop questions to catalyze the robust, two-way discussions anticipated for the web-based dialogues.

## 2. Discussion of Work Group Charge

The majority of the conference call discussion was devoted to the following WG charge:

### ***Chemical Emergencies: preventing, preparing for, and responding to acute chemical incidents;***

Chemical exposure emergencies can be devastating in human, environmental, and economic terms. Safeguarding public health requires analyzing system vulnerabilities, reducing risks where appropriate, and developing effective emergency preparedness and response plans. While many government agencies have roles in emergency preparedness and response efforts related to chemical events, coordination among concerned parties has not been optimized. Further, there remain shortcomings, gaps, and redundancies in the chemical emergency preparedness system. This group will consider and make recommendations on issues such as chemical infrastructure security, monitoring of events, and the preparedness of local health care providers to care for victims in the event of a disaster.

Suggestions were made for ways to address the charge, as well as specific language modifications for the charge.

The WG discussion of the charge began with consideration of the three main themes highlighted during the Chemical Emergencies Breakout Session at the June 26<sup>th</sup> kick-off meeting: 1) system and coordination issues, 2) training, and 3) community involvement. Using these themes and the June 26 Breakout Group Report as a starting point, the group focused on four questions during the discussion:

- Are there any major themes missing from the draft charge?
- Does the charge focus on the right themes?
- Which themes or elements would you prioritize for the Work Group to begin addressing?
- Are there any ongoing resources / initiatives / reports etc. that might impact this area or inform our work?

The WG members offered their thoughts on the charge, and several people suggested considering the sequential phases of prevention, preparedness, response, recovery (with mitigation going through all of them) as the framework for the charge.

Members also offered proposed options for ways to structure the work of the WG, including:

- Reviewing the various governmental approaches, including the charge of ATSDR
- Comparing the relative costs for preventing vs. responding
- Acknowledging the importance of community outreach, involving industry, and local planning
- Identifying a set of materials to help structure the discussion and the work of the WG, including but not limited to information on Infomatrix, OSHA Best Practices for Hospital First Receivers, the Congressional Staff Report on ATSDR, and community stories

*Questions and Discussion:*

Breaking up into subgroups

The WG briefly discussed the idea of breaking into subgroups. For example, the bullets from the June 26 Breakout Group Report could be prioritized and possible solutions grouped by theme. It was noted that this will be considered as the WG moves forward.

Format/structure of the final report

At least one member noted that we should begin thinking about the structure of the final report as early in the discussions as possible. This was acknowledged, and an agreement was made to discuss the written product and assign tasks at the first in-person meeting. More information on the process and timeline will be shared then as well.

### **3. Wrap-Up and Next Steps for Work Group**

Dana reviewed the next steps for the WG and Andrea adjourned the call at 11:30 am Eastern.

## **IV. Participation**

**Members Present:**

Bill Benerman Denver Department of Environmental Health  
Nathan Birnbaum, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
John Bresland, U.S. Chemical Safety Board  
Susan Cibulsky, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Kathleen Curtis, Clean New York  
Jacque Darbonne, Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services  
James Eaton, Maine Health and Environmental Testing Lab  
Fleming Fallon, Bowling Green State University  
Nancy Hughes, American Nurses Association  
Jim James, American Medical Association  
Erik Janus, CropLife America  
Todd Jordan, Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
Betsy Kagey, Georgia Division of Public Health  
Andrea Kidd Taylor, Morgan State University, *chair*  
James Madsen, U.S. Army Medical Corps  
Jacqueline McBride, Love, Peace and Prosperity International, Inc  
Maureen Orr, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry  
Paul Orum, NGO Chemical Safety Consultant  
Susan Palchick, Hennepin County  
Clark Phinney, Maine Oxy  
Darius Sivin, International Union, UAW  
Derek Swick, American Petroleum Institute  
Constance Thomas, South Fulton and Fayette Community Task Force  
Wanda Welles, New York State Department of Health

**Facilitation & Staff Team:**

- Benjamin Gerhardstein, NCEH/ATSDR
- Dana Goodson, RESOLVE *facilitator*
- Montrece Ransom, NCEH/ATSDR