

State Camp Safety Advisory Council Meeting (SCSAC) November 2, 2017, Meeting Minutes

Members

Present: Jordan Dale, Eric Bacon, Gordon Felt, Meir Frischman, Dr. Thomas Welch, Douglas Pierce, Robert Scheinfeld

Members

Absent: Dawn Ewing

Department of Health Staff

Present: Brad Hutton, Michael Cambridge, Roger Sokol, Brian Miner, Timothy Shay, Megan Mutolo, Eric Wiegert, James Maurer, and Carolyn Caldwell

Chairperson, Jordan Dale called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. at the New York State Convention Center Meeting Room 2, Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York. A quorum was present.

Council Administrative Business

Mr. Shay noted that all Council member terms are current; however, the terms of Mr. Dale and Ms. Ewing will be expiring at the beginning of next year. He will be reaching out to them independently to determine their desire to continue on the Council. He also noted that there remains one vacant position on the Council for a representative of a for-profit camp.

Mr. Shay announced the appointments of Mr. Daniel Lang, Deputy Director for the Division of Environmental Health Protection, and Mr. Eric Wiegert, Section Chief for the Recreational Environmental Health Section of the Bureau of Environmental Health and Food Protection, which includes the children's camp program.

The minutes from the May 3, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously.

Issuance of Department of Health Guidance

Brad Hutton, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Public Health addressed the Council and thanked them for their service to the Department. He discussed the issuance of Department of Health guidance for camp operations and sought the Council's input on the timeframe for issuance. Mr. Hutton and the Council agreed that it is necessary to streamline the process in order to have guidance documents available as early as possible to ensure camps have time to implement the guidance for the upcoming season. The Council further recommended that guidance should be issued no later than January, especially for any guidance or requirement involving staffing.

Mr. Hutton inquired about the scheduling of Council meetings and the timeframe that the meeting should be held. Meetings earlier in the year would assist the Department in getting the Council's input on issues for the upcoming season. It was concluded that a winter meeting should be held around the end of February and a fall meeting around October. If necessary an ad hoc meeting in December could be scheduled to discuss time sensitive

issues. The Council discussed the potential use of satellite locations due to concern of travel in the winter months when weather may be inclement. The Department indicated that satellite locations may be possible, but they would require equipment to broadcast the meeting to other locations and be open to the public. The Department can explore this option for potential future use.

The Council thanked Mr. Hutton for his input and consideration of the issues.

Preliminary Overview of the 2017 Season

Mr. Shay stated that there were no fatalities, drownings, or non-fatal drownings reported for the 2017 season. Department staff are continuing to work on obtaining incident information from local health departments. However; the preliminary review of the data showed no overwhelming trends for incidents. It appears that the downward trend in numbers of injuries continued this season. Mr. Pierce highlighted that he was aware of two deaths at single purpose day camps, which fall outside of DOH regulatory oversight.

Mr. Shay reported that there was an outbreak of mumps involving four international staff members at an overnight camp. Affected staff were not housed with campers and no cases of mumps were reported in the camper population. This outbreak highlighted the importance of obtaining immunization records and implementing proper control measures to prevent the spread of illness.

Mr. Shay reported that the 2013 and 2014 children's camps incident summary reports and charts/graph should be released soon and will then be shared with the Council. The Council discussed the timelines of the Department's release of incident data. Dr. Welch indicated that there are other robust national databases for injury and illness that should be utilized to identify trends. Council members stressed their desire to have current data trends to review. Mr. Shay noted that significant incidents including fatalities, serious injuries and illnesses are discussed at Council meetings at the conclusion of each season. The Department will continue to work on providing current statistics.

Tick and Insect Repellent Legislation

Mr. Shay discussed legislation, signed into law on July 25, 2017, regarding the use of tick and insect repellents at children's camp. The legislation amended Public Health Law to:

- Allow a camper to carry and use repellents with written permission from the camper's parent or guardian.
- Require the camp to maintain a record of the parent or guardian permission.
- Allow unlicensed personnel to assist a child who is unable physically to apply the repellent when directed by the child if permitted by the parent or guardian, and authorized by the camp.

The legislation is consistent with repellent guidance issued by the Department in the spring. Mr. Felt inquired if specific guidance relating to this legislation would be issued by the Department. Mr. Shay indicated that none was planned, but could be developed if the Council felt it was necessary. The Council did not feel specific guidance was needed.

Children's Camp Safety Plan Template Update

Mr. Shay notified the Council that the Children's Camp Safety Plan Template was being revised and may be available in January. The template, which was originally released in 2009, is an interactive document that addresses components required by regulation and those where further details are needed. Revisions include new requirements related to campers with disabilities, topics recommended by the Council, and web links to guidance. The Department does not require use of the template. It can be utilized by new camps or camps that need or want to update their safety plan.

Wilderness Camping Programs

A discussion on wilderness camping activities was introduced by Dr. Welch. He noted that wilderness activities are a growing industry and may not always be able to be conducted in accordance with all regulations due to the nature of the activity. It was asked if there was any need to revise or draft guidance. The Council discussed the issue, current requirements and guidance for wilderness activities including the wilderness swimming guidance. The Council asked Mr. Shay if he was aware of any issues or needed guidance. Mr. Shay responded that that he was not aware of any issues that needed to be addressed at this time. The Council concluded that specific issues associated with wilderness camping activities will be addressed as the need arises.

Concussions

Mr. Shay presented data on head injuries at children's camps. The data show a progression in the number of concussions reported since 2004, however it is difficult to determine whether this represents an increase in the actual number of concussions or an increased awareness of the issue.

Mr. Shay noted that there is an abundance of guidance available about concussion prevention, identification and management from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), NYSDOH, and State Education Department. Mr. Shay asked the Council if NYS children's camp specific guidance was needed or if current guidance is adequate.

Mr. Pierce identified a free online course from CDC entitled "*Heads Up*" that his staff utilize. The Council ultimately recommended that the weblink to CDC's concussion guidance be provided to camp operators for their information but no camp specific guidance was needed from the Department. The Department agreed to distribute the CDC weblink.

Camps for Children with Developmental Disabilities

Mr. Shay informed the Council of a new requirement from the Justice Center to ensure consistent monitoring and tracking of administrative actions taken toward staff with a substantiated finding of reportable abuse or neglect. This new requirement only applies to Camps for Children with Developmental Disabilities (20% or more children with a developmental disability). Operators of these camps will need to enter the administrative actions taken against staff into the Justice Center's new online Administrative Action Reporting Mechanism (AARM) application.

Other Business

Mr. Scheinfeld discussed a concern about an issue that came to his attention this past summer. He was informed that a camp aquatics director left a camp mid-season resulting in the camp not having a qualified individual to oversee swimming. Mr. Scheinfeld stated that certain personnel are required by the children's camps regulation for operation and questioned how local health departments know if a position was vacated. Mr. Dale suggested that a reporting requirement could be beneficial and asked that this issue be put on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

There were no other topics presented for discussion.

Next Meeting/Adjournment

The Council adjourned at 12:17 p.m. after tentatively scheduling the next two Council meetings for February 28, 2018 and October 18, 2018.