PCC Meeting

October 21, 2024, from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm

In-Person and Via TEAMs

# Meeting Minutes and Notes

# **Attendance**:

|  |  |
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| **Representatives** | **Agency/Division/Program** |
| Jim Parisi | Texas Hospital Association (THA) |
| Dr. Serena Bumpus | Texas Nurses Association (TNA) |
| John Henderson | Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals (TORCH) |
| Dr. Christina Ly | Texas Medical Association (TMA) |
| Matt Dowling | Texas Medical Association (TMA) |
| Greg Bennett | United Way of Texas |
| JCLTRG Director | 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 |
| Scott Smith | Texas Funeral Service Commission |
| Michelle Havelka | Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) |
| Eric Epley | Governor’s EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) |
| Jim Elliot | Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) |
| Captain Ryan Hammett | Texas Military Department (TMD) |
| Joe Schmider | DSHS EMS Director |
| Jeff Hoogheem | DSHS/RLHO/CHEPR Director |
| Dana Birnberg | DSHS/RLHO/CHEPR PMU Director |
| Aimee Wong | DSHS/RLHO/CHEPR PMU |
| Michelle Jones | DSHS/RLHO/CHEPR PMU |

# Discussion Item #1 Beginning Remarks

* Welcome and introductions

# Discussion Item #2 – PCC Business by Jim Parisi

## Quorum

* Quorum met.
* The next meetings will be January 7th, 2025, 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm, both in person in M-100 and via Teams. More information and calendar holds will be sent via email.

**Questions/Discussion:**

### None

# Discussion Item #3 – Texas Medical Association (TMA) Legislative Update by Matt Dowling and Christina Ly

* Provided overview of TMA and organizational structure.
* TMA Emergency & Disaster Response
  + Hurricane Harvey- Discussed role in response, such as TMA physicians volunteering at medical shelters, assisting patients with pharmacy needs, and other activities.
  + Covid-19- Provided information about response to include creation of task force, collaborating with DSHS, and generating resources.
  + TMA Policies on Preparedness- Provided overview of response policies and information on other related issues.
* Strategic National Stockpile (SNS)- Discussed federal funds being authorized and available for states to create state-level stockpiles and provided information about related national policies.
* ImmTrac2- Provided definitions and information about the state immunization registry, to include benefits to first responders. Also, discussed some of the obstacles in implementing the registry more in the state.
* Vaccine hesitancy- There have been efforts to ban mRNA vaccines in Texas, as well as to add an additional consent form. This, paired with general vaccine misinformation, have contributed to an increase in vaccine hesitancy in the state.
* Emerging & Re-emerging Infectious Diseases- Discussed list of a few emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases that are on physician member’s radars right now, with one of the biggest priorities being congenital syphilis and syphilis.
* Public Health Funding- Provided information related to Legislative exceptional items pertaining to DSHS and HHSC. TMA is in full support of funding these.
* Other public health priorities- Discussed priorities to focus on, such as protecting the patient-physician relationship, medical workforce, and THC considerations.

**Questions/Discussion:**

### Regarding SNS, is TMA advocating for additional supplies, or what is the clarification?

* Any time we can get more funding and supplies out in the field quickly is better. Ordering and shipping in this very large state is better.

### Do pharmacies report to ImmTrac?

### You must consent and opt-in.

* Suggestion- have a presentation for the next meeting on ImmTrac and what is being done to update it.

### With regards to keeping psychiatric patients and ER doctor’s ability to keep them, are you referring to court authorization and all these things?

### Yes, that is what they were referring to. And there was a bill that was passed a few sessions back that ended up getting vetoed. There's been more work too on the non-legislative route to get court orders with justices sooner, but there are still gaps.

# Discussion Item #4 – Texas Health Association Legislative Update by Carrie Kroll, Advocacy and Public Policy and Jim Parisi, CHI St. Lukes Health-The Woodlands Hospital

* THA Legislative Update- Provided overview of Legislative process in Texas. Also gave historical overview of 2023 legislative session, to include record number (8,520) bills filed this session, and information on special sessions.
* 88th Session Public Health Priorities- Provided information on the many priorities for this session, such as supporting efforts to improve vaccination rates for vaccine preventable diseases and expanded resources to allow the state and Texas hospitals to respond as needed.
* Workforce Wins- The Workforce was the number one priority coming out of the pandemic. Presented data on hospitals staffing and overtime, and Funding in HB 1.
* Hospital funding- Increased state funding of Medicaid and increased inpatient psychiatric beds. However, there is still a need for more. Trauma funding has been maintained. Presented rural hospital funding as well.
* Public Health Budget Outcomes- presented on items such as HIV/STD Prevention & Medication, EMS/Trauma/Regional Advisory Councils, and World Health Organization Collaboration.
* Increase Health Care Coverage- Increased health coverage continues to be a huge priority for the organization, especially in terms of really trying to cover patients so that they have better access to care and are able to receive the services they need. Texas hasn't been ready to expand Medicaid yet, so in the meantime, we're looking at other ways of getting care around patients.
* Disaster Updates- During Hurricane Beryl, Texas hospitals worked around the clock to seamlessly continue operations despite challenging conditions, THA issued a news release and other digital media emphasizing key tips to help relieve overrun hospitals and keep emergency departments available for those who need them the most, and THA worked with state officials regarding shelter operations, power and connectivity assistance, transport issues and other hospital-related matters. Moreover, as a result of damage from Hurricane Helene, Baxter, one of the largest suppliers of IV fluid solutions, has a major manufacturing facility in North Carolina that was damaged and shutdown. Texas hospitals are experiencing shortages and are being instructed to work with their RACs. FDA has listed all solution shortages, released guidance on compounding solutions, and are bringing in temporary imports to help mitigate shortages.
* Governor Executive Order - GA-46- Presented on the details of the executive order, and laid out the required actions for HHSC, along with relevant due dates for due items.
* Setting the Scene for the 89th- Provided strategies for this session and which items are needed to be passed, such as the biennial budget. Also spoke to anticipated challenges.
* THA 88th Policy Priorities in Development- Discussed the various priorities for this upcoming session, to include increasing the Texas health care workforce, ensuring health care providers are safe at work, increasing resources for behavioral health care, and other topics.
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## ****Questions/Discussion:****

* No Questions

# Discussion Item #5 – DSHS Updates: Government Affairs by Jordan Hill Sheppard - Government Affairs Director, Public Health Region by Dr. Carlos Plasencia – Region 6/5S Regional Medical Director, EMS by Joe Schmider – State EMS Director

## ****Government Affairs Update****

* Interim and Pre-Session Themes- Presented on filing trends, task force reports, speaker race, and other relevant issues. Also, noted that early voting numbers are high from the beginning and there is a record number of bills so far, especially due to duplicates. Consumable hemp is a topic that is hard to enforce but hopefully will get resolution soon either through Texas Supreme Court or through cleanup legislation.
* Taskforce on Healthcare Workforce Shortages- Biennial report projects shortages. Similarly, the Texas Nursing Workforce Center puts out similar data specific to nursing. Recommendation #1 included was essentially repurposing an existing committee or Council that we have here at DSHS called the statewide Health Coordinating Council and repurposing it to be more specific towards health professions and really identifying ways to have more concerted effort towards planning education in preparation for the healthcare workforce. DSHS would be tasked with continuing to provide administrative support to this new or repurposed Council and then providing more data and support for that council.
* FY2024 – FY2025 Accomplishments- Highlighted major accomplishments, such as the success in expanding federally qualified Health Center (FQHC) grant program, and making public health data more available to partners, as well as the public. Also, leveraging investments from a lot of the COVID grants that we've received since the beginning of COVID.
* Top Federal Funding Sources- Presented on federal funding sources, such as Epi Lab Capacity (ELC) grants having major investments, which has significantly bolstered labs.
* Exceptional Item Objectives- Agency is really focused on ensuring efficient and effective operations of our current services, making sure data is timely and of high quality. Also focusing on strengthening broader public health systems and protecting from emerging and persistent healthcare challenges.
* State Laboratory- Presented on current challenges with limited space in the existing state lab building, gave overview of spaces, and presented on proposed expansion project to increase space and resolve current challenges.

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

### Where would money come from for a lab expansion?

* Probably from general revenue, but also looking at alternate sources as well

### Anything the group can do to help with the process?

* Would appreciate sharing the message about the need

**Public Health Region Update**

* Respiratory Virus Surveillance report- Covid data and other data may show as less than actual reality, due to the fact that it’s no longer reportable. Presented ILI graph showing cases and emergency room visits and also presented on Houston wastewater graph as it relates to ILI.
* H5N1- There was one case in Missouri not associated with an animal. Others are also suspected of being person-to-person, but results are pending.
* Assessing Influenza Pandemic Risk- We are currently doing influenza risk assessment tools (IRAT) to assess. The most recent one conducted has concluded that a risk for a pandemic is actually low at this point. However, if conditions worsen, then we move into a pandemic severity assessment framework (PSAF).
* MPOX Update- This is low in our country and not much of an issue at this point but still tracking.
* Marburg Update- Data suggests this is starting to burn out and end hopefully soon. This is a virus similar to Ebola with high consequences and can be spread from human to human, especially in healthcare settings. Measures to mitigate included limiting travel from Rwanda to only certain airports for screening and potential follow up. Texas will get a list of individuals that came here from Rwanda. This is a good opportunity to take a look at PPE stocks and revisit plans and training.
* Regional Updates-
  + Region 1 Preparedness Update- There is a large amount of work done by the regions for SNS, CHEMPACK and points of dispensing. The regions are constantly training for this.
  + Thanks for Region 7, 8 and 1- These regions came to the assistance of region 6/5S in response to the Hurricane Beryl disaster and helped their staff when they were exhausted from the response.
  + Region 11- Recently put on Operation Lonestar and saw close to 6,000 people.

## Questions/Discussion:

None

## EMS Update

* Senate Bill 8- This was an effort to recruit and retain EMS personnel in Texas and was a great success.
* EMS Overview- Provided an overview of the EMS system in Texas, to include the overall numbers of agencies and personnel. Also provided figures regarding response calls.
* EMS Personnel- Covid era saw the workforce reduced, mainly to go work at hospital, but workforce numbers are now increasing once again. This effort was supported by funding from the 87th Session, in the amount of $21.7 million.
* EMS Scholarships- Presented on the positive impact these have had on overall workforce figures, and also provided details regarding specific distribution amounts, requirements, and timelines.
* EMS Campaign- Provided facts about the efforts to create and distribute EMS campaign. Also provided data regarding the impact of the campaign. Social media was also utilized through donated means. Much of the developed materials have been made available on the website for agencies to use (EMS.Texas.gov)

**Questions/Discussion:**

None

# Discussion Item #6: Nursing SB.25 by Serena Bumpus with Texas Nurses Association (TNA)

* Before the 88th section started, did an environmental scan to know what is going on in the field, specifically towards nursing workforce shortage. Was short at least 30,000 nurses and was constantly hearing from nurses that they were short staffed, especially after COVID.
* Presented data on metrics related to nursing shortages (over 40,000). Data also showed that many students seeking admission were being denied acceptance to nursing schools.
* High level politicians were championing this.
* SB 25 did pass unanimously, along with SB 240.
* The result has been historical funding appropriated to nursing education. Also got governor’s (106M $) to help alleviate this.
* Results were new scholarships, nursing innovation grant program,
* Some line items were not funded, such as clinical sites and preceptors. This line item would create an incentive program for nurses precepting.
* Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board was tasked to put together a healthcare workforce taskforce
* Some major recommendations include streamlining nursing school application process, implementing a state-wide system to manage clinical placements and preceptor program.

## Questions/Discussion:

### With regard to 12.5 M in loan repayments, do you know if this is enough?

* Not sure yet, but we will need to see what the appetite is

# Updates from PCC Members

* No updates

## Closing Remarks

### Would a presentation about SNS be a helpful topic for the next meeting?

* Jeff Hoogheem- Yes, we will plan to give an update on SNS, especially since the federal government (ASPR) has gone through some recent changes. We might also be able to bring in the ImmTrac team to present on ImmTrac

Adjourn