

Syndromic Surveillance Governance Council
Meeting Minutes

April 30, 2015
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
DSHS, 1100 West 49th Street, M101
Austin, TX 78754

Attendees:

*Raouf Arafat, MD, MPH, Asst. Director, City of Houston, Dept. of Health and Human Services
*Carol M. Davis, BS, MSPH, Program Mgr., Health Service Region 7, DSHS
*Philip Huang, MD, MPH, Medical Director, Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services
*Linda K. Gaul, MPH, PhD, State Epidemiologist, Office of Epidemiology, DSHS
*Natalie D. Lambert, FACHE, Regency Hospital of Fort Worth
*Thaddeus Miller, MPH, Dr.PH, Associate Professor, UNTHSC, School of Public Health
*Santos Navarrette, Jr., MA, MBA, Abilene-Taylor Co. Public Health District, Assistant Health Administrator
*Christopher Taylor, BS, CM, Executive Director, Cherokee County Public Health
*Don Vickers, Med, CEO/Managing Partner, HPT Healthcare
*David W. Gruber, Assistant Commissioner, Division for Regional and Local Health Services (RLHS), DSHS
*Peggy Hines, Health Information Technology Mgr., DSHS
Beverly A. Pritchett, Director, Office of Public Health and Deputy Assistant Commissioner, RLHS, DSHS
Bonnie Martin-Hudson, Division for Regional and Local Health Services
Dan Smith, Division for Regional and Local Health Services
Jay Jackson, Project Manager RLHS
Donald Jirasek, Sanitarian, Food Safety Inspector, RLHS, DSHS
Steve Eichner, HIT Policy Director, Center for Program Coordination and Health Policy, DSHS
Leo Achembong, Health Systems Integration Program Fellow, Center for Program Coordination and Health Policy, DSHS

Not Present:

*Diana Martinez, MPH, PhD, Program Mgr., Harris Co. Public Health and Environmental Services
Monica J. Hughes, RN, BSN, Director of Public Health Nursing, RLHS, DSHS
Glenna Laughlin, Division for Regional and Local Health Services

* Voting Member

Proceedings:

A copy of the agenda is attached to these meeting minutes

1) Welcome: Dave Gruber

- a. Mr. Gruber welcomed everyone to the Syndromic Surveillance Governance Council (SSGC) meeting.
- b. Initial part of project is under development and the project is moving forward quickly
- c. The perception in the field may be that the project is not moving fast enough. This is not entirely accurate. The system is being built from the ground up. To do this properly and to ensure longevity of the system takes time.
- d. The project has adhered to the promise that it will not pull down any currently functioning systems during the transition.
- e. As the project moves forward we will need the SSGC to provide advice.

2) Introductions:

- a. Mr. Gruber asked everyone to introduce themselves and provide the category of organization they were representing.

3) Approval of previous minutes:

- a. The previous meeting minutes were approved with Steve Eichner's title corrected to read HIT Policy Project Director.

4) Previous Business

a. Charter Review

- i. The previous meeting decision was that member categories be changed to accurately reflect the individual's category that they represent. This has been completed and was accepted.
- ii. Clarification was requested on the difference between category of Hosting Systems and Users. Hosts are usually users but not all users are hosts. Houston, San Antonio and Tarrant County are both Hosts and Users.
- iii. The committee decided that the decision regarding which positions would be two year and which three year would be a business process decision, not as a part of the charter, and would be addressed later.
- iv. A clear process was requested for bringing in new board members to avoid the same people remaining in board positions for an extended amount of time. It was decided that the process for renewing terms this would also be a business process and would be addressed at a later date.
- v. A motion was made that the wording "which is not eligible for renewal" in section 5 (c) be struck from the charter and replaced with "process to be developed by the council". The motion was passed.
- vi. A motion was made that three year positions be decided by committee. The motion was passed.
- vii. Majority rule was clarified to state the majority represents the number of members on the entire committee and not just the members attending the meeting. In addition, it was decided members could vote offline and by proxy.
- viii. A motion was made and passed by the committee to accept the Charter changes as discussed.

b. Syndromic Surveillance Regional Advisory Committees (SSRAC)

- i. Six of 8 Health Service Regions have hosted initial committee meetings.
- ii. Universally there were a great deal of questions and concerns raised at the meetings.
- iii. The SSRACs will meet on a quarterly basis between the meetings of the SSGC so that their questions can be addressed at the subsequent SSGC meeting.
- iv. During the technical build out RLHS will continue to address questions and concerns as the system design is completed and we begin implementation.
- v. The two biggest challenges will be ensuring that there is no gap in the information stream and duplication of data when the streams are combined.
- vi. All the regions have been encouraged to keep submitting their concerns and questions.
- vii. It was pointed out that Syndromic data feeds are notoriously "dirty" and the systems are designed to be able to take this into account. The point is detection and building out the alert system that takes into account these kinds of issues. Collecting individual records is not the point, aggregate data is the point.
- viii. **Agenda item for next meeting.** Provide a wrap around document that discusses the limitations of the system; what we foresee as the business, technical and user documents and their intended uses.

c. Data Use Agreements

- i. Copies of the newest version of the DUA that is being used by HHSC were distributed to the committee.
- ii. It was discussed at great length how cumbersome the current DUA form is. The question was asked if the project needs a full DUA. Additionally the question was raised regarding using an alternate document such as a participation agreement in lieu of a DUA.
- iii. Members pointed out that the easier the process with stakeholders, the more they will buy into the system. The current DUA has wording that seemed to cause reluctance to sign.
- iv. The question was asked if this group could review the language prior to rolling it out. The sentiment was expressed that the current DUA is unduly cumbersome and may not apply to the situation.
- v. First draft document of the proposed participation agreement will be drafted by Steve Eichner (program) in collaboration with HHSC. It is unclear at this time how much of the DUA wording will be required in the new document.
- vi. The question was raised that in place of signing a DUA, could the software include a disclosure up front that said that if you use this system, you agree that the following things will apply. The ability to do this will be tabled for discussion at a later date.
- vii. A point was made that addressing the data use agreement issue now is critical to the success of the program. No consensus was made on this issue.

d. Action Items

- i. Share SSRAC Guidelines
 1. Beverly Pritchett will get this out to the regions.
- ii. Share HSR 7 SSRAC Agenda
 1. Beverly Pritchett will get this out to the regions.
 2. Steve Eichner will work on a draft DUA/Memorandum of Agreement.
- iii. Develop a wrap around document that discusses the limitations of the system; what we foresee as the business, technical and user documents and their intended uses.
 1. This will be a joint effort between the information technology contractors and program staff.
- iv.

5) New Business

a. Technical Planning Project & SSGC Goals and Timeline

- i. Programmatic status
 1. Governance structure is in place.
 2. SSRAC are in place.
 3. All Stakeholders have met and the information has been well received.
 4. Staffing in central office: Team lead is in the process of being hired, data analyst (Bonnie Martin-Hudson) is on board, the admin specialist should be in the process of being posted soon and the epidemiologist position is still in audit and may take some time until it is ready for posting.
- ii. Information Technology status
 1. The project manager (Jay Jackson) and business analyst (Tasneem Ali) are both on board.
 2. The project has a signed charter and a schedule has been approved.
 3. Upcoming events: Site visits to Tarrant County next week and San Antonio later in May 2015.

4. Information requirements gathering includes deliverables of: Systems requirements specifications, alternative analysis report and statement of work
 5. Project timeline was reviewed, the project is ahead or on schedule
 6. This is a technical planning project that precedes the actual implementation project.
 7. User questions have been designed to gather information on business and technical requirements. A broad spectrum of stakeholders will be taken into consideration in the system design.
 8. A question was asked about looking at HIE's and existing systems. The concern was if there a product on the shelf we could be used.
 - a. The point was made that the project has to comply with Meaningful Use which includes the capability to send data to BioSense. In addition, ESSSENCE software was developed using federal dollars, so there is no cost for the software. Building out the platform to run ESSENCE will be the main expense. The project and business analyst are looking at all the available options. The project is following federal standards which require the ability to send data to other systems at the national.
 9. A question was asked regarding consideration of sharing data with other states or countries that share Texas state boundaries such as Arkansas or Mexico
 - a. There will be a lot of sections that take these kinds of things into consideration. There is a way it can be written into the requirement package. Many of the newer hospital systems are multi-state systems and might require this functionality.
 10. Council members were asked to look over the User questions and make suggestions of question topic areas that might have been missed.
 - a. Beverly Pritchett is the point of contact to get feedback on the questions.
 11. Listing of stakeholders was given to the group and feedback requested. If anyone has suggestions for addition, pass them on Beverly Pritchett. The project needs this information within the next week.
- 6) Open Discussion
- a. The question regarding the order in which data would be uploaded into the new system; Houston, San Antonio or Tarrant?
 - i. That decision will be made when the business analyst is done analyzing the information.
- 7) Future Meeting Date
- a. It was decided by Doodle Poll the next meeting will be 7/30/2015.
 - b. It was decided by Doodle Poll the October meeting would be held for 10/29/2015.
 - c. These future meeting dates will be sent out with a calendar invite.
 - d. Meetings for 2016 will be decided by Doodle poll.
- 8) Closing
- a. Motion to adjourn the meeting was passed and the meeting was adjourned.