



Environmental Health Services

● *Healthy Environments = Healthy People* ●

DEHS Directors' Meeting: 06 February 2025

[Meeting recording available](#)

Next conference call 07 August 2025 1:00-2:00PM ET

<u>Area</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Alaska:	<i>Not on call</i>	Nashville:	Charles Woodlee
Albuquerque:	Carrie Oyster	Navajo:	Donna Gilbert
Bemidji:	<i>Not on call</i>	Oklahoma:	Danny Walters
Billings:	Darcy Merchant	Phoenix:	Rob Morones
California:	Carolyn Garcia	Portland:	<i>Not on call</i>
Great Plains:	Tim Wildcat	Tucson:	<i>Not on call</i>

Environmental Health Support Center: Jeff Dickson

DEHS HQ: Matt Albright; Brian Hroch; Molly Madson; Mike Reed; Andrea Tsatoke

1. Welcome and Update (Mike Reed)

- a. Appreciate everyone making time for us today
- b. New Presidential Administration
 - i. Focus on our mission
 - ii. Check-in on staff
 - iii. Recognition EH is needed and important
- c. Mike Reed 90 day TDY as Acting Deputy Director, OEHE; Matt Albright, Acting Director, DEHS
- d. Authority to Operate for WebEHRS in place; ensure use of WebEHRS Mobile²
- e. FDA Standardization
 - i. DEHS HQ determining level of financial support to Areas
 - ii. Send number of staff interested to Matt Albright
- f. Healthy homes initiative
 - i. Esri software/checklist, building training modules with EHSC & EPA resources, monitoring equipment needs
 - ii. DEHS HQ will request equipment needs for healthy homes work
 - iii. Intent is to create a standardized equipment tool kit in each Area for familiarity & consistency across the Areas
- g. Also will be asking for ideas on projects related to healthy homes
- h. Produce farms on tribal lands
 - i. Contact Matt who is coordinating w FDA if you're aware of such operations
- i. Environmental Health Specialist of the Year Award – 2024

Congratulations LCDR Kathryn McNamara, Albuquerque Area

 - i. Navajo Area Nominee: Lucynda Dahozy
 - ii. Oklahoma City Area Nominee: Gabriel Gemez
 - iii. Great Plains Area Nominee: Daniel Dicks

2. Area Highlights

- a. Alaska – *Not on call*
- b. Albuquerque
 - i. Procured iPads and about to will use Mobile² more
 - ii. Animal bite tracking app from CDC
 - Giving it a try
 - iii. Providing assertive, consistent comms
 - iv. Carrie Oyster retirement this spring
- c. Bemidji – *Not on call*
- d. Billings
 - i. Begin evaluating tribal EH programs
 - ii. PMAPs
 - iii. Crow Agency traffic safety law project
 - Conducting focus groups
- e. California
 - i. Staffing
 - Troy Barker reported to Ukiah
 - Aaron Alexander reported as DEHO in Sacramento
 - Two vacancy announcements forthcoming
 - ii. IP
 - Three special projects selected and announcements pending
 - Project report evaluated and program is on target
 - iii. Emergency Preparedness
 - No major impact on tribes w the recent two atmospheric river events
- f. Great Plains
 - i. Procured iPads in the fall and staff using Mobile²
 - ii. Routine work ongoing
- g. Nashville
 - i. Trying to hire a third DEHS position
 - ii. New Area OEHE Director interested in aligning OEHE-related data systems; hired a management analyst and will be using Splash more
- h. Navajo – *no report*
- i. Oklahoma City
 - i. FDA Standardization: two staff remain to become standardized
- j. Phoenix
 - i. Staffing
 - Rinnah Wyatt, District IP Coordinator, Reno District Office, reported
 - Two new staff reported to Reno District Office
 - ii. EH
 - Assisting with response to concerns of potential lead exposure concerns at some hospital housing compounds

- iii. IP
 - Travel restrictions paused some collaborative work scheduled
 - Gun safe project w behavioral health complete
 - Pause on manuscript for the BMJ
- iv. IEH
 - Supporting Phoenix Indian Medical Center (PIMC) as much as possible during staffing shortage
 - IEH helping with PIMC replacement projects
 - Cloud-based emergency notification system project
 - Medical Physicist contract being pursued
- k. Portland – *Not on call*
- l. Tucson – *Not on call*
- m. EHSC (Jeff Dickson)
 - i. Online Food Handler Training: review period has closed; making final edits and then ready for 508 compliance/publishing
 - ii. Food Safety for Temporary Food Vendors: currently working on last round edits; will send to the Directors/HQ for review by the end of Feb
 - iii. Competency Model sprint: thank you for submitting names; first round of competencies will be completed by the end of Feb; Braden will schedule a Focused DEHS Directors Call to discuss the updated competencies (beginning of March)
 - iv. Orientation: 23 EH registered; working to finalize agenda
 - v. FDA Standardization Workgroup: working to create an SOP for how IHS will implement FDA Standard 2

3. HQ Announcements

- a. Injury prevention (Molly Madson)
 - i. Fellowship [2025-2026 cohort]
 - 11 fellows accepted from 7 Areas
 - 10 IHS EHO/IPS
 - 1 non-fed
 - 7 tribal members
 - ii. [2024 Rick Smith Injury Prevention Award](#); nominations due to [CDR Molly Madson](#) by 07 February 2025
 - iii. Training
 - IP short courses train-the-trainer course being developed
 - 2025 schedule being set
 - iv. IVP Publication Assistance from IVP Academic Advisor (UNC_
 - See Molly's 17 January 2025 email for details
 - IHS injury prevention staff, and/or past graduates of the IP Fellowship, who are interested in developing manuscripts for journal publications that are related to their IVP work



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- v. TIPCAP (Andrea Tsatoke)
 - Notice of Awards for Year 5
 - FAQs on audit restrictions created
 - TIPCAP Program Guide 2025 is available on TIPCAP.ORG
 - Conference calls
 - Site Visits (in conjunction with Life Savers)
 - Annual Workshop being planned
 - Notice of Funding Opportunity for next cycle being developed
- b. Institutional EH (Brian Hroch)
 - i. Annual meeting
 - 30 July-01 August, Columbus, OH
 - Follows American Society of Safety Professionals Conference
 - ii. Andrea Taylor TDY to DEHS HQ
 - iii. IEH Workforce Development
 - USUHS IEH Residency
 - 2025 Academic Year, not announced
 - 2026 Academic Year, ongoing planning
 - Filed-based Residency
 - Workgroup: Cook, Conner, Hansen, Joplin, Peaches, Hroch
 - Competency assessment & methods to competency
 - Pilot complete: congratulations LCDR Kathryn McNamara, Albuquerque Area
 - iv. Professional development
 - OEHE Orientation SOFR track
 - SOFR Office Hours held monthly
 - Competency development for SOFRs & IEHOs
 - v. Radiation protection
 - Collins
 - Completed initially identified activities
 - Potential future priorities & ongoing work: medical surveys; dental guidance
 - vi. [IHM Part 1 – Chapter 9 – Occupational Safety And Health Program](#)
 - Calvert, Conner, Dickson, Franks, Hroch, Peaches, Wiggins, Williams, Woodlee
 - Completed for 2024, pending some additional steps & ongoing presentations
 - vii. Staffing management
 - Lewelling, Murga, Peaches, Williams
 - IEH position templates, including PDs, other HR documents
 - SOFR position templates, including PDs, other HR documents
 - viii. Potential future priorities
 - Plan reviews (pending)



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- ix. Accreditation readiness
 - EC/LS Workgroup
 - Conner, Cook, Franks, Hansen, Hroch, Murga, Peaches, Williams, Woodlee
 - Subworkgroups for engineering (Rick Wermers), training (Conner), & governance (Hroch)
 - 16 recommendations
 - Charter development for National Council of Healthcare Safety and Engineering Professionals (NCHSEP)
- x. IH Protocols
 - Hroch, Murga, Cook
- xi. Safe Patient Handling & Mobility
 - Hansen, Hiles, Hroch
 - HFAC/OEHE A/E Design Guide update
- xii. EC/LS Dashboard Development and Pilot Testing (in progress)
 - Conner, Franks, Hroch, Williams
 - In addition to Navajo Area, planning to test in ABQ, BIL, GPA, & OKC Areas
- xiii. Radiation protection
 - Hroch, Cook, et al
 - Dental (badges & aprons)
 - IEH surveys
- xiv. I-STAR
 - Woodlee, Hroch, Murga
 - SOP, core team, contract
- xv. Nitrous Oxide
 - Hiles, Hroch
 - ED & LD use & OEHE Tech Handbook implications
- xvi. Navajo Area Strike Team
 - OEHE staff from HQ Navajo Area Office
 - Per Dr. Cotton, DDFO
 - “identify training needs or other facility issues that need to be addressed before we have any negative outcomes or consequences”
- xvii. HHS Annual Safety Report
 - Responses due to brian.hroch@ihs.gov by 12 February 2025
- xviii. [2024 Gary J. Gefroh Health and Safety Award](#); nominations due to Brian Hroch by 07 February 2025



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- c. DEHS Annual Meeting 2025 (Matt Albright)
 - i. 05-08 May 2025
 - ii. Portland, OR
 - iii. Hotel secured: please make your reservation by 05 April
 - iv. Agenda almost finalized: draft sent out for use in Concur
 - v. If you haven't indicated if you or your protégé are attending in-person or virtually, please do so ASAP

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