

**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
HEALTH COMMISSION**

Minutes of Meeting

Monday, November 14, 2011 (County Board of Supervisors Chambers)

Members Present: Ed Guerena (Chair), Jesse Arnold, David Clous, Tracy Del Rio, David Odell, James Pope, Jean Raymond, Mary Jean Sage, Susan Warren

Members Absent: Lynn Enns, Anne Quinn

Staff Present: Penny Borenstein, MD, Health Officer, Jean White

Speakers: Curt Batson (Director, Environmental Health Services); Jesse Sostrin, PhD (Vice President, Leadership & Organization Development, Wilshire)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action	Who/When
1. Call to Order	Meeting called to order by Chair Guerena at 6:00 p.m.	<i>Call to order</i>	<i>Chair Guerena</i>
2. Approval of Minutes	Minutes of the October 17, 2011 meeting were approved as written.	<i>Odell/Arnold</i>	<i>All</i>
3. Public Comment	No public comment at this time.		
4. Update on Ocean Water Monitoring Protocols	<p>Curt Batson, Director of Environmental Health Services, talked about the ocean water monitoring protocols that are in place for responding to a sewage spill when it impacts the ocean, and provided details about the sewage spill that occurred on October 14 at approx. 6:30 pm in Shell Beach. The on-call Environmental Health Specialist was notified by Sheriff's Dispatch at 8:20 pm of the spill and followed protocol, making all notifications in a timely manner. Staff did not go out to the spill site that night as it was approximately 10:30 pm after notifications were made. The next morning a press release was sent and posted on the EH website by 8:30 am. Two signs were also posted that morning at two public access areas to the beach (the stairs and an access trail) by 8:30 am. A water sample was not taken because it was 14 hours after the incident. On Sunday morning (40 hours later) the warning signs were removed.</p> <p>Mr. Batson noted some of the things that could have been done better. In retrospect, staff should have gone out to the site that night to ensure the site of the sewage spill was cleaned up. And, even though it would have been unsafe to take a water sample that night, a sample should have been taken the following morning, because it gives a basis for when the advisory signs can be taken down. Protocol is going to be modified to address 1) what happens when you can't post the beach immediately when you find out about the incident; 2) what happens if it is not safe to take a sample; and 3) what is the appropriate amount of time to leave up signs without taking a sample.</p> <p><u>Commissioner Questions/Discussion:</u></p> <p>Commissioner Clous asked about the distance from where the signs were posted to the spill. (<i>Mr. Batson explained that the stair access was closest to the spill -- about 150 yards away. He also explained that it is a rocky area; a good place for tide-pooling at low tide.</i>)</p> <p>Commissioner Pope asked how long E.coli will live in the water and if 14 hours was ample time for it to die. (<i>Mr. Batson believes for a 6,000 gallon spill, 14 hours was probably acceptable. The advisory signs went up on Saturday morning and remained up until 10:30 on Sunday.</i>)</p> <p>Commissioner Odell asked about the cause of the spill. (<i>Mr. Batson explained that a pump failed in the middle of the street and the spill went into the storm drain. From the storm drain to where it goes out into the ocean is about 50 yards.</i>)</p>		

Commissioner Raymond asked if they use anything to flush out the storm drains. *(Mr. Batson explained that “flushing” is done while cleaning up, but is not effective onto the beach, where the ocean tides take care of it eventually.)*

Commissioner Del Rio asked how long the raw sewage had been leaking. *(Mr. Batson explained that it had been within an hour or two; as this isn’t something that happens over days.)*

Commissioner Warren asked about the # of calls Environmental Health receives for spills, and if staff are paid while on-call. *(Mr. Batson explained they receive 3-4 calls per year for spills into the ocean; and a total of 10-12 calls per year, with 1-2 received after-hours. He explained that on-call staff gets paid standby pay and when they are called, they receive call-back pay.)*

Commissioner Warren asked if protocol requires that the on-call person go on site to see what has happened to make a determination about public safety. *(Mr. Batson explained that this is usually what happens; but protocol is going to be updated to address this more specifically, taking out some of the judgment call.)*

Commissioner Warren suggested the use of yellow caution tape between advisory signs to make the affected area more noticeable to the public.

Commissioner Arnold asked about the use of Sheriff’s Dispatch for after hour calls and why cities don’t contact Environmental Health directly. *(Mr. Batson and Dr. Borenstein explained that the Sheriff’s Dispatch has worked well for urgent and emergent responses. Dr. Borenstein explained some of the complexities and difficulties with staff turnover, training, and dissemination of access information if Public Health were to deal with 7 cities directly rather than through one dispatch. She emphasized that events like these are fairly rare, and that the judgment calls that were made were done with the public’s health in mind. EH is working on tightening up all of the protocols.)*

Mr. Batson informed the commission that the Ocean Water Monitoring page on the Environmental Health website is being revised to add a “red text box” that will alert of sewage spills at a specific beach. This will be in addition to alerts & media releases that are posted in another location on their website.

Commissioner Pope suggested the use of a plastic red flag as a better way to catch the public’s attention when an advisory is in effect.

Commissioner Guerena referred to this 6,000 gallon spill and asked if there was a minimum amount before EH would respond. *(Mr. Batson explained that 1,000 gallons is the minimum for reporting, but a judgment call is made and most of the time they go out regardless.)*

Commissioner Guerena asked about routine testing of the ocean. *(Mr. Batson explained they test 19 locations from San Simeon to Oceano once per week and test for three types of indicator bacteria. Results are compared to standards established by the State. If any of the State standards are not met, a Health Advisory is issued. An advisory spans fifty yards north and south of the area where the sample is collected. Beaches are posted with advisory signs and remain posted until sample results indicate that bacteria levels meet State standards.)*

Commissioner Guerena suggested posting the ocean water data on the website. *(Mr. Batson advised that they are working on updating their website and each site will have a map with 30 days of data.)* **Chair Guerena** invited Mr. Batson to come back once the new website is up and running.

Public Comment:

Larry Blonder, resident of San Luis Obispo County, was surfing in this area the day after the spill. He used the access trail and didn’t see any signs posted. He stated that if he would have had knowledge that a sewage spill had occurred, he would not have gone surfing that day. Mr. Blonder expressed his concerns about a sample not being taken and the inadequate posting & public warning of the spill. He disagreed that the public’s health was not in danger, and reiterated that knowledge of the spill would have changed his behavior. He emphasized the need for better notification to the public and liked the idea of red flagging that would draw more attention. He suggested that more thought needs to go into how signs are placed, where signs are placed, and when signs are placed.

	<p>Jennifer Blonder, 2nd grade teacher and Secretary for Surfrider Foundation-SLO commented that many people, including children, use the trail to access the beach to go tide-pooling. She feels this incident is being minimized and was dangerous. Sewage in the water is a big problem and the public needs to be made aware of every sewage spill, no matter where it is, because it is unknown who is accessing certain areas. “Dilution is not the solution.” She suggested the possibility of getting the City involved and placing a public official at access points on the beach to warn people.</p> <p>Jennifer Joswiak, resident of SLO County and member of Surfrider Foundation-SLO thanked the commission for putting this item on their agenda. She spoke to the commission previously about the high bacteria counts and inadequate warnings to the public. She appreciates that the County is working on their website. She talked about some of the problems with the location of the permanent flip signs, noting that paper signs don’t work, and has been told by Environmental Health that a permanent sign is in the works for the Beachcomber stairs, where the majority of public is accessing the beach. She liked the idea of the “red flag” and made reference to the day of the Tsunami warning where caution tape and a Public Works employee sent a clear warning to people about entering the beach. She would like to see a similar approach for sewage spills, so people know when it is dangerous to the public’s health to enter the water.</p> <p>Mr. Batson advised that a permanent sign has been purchased for the Beachcomber stairs and will be placed soon. Chair Guerena suggested that Environmental Health work with Surfrider to find out where surfers are parking and accessing the beach and for suggestions on where signs should be placed.</p>		
<p>5. Report on Outcomes from the “SLO 2025 Senior Symposium”</p>	<p>Commissioner Raymond introduced Jesse Sostrin, PhD, Vice President, Leadership & Organization Development, of Wilshire Health & Community Services. Dr. Sostrin provided a Power Point overview of the SLO 2025 Senior Symposium that took place on October 21, 2011, where more than 145 community members and stakeholders came together for a day long interactive “conversation” about the future of aging in San Luis Obispo County. He talked about the series of table discussions, panel discussions, presentations, and breakout workshops that took place that day to learn about the challenges and opportunities facing the community and to explore concrete actions and collaboration needed to address them. The major themes were 1) Economics of Aging; 2) Health, Wellness and the Continuum of Care; 3) Creating Livable Senior Friendly Communities; 4) Diversity and Aging; 5) Ensuring Safe Communities Free of Fraud & Abuse; 6) Cross-Sector Collaboration.</p> <p>Dr. Sostrin shared the outcomes from this event -- the need for specific, focused actions prioritized by the participants in the following areas: Affordable Housing; Sustaining Financial Independence; Education Campaigns; Mental Health Resources; Older Adult Education, Service and Community Involvement; Access to Healthcare; Continued Cross-Sector Collaboration from Symposium; Accessible Transportation; and work to change SLO County’s rural designation to promote change to Medicare provider reimbursement to increase access to healthcare.</p> <p>The final report is available on the website at www.slo2025.org. The planning team will be meeting in another week to talk about next steps.</p> <p><u>Commissioner Questions/Discussion:</u> Commissioner Del Rio attended the symposium and enjoyed the interactive conversations and the inter-</p>		

	<p>generational piece about the need for people to connect with younger people. She commented on the resources and technology used at the symposium that kept the audience engaged and allowed immediate results.</p> <p>Commissioner Warren asked if there will be an ongoing committee and for ways to get involved. <i>(Dr. Sostrin advised that the planning team will be working on next steps, based on feedback received. He envisions events like the symposium every 3 years, and perhaps smaller, more dynamic meetings around specific issues, such as affordable housing issues.)</i></p> <p>Commissioner Warren commented that many communities already have collaborative networks in place and suggested using that energy as a place to start to look at the bigger picture.</p> <p>Commissioner Clous asked how they plan to get these important messages out to the majority of the community. <i>(Dr. Sostrin agreed that this is a critical piece and one of the priorities that emerged. One of the things they did well when organizing the symposium was to ask the question, “who are the influencers and how can we bring them into the conversation.” He believes this was a good first start, and other components could be added in the future, possibly even online participation. They are open to suggestions.)</i></p>		
<p>6. Health Agency Report</p>	<p>Dr. Penny Borenstein, Health Officer, provided a brief update on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On Tuesday, 11/15, there will be a presentation to the Board of Supervisors by Jeff Hamm on the Low Income Health Program (LIHP) and what the issues are around the County’s decision to participate. 2. On Wednesday, 11/16, there will be an APCD Board meeting where the Board will be voting on the fugitive dust rule, a rule that would impose certain time specific milestones in implementing mitigation to lesson the impact of dust in the area coming off the off-road vehicle areas. 3. On Wednesday, 11/16, there will be a Nuclear Power Plant Hostile Action Exercise. This exercise is in preparation for the FEMA evaluated exercise that will take place next year. 4. On Thursday, 11/17, Public Health/Emergency Medical Services, hospital partners, OES, and others will be participating in an annual Statewide Health and Medical exercise; with a scenario having to do with contamination of water supply. <p><i>Commissioner Del Rio</i> asked more about the “Hostile Action exercise.” <i>(Dr. Borenstein explained that the one-day exercise/drill will include the Sheriff, Cal Fire, County Administration, Highway Patrol, Public Health and a host of agencies on how they would respond to a scenario having to do with a takeover of the Diablo Canyon Plant by hostile forces. Participants are fed small bytes of information as the scenario develops throughout the day.)</i></p> <p><i>Commissioner Guerena</i> asked if the FEMA evaluated drill next year will be a nuclear drill. <i>(Dr. Borenstein answered that it will be; FEMA does an evaluation of the County and the Plant’s response every other year.)</i></p>		
<p>7. Health Commissioner Updates</p>	<p>Chair Guerena is a member of the policy committee for HEAL SLO, who have been meeting to look at policy around a “Buy Local Program” for food. “Local” has been defined as this county, plus neighboring counties. The committee is making progress and will have final results soon.</p> <p>Commissioner Pope – no report.</p> <p>Commissioner Arnold reported that the AIDS Support Network made \$74,000 on the “Walk for Life.” He also noted that Janice Campbell from the County Agricultural Department advised that there have not been any applications for the use of Methyl Iodide, but that the use of Methyl Bromide is continuing, as growers are allowed to use up existing stock, which could take until 2013 or 2014.</p> <p>Commissioner Clous attended his first meeting on the Tobacco Control Coalition, where one of the topics discussed was AB 795, signed into law by Governor Brown, that will give community colleges, California State Universities and the University of California the tools and authority to enforce existing campus smoking policies. Another topic discussed was that on November 7th, a US District Court judge</p>		

	<p>blocked the Food and Drug Administration from moving forward with implementation of a new graphic warning label on all cigarette packages and advertising. The judge's ruling was in response to a lawsuit filed by five tobacco companies, stopping the implementation of the new label until after the lawsuit is resolved.</p> <p>Commissioner Warren attended the Drug & Alcohol Advisory Board meeting in October and reported that there are a few new board members and that the Board still has some vacancies. The Board has been reviewing their goals for the upcoming year.</p> <p>Commissioner Odell – no report.</p> <p>Commissioner Del Rio provided an update on the Acceleron Project. In response to over 932 comments, the County Building and Planning Department requested that Acceleron pay an additional \$75,000 and come back and address 650 unanswered comments. One of the issues that needs to be addressed is the issue of type of oil (paraffinic or naphthenic) expected to be produced and the health implications, a concern that was brought forward in the letter from the Health Commission.</p> <p>Commissioner Sage reported that she and Commissioner Odell attended the organizational meeting for the Community-based Preventive Health Grant funding. Applications are due after the first of the year, and in the past approximately 50 organizations have applied. The committee will be busy reading, reviewing and making decisions; and plan to do more site visits this year than last year.</p> <p>Commissioner Raymond attended the Low Income Health Program (LIHP) meeting where Dr. Borenstein gave a presentation on where they are & where they are going and Jeff Hamm summarized what's happening at the State level. Mr. Hamm will be making a presentation at the Board of Supervisors meeting this week. Commissioner Raymond also attended the Adult Services Policy Council meeting where there was a presentation from Transitional Food & Shelter, who reported that budget reductions have limited their voucher program and they are looking for volunteers to help out with projects. There was also an outstanding presentation on senior care and cultural competence given by the Gay and Lesbian Alliance of the Central Coast.</p>		
8. Committee Reports	No reports.		
9. Prospective Future Items	<p><u>December 2011</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-Profit Organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Way of San Luis Obispo County San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation ▪ Update on Operation Medicine Cabinet – either Dec 2011 or Jan 2012 <p><u>Suggested Future Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pesticide Update from Janice Campbell, Ag Department – rescheduled for February 2011 ▪ Prescription Drug Abuse – will need to work on putting a program together ▪ 2025 Sr. Symposium – commission would like to continue discussion by including topics throughout the year on the priority topics such as affordable housing /access to healthcare. ▪ Invite County Counsel to speak about Brown Act / Conflict of Interest and voting by commission. 		
10. Adjournment	Motion to adjourn at 7:51.	<i>Meeting adjourned.</i>	