

**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY  
HEALTH COMMISSION**

Minutes of Meeting

Monday, January 12, 2009 (Board of Supervisors Chambers)

Members Present: Lynn Enns (Chair), Pam Heatherington (Vice-Chair), Jesse Arnold, Martin Craven, DDS, MD, Pamela Munson, David Odell, Susan Warren, Dawn Williams

Members Absent: Penny Chamousis (excused), Ed Guerena (excused), Robert Thielscher (excused)

Staff Present: Penny Borenstein, MD, Health Officer, Jean White (Recorder)

Speakers: Elizabeth Merson (American Red Cross SLO Chapter); Linda McGregor (2-1-1- SLO Hotline)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action	Who/When
<b>1. Call to Order</b>	Meeting called to order by Chair Enns at 6:00 p.m.	<i>Call to order</i>	<i>Chair Enns</i>
<b>2. Approval of Minutes</b>	Minutes of December 8, 2008 were approved with two typographical errors corrected.	<i>December minutes approved</i>	<i>Heatherington/Odell</i>
<b>3. Public Comment</b>	No public comment.		
<b>4. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) / Medical Volunteer Program</b>	<p><b>Elizabeth Merson, Emergency Services Director, American Red Cross SLO Chapter,</b> talked about two programs that the American Red Cross is actively involved in:</p> <p>1) <b><i>Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)</i></b> is a program that started at the national level in 1960, and led to programs at both the state and regional levels. VOAD came to San Luis Obispo County two years ago when the Red Cross received grant funding from PG&amp;E. VOAD is comprised of 45 local non-profit organizations, all with a mission relating to disaster response. VOAD works closely with first responders and the Office of Emergency Services to partner and support their efforts in responding to a disaster. VOAD is only activated when the County requests their services. If the County cannot fill services within their own first responder or governmental groups, they can utilize VOAD for additional resources. VOAD has a lead agency for each of the different services they provide, with a call down to their member agencies. This collaborative program between local agencies has helped in building relationships and communication for a more efficient and effective response in disaster. The agencies have been participating together through tabletop simulations and drills. Red Cross is working on establishing MOUs between VOAD and each of the agencies.</p> <p><i>Commissioner Warren asked if outlying areas, such as San Miguel, Shandon and Cambria, were involved in the planning process. (Ms. Merson answered that networking in every community is one of the strategic goals of VOAD. She works with the school district in Shandon and a few agencies in the Cambria area are involved. They are working to get the word out.)</i></p> <p><i>Commissioner Arnold asked if the CERT Program through the Cambria Fire Department was a participant in VOAD. (Ms. Merson has a presentation scheduled to them in March.)</i></p> <p><i>Commissioner Heatherington asked about their funding sources. (Original start up money came from PG&amp;E for a 3-year period -- they are going into the third year. They received additional grant funding from United Way and the Community Foundation.)</i></p>		

	<p>2) <b>San Luis Obispo County Medical Volunteer Program (MVP)</b> is a collaborative effort between the American Red Cross, the County Office of Emergency Services, and the County Health Agency. It is made up of volunteer health care professionals and auxiliary staff who are pre-registered and pre-trained to respond and assist local emergency responders and public health professionals in SLO County. There are many training requirements. The initial training familiarizes volunteers with the American Red Cross and SLO County emergency policies and procedures. Ongoing training includes trauma response, crisis intervention, and participation in exercises and drills. After all of the training requirements have been met and medical licenses have been verified, volunteers become California Disaster Worker Volunteers and are covered under the County and State’s liability insurance and can practice in an emergency to the full extent of their license. Medical volunteers recently participated in a First Responder Point of Distribution drill, giving flu vaccinations to first responders and family members. Tracey Vardas from the Office of Emergency Services and Christine Gaiger from the Public Health Department provide the orientation to the program. Red Cross administers and coordinates the volunteers, and ensures all requirements are met.</p> <p><i>Commissioner Craven asked about the number of volunteers currently enrolled and suggested a good source to tap into would be local retired physicians who are qualified, but may not have a current medical license. (Currently, medical volunteers must be licensed, as they are only allowed to practice within the scope of their license. If their license is not up to date, they cannot be covered by liability.)</i></p> <p><i>Commissioner Williams asked about the need for translators. (Translators are key auxiliary staff that are needed.)</i></p> <p><i>Commissioner Munson asked how VOAD and the Medical Volunteer Program dovetail. (Red Cross is a VOAD and the Medical Volunteer Program could be used through VOAD or activated by the Health Officer. They would be very tied together.)</i></p> <p><i>Chair Enns praised the Red Cross organization. As a medical volunteer, she encouraged those with a medical license to contact Red Cross.</i></p>		
<p><b>5. 2-1-1- Hotline</b></p>	<p><b>Linda McGregor, Executive Director, 2-1-1 SLO Hotline</b>, provided an overview of Hotline -- a free 24-hour, confidential service, providing information and referral to over 500 local programs and support groups, and also providing support and crisis intervention. All of their funding is local, with some state and federal legislation pending. Calls are handled by volunteers, with paid staff for bilingual calls. She talked about their Telecare Program, and their call handling services for the Women’s Shelter, Homeless Shelter, Foster Care Network, Child Welfare Services and (soon) SART. They also recently signed a contract with PG&amp;E and will be offering the CARE program utility assistance to their callers (in SLO County, there are 35,000 people eligible for utility discounts that are not availing themselves of that service). They will be the first 2-1-1 to be a community outreach center for PG&amp;E. She talked about the soon to be 3 digit dial code for public transportation (5-1-1), and that they will be doing joint public service announcements (9-1-1 for emergencies, 2-1-1 for community services, 5-1-1 for local transportation). Ms. McGregor noted that a lot of their work this last year has been in response to the “financial disaster” and talked about some of</p>	<p><i>Handout: 2-1-1 Info Sheet Hotline brochures</i></p>	

	<p>2-1-1's one-year results. Calls for the year are up 62%. In August, their calls doubled. Requests for food and financial assistance are up over 100%. They've received over 2400 shelter calls, 110 suicidal calls, and substance abuse calls increased 32%. Calls are up, but people are seeking solutions and alternatives.</p> <p>Hotline's Health and Human Services Directory is still available in hard copy or their database can be accessed online at <a href="http://www.slohotline.org">www.slohotline.org</a>. All county 2-1-1- databases are uniform, so that in an emergency, calls could be overflowed to other counties who could access San Luis Obispo's database and current local information.</p> <p><i>Commissioner Odell commended Ms. McGregor on an excellent presentation and confirmed that 2-1-1 is available from cell phones.</i></p> <p><i>Commissioner Munson asked about training for their volunteers. (Volunteers receive about 80 hours of training and a lot of on the job coaching and observation. They are in need of long term volunteers.)</i></p> <p><i>Commission Craven asked about local funding. (They have received grants from the County, some from the cities (now that they are more established), private donations, PG&amp;E, and Rabobank.)</i></p> <p><i>Commissioner Heatherington asked if there has been a decrease in calls to 9-1-1 with the establishment of 2-1-1. (Ms. McGregor answered that the numbers are difficult to come up with because many PDs have their own dispatch. But the dialogue is that it has decreased the unnecessary calls to 9-1-1. They will be looking more at the numbers as they work toward more efficiencies.)</i></p> <p><i>Commissioner Williams asked if they refer to NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness), especially for family members who are coping with a member of their family who is mentally ill. (Yes, they encourage "Hotliners" to ask how family members are doing and refer to support groups for families. They also work very closely with the Mental Health Crisis Team,)</i></p> <p><i>Commissioner Warren noted that the numbers for substance abuse calls are even higher than what Hotline is seeing, because there are other resources in the community, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, who do public service announcements, who people call directly. North County Connection receives many referrals from Hotline.</i></p> <p><i>Chair Enns thanked Ms. McGregor and noted Hotline's website address at <a href="http://www.slohotline.org">www.slohotline.org</a> and their need for volunteers.</i></p>		
<p><b>6. Health Agency Report</b></p>	<p><b>Penny Borenstein, M.D., Health Officer,</b> provided an update on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Budget:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the extreme difficulties at the state level and the economic downturn, the State is proposing deferring payments to counties beginning in February (for a six-month period) for certain health and human services. CSAC has taken a very strong position against this action.</li> <li>• The Governor's budget is proposing reallocation of First 5 (Prop 10) funds to fill other needs in the State and help fill the budget gap. First 5 has been in place for approx.10 years and funds services for children ages 0-5, including the Children's Health Initiative. A number of programs would be impacted. This would require a vote by the voters. (It was noted that Mental Health Services Act/Prop 63 funds are also being looked at to help fill the budget gap at the State level.)</li> <li>• The Health Agency's "status quo" budget is due to the County Administrative</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		

	<p>Office the first week of February. Any additional costs associated with maintaining status quo will have to be determined and addressed by including a list of what would be cut to bring back to the current level of funding.</p> <p><i>(Commissioner Heatherington referred to an alert she received from the California Medical Association that Anthem/Blue Cross had dropped Healthy Families in five counties (SLO County was not one of them). Dr. Borenstein hadn't heard and could not confirm.)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Dr. Borenstein attended the Medical Association Board retreat last week where she had an opportunity to talk with board members about ways in which they could partner and have greater synergy with the medical community. She wants to continue to focus on getting the word out on prevention opportunities and ways Public Health can help.</li> <li>3. <u>Cocci</u>: Dr. Borenstein provided follow up information to questions raised last month. There were a total of 81 reports of Cocci disease in San Luis Obispo County for 2008, which is an average number for an endemic area with a population the size of SLO County. None of the deaths listed Cocci as the primary cause of death, but 3 listed it as "a contributing factor." Looking at statistical trends, nothing this year was out of the ordinary. Prevention is key. Public Health continues to work with Planning on prevention and outreach efforts. Dr. Borenstein mentioned again that Public Health would be happy to meet with interested community members in California Valley to "brainstorm" and talk more about prevention methodologies. She welcomes ideas for best ways to pull community members together for an outreach effort. <i>(Commissioner Arnold asked how many of the total reported cases of Cocci were in California Valley. Dr. Borenstein will bring breakdown info on the numbers)</i> <i>(Commissioner Warren suggested that Public Health work with the Farm Bureau on education and outreach to farmers and farming communities.)</i></li> <li>4. <u>PH Laboratory testing</u>: Dr. Borenstein received a question today about laboratory testing of a specific food after a single report of illness. Dr. Beebe, PH Lab Director, has been invited to speak at an upcoming Health Commission meeting and will be able to more articulately answer questions about testing food specimens and explain some of the technical difficulties that are involved.</li> <li>5. <u>Smoke-free County campuses</u>: The Health Agency has begun to do some research on pursuing a Health Campus smoke-free policy. County Counsel has advised this would have to be an ordinance as opposed to policy. The Health Agency will move forward incrementally.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>7. Health Commissioner Updates</b></p>	<p><b>Chair Enns</b> reported on an email that she received regarding the tobacco free movement for outdoor areas in Atascadero, asking for support at the Parks &amp; Recreation Commission meeting in Atascadero on Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 7PM.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Arnold</b> distributed an article from <i>In These Times</i> dated January 2009, titled "Cancer: Cause and Defects" by Terry Allen, and read a quote from it: "There's no money in prevention, and once you've got cancer you'll pay anything to try to stay alive. Cancer treatment is therefore a booming business, and cancer prevention is nowhere."</p> <p><b>Commissioner Arnold</b> also referred to an article in <i>The Tribune-Viewpoint</i> on "Chemicals" by Al Meyerhoff, who died from complications of leukemia. In the article, Meyerhoff suggested a fundamental rewrite of the Federal Toxic Substance Control Act to be more</p>		

	<p>inclusive of testing and phasing out of the most toxic substances. Commissioner Arnold suggested a review of the Act by the Legislative Committee or Community Education Committee, for possible action by the commission.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Heatherington</b> reported that the Domestic Violence Task Force meets on Wednesday, 1/21, and asked if someone would be available to attend in her place.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Odell</b> reported that the annual Preventive Health Grant cycle will begin in February. He and Commissioner Heatherington will attend the meetings.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Munson</b> was unable to attend the ASPC meeting this month. She will report on the January and February meeting at the March meeting.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Craven</b> will be attending the Oral Health Coalition on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. He also noted that while researching Cocci (online at diseasesummaries.com), he found that a drug called Nikkomycin Z has been shown to kill the fungus in mice. The article was published in 2006 and stated they were getting ready to begin human clinical trials.</p> <p><b>Commissioner Warren</b> attended the Drug &amp; Alcohol Advisory Board where most of the discussion centered around budget and the proposed reallocation of Mental Health Services Act funds. Drug &amp; Alcohol is also in the investigative stage for possible development of a “Social Host Ordinance” and are currently reviewing ordinances throughout California.</p>		
<b>8. Committee Reports</b>	<p><b>Community Education:</b> Commissioner Heatherington noted that Public Health Week is in April and suggested “<i>Healthcare in Hard Times</i>” as a theme for the meeting. She will coordinate a Community Education meeting in February to discuss further and welcomed input from commissioners. Commissioner Warren noted that there have been some changes in state and federal law that allows physicians to do more screening and intervention in ERs for substance abuse. She suggested inviting some of the ER physicians to talk more about the impacts this will have on referrals and screenings.</p> <p>No further committee reports.</p>		
<b>9. Prospective Future Items</b>	<p>No meeting in February.</p> <p><u>March 2009:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cancer prevention / cancer awareness</li> </ul> <p><u>April 2009:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare in Hard Times – suggested theme</li> <li>• Dr. Beebe, Public Health Laboratory Director</li> <li>• Sludge Ordinance Update (<i>Public comment period was extended to February 1<sup>st</sup> and the commission has sent a letter with their input.</i>)</li> </ul>		
<b>10. Adjournment</b>	Motion to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.	<i>Meeting adjourned</i>	