

**Executive Board Conference Call
September 12, 2008**

Present:	Duc Vugia	Martha Stanbury	Pat McConnon
	Perry Smith	Jeff Engel	Mike Landen
	Stephen Ostroff	Mel Kohn	Sara Huston
	Tom Safranek	Lakesha Robinson	

Absent: Patty Quinlisk

Agenda

Minutes

The Executive Board approved the minutes from the Aug. 8 Executive Board Conference Call.

Action Item:
None Required

List of “Immediately” Notifiable Conditions (attached)

CSTE joint working groups of the PHI Team, Surveillance Coordination and Policy Committee are in the process of re-formatting all notifiable diseases/conditions. A draft list of immediately and routinely notifiable conditions has been developed that is consistent with the International Health Regulations (IHR) requirements and addresses American Health Information Community (AHIC) recommendations. The group has asked the Executive Board to review the draft list for content.

The next steps for the workgroup are:

- The workgroup is to engage with CDC and review each definition.
- CDC will provide justification on why a disease should be national notifiable.
- CDC will work with CSTE to define the mechanics of how the immediately notifiable conditions will be reported.

A motion to endorse the CSTE workgroup draft list that it is in line with position statement 08-EC-02 was called by Perry Smith and seconded by Martha Stanbury. The Executive Board approved the workgroup draft list and agrees that it appropriate at this stage of development.

Action Items:

- Pat has suggested that the workgroup rename or clarify the category of “routinely” notifiable conditions.

- The Executive Board would like the final product to be presented clearly in laymen's terms.
- The Executive Board will send feedback to the group and would like to continue to be updated on the progress of the list.
- Pat asked Lisa Dwyer to look at what the position statement is requesting from CDC, put together a brief summary and present it to CDC to jump start the process.
- Pat and Lakesha will work with Lisa Dwyer to incorporate the comments from the Executive Board.

Brief Updates: Pat

CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship - Class VI

Class VI has completed orientation and all fellows have started in their positions. CSTE has a total of 17 new fellows and a total of 35 fellows on assignments.

UNC Partnership Opportunity - Epidemiology Training

CSTE was approached by UNC to form a partnership opportunity. UNC would like to use the CSTE Epidemiology Capacity Assessment Training Module to develop training materials and host a pre-conference training workshop at the 2009 Annual Conference. UNC has funding to support these training activities. The training activities will be based on the needs of state epidemiologists. UNC will seek input and feedback on the training materials from CSTE members.

Coliform-Revised Rule

The Executive Board approved the recommendation of the CSTE Environmental Health Committee Coliform Work Group to approve the proposed Coliform Revised Rule.

EL (Internal CDC&ELC/EIP) Program Review

Pat and staff recently attended a cross-center review of Emerging Infections (EI) activities at CDC. It was clear that all four components of the Coordinating Center for Infectious Diseases (CCID) were heavily engaged in EI activities and eager to share their work. Unfortunately, funding for EI at CDC has been stagnant or in some cases had declined. All programs are likely to be cut further in the upcoming budget.

Les Lenert Proposal Regarding CSTE Position Statement of BioSense (06-EC-03)

Les Lenart met with CSTE members attending the recent PHIN Conference in Atlanta in late August. He requested that CSTE revise the Position Statement on Biosense. In general, there was little support for such a revision. The EB felt it was appropriate to invite Les to the upcoming face-to-face EB meeting in Buffalo for further discussions on this issue.

GAO call on BioSurveillance

The group has a call at the end of next week with GAO to discuss an upcoming evaluation they will be doing on the status of national surveillance activities. No discussion took place.

CDC Cooperative Agreement Funding (Attached)

The attachment has the final numbers for this year's CSTE Cooperative Agreement. No discussion took place.

President's Priorities for 2008-2009 (Attached)

No discussion took place.

- Increase communication of issues to and involvement of the CSTE membership
 - o Use the new Steering Committee/Sub-Committee structure to generate quarterly reports intended especially for the general membership, to keep them informed and hopefully increase their involvement and interest. Distribute via the CSTE quarterly report.
 - o Review the consultancy form and develop a clear mechanism and instructions that encourage membership involvement in CSTE
 - o Continue reaching out to new state epidemiologists, inactive epis, and local epis (ongoing)
 - o Form workgroup to engage local epidemiologists (Rick Vogt and Patty Quinlisk heading)
 - o Regional Epi Meetings: provide CSTE travel support; provide a briefing of national CSTE issues at these meetings
- Continue to lead on public health surveillance issues nationally
 - o National Surveillance Bill
 - o SRCA
 - o 2009 NNDSS Template and Updating Case Definitions
- Promote epidemiologic study/presentation on disparities (Conference Planning Committee?)
 - o National Plenary Speaker
 - o Better promotion of the RWJ Award
 - o Short-term workgroup to assess how CSTE could be more involved and promote epidemiology of disparities; consult with CDC's Office for Minority Health
 - o Consider as criterion in selection of CSTE Fellows

Action Item:

None required

Annual Meeting and Related Items

Melvin Kohn has accepted the position of Oregon's Acting Director of Public Health and State Health Officer through June 2009, with the possibility that he will take this position permanently. This raises concerns about his ability to continue to function as an elected official of CSTE (president-elect).

Insert: CSTE Bylaws Membership

- a) Active Members. All persons engaged in the practice of epidemiology at the local, tribal, state, and territorial public health levels shall be eligible for active membership. More than one person from a local jurisdiction, state, tribe, or territory may be an active member of the Council, including eligibility for office and committee participation. For membership and voting purposes, the District of Columbia is considered to have status equivalent to a state or territory.*

Discussion ensued about whether or not the CSTE Bylaws prohibit Mel in his new position from being an Officer on the CSTE Executive Board. The only requirement currently in the Bylaws for Officers is that they be active members, defined as follows: "All persons engaged in the practice of epidemiology at the local, tribal, state and territorial public health levels shall be eligible for active membership." Further discussion ensued about the following issues:

- Does Mel's new position fulfill the criteria of "engaging in the practice of epidemiology"?
- Have other state epis who have gone on to be State Health Officers been allowed to continue to be Active members?
- What are the implications of this job change for Mel's ability to plan the 2009 conference, and for having the 2010 conference in Portland?

Mel stated that after reviewing the duties of his new position he felt comfortable that he will fulfill the requirement of "engaging in the practice of epidemiology" in his new role, and that he would be able to manage the workload of planning the 2009 meeting. He also stated, however, that he would only continue on the Board if the Board was supportive of him doing so. There was further discussion, without resolution of the issue.

Action Item:

An additional EB conference call was scheduled for Sept. 19, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. EST to discuss this issue further.

Committee Structure-Final Review - Perry

This agenda item has been tabled until the next conference call.

Proposal for Annual Meeting

This agenda item has been tabled until the next conference call.

Draft Agenda for October Board Meeting

This agenda item has been tabled until the next conference call.

Miscellaneous

An Executive Board Conference Call will be scheduled for Sept. 19 at 1:00 p.m. EST to continue the discussion of agenda items.

Continuation from 9-12-08

**Executive Board Conference Call
September 19, 2008**

Present:	Patty Quinlisk Lakesha Robinson Mel Kohn Jeff Engel	Pat McConnon Michael Landen Tom Safranek Duc Vugia	Beverly Christner Perry Smith Martha Stanbury
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Absent:	Sara Huston	Steve Ostroff
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Agenda

Draft Agenda for October Meeting (Attached)

Pat reviewed the Agenda.

Action Items:

Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2008

- 10:15 - Add Michael Landen's name to the Tribal and Local Epidemiology Steering Committee Report.

Wednesday, October 22, 2008

- 2:30 - Add two additional topics:
 - o Substance Abuse Epi Capacity Survey /Questions
 - o Community Health Assessment Survey/Questions

Thursday, Oct. 23, 2008

- Strategic Plan addition items:
 - o What will replace the consultancy form
 - o Tools to communicate with the membership (Beverly is working on this issue)
- Additional Topics for Thursday:
 - o Disparities: Whether to set up a workgroup
 - o Data Release Guidelines
 - o SPADA Public Health Response to BioWatch

Additional Item for the Agenda

- Richard Hopkins's and Steven MacDonald's update on the reformatting of the Case Definitions

CSTE Staff

- Beverly will draft a brief outline on engaging the membership

Les Lenert Proposal Regarding CSTE Position Statement of BioSense (06-EC-03)

Pat and Perry will talk with Les about his proposal that CSTE reverse its position on the BioSense position statement 06-EC-03.

Action Items:

- Have Les Lenert articulate what he wants from CSTE and his rational justification for reversing CSTE's position.
- The Executive Board should read the BioSense 06-EC-03 and the new version draft BioSense strategic plan.

Annual Meeting and Related Items

Issue: Is the scope of Mel Kohn's new role compatible with being a Practicing Epidemiologist?

Mel Kohn's Discussion Points:

- Scope of Public Health Division in Oregon.
 - o Public Health in Oregon doesn't include Medicaid or any direct clinical services that are provided through some public health departments.
 - o Oregon Department of Health has five offices: Family Health, Environmental Public Health, Community Health, Health Planning, Public Health Laboratory and Disease Prevention Epi.
 - o One of the frustrations that Mel has had over the years as a State Epi is that he feels that epidemiology should be the basis for everything that is done in public health. In his new role he will have the authority to better integrate the practice of epidemiology throughout the Health Department, which he feels is very congruent with CSTE's mission.
- The CSTE Competencies specifically address the Senior Epidemiologist position.
 - o Mel has reviewed the CSTE Epi Competencies and feels they are very relevant to the work he will be doing as Oregon Acting State Health Officer.
 - o Mel feels that it is very clear; he will be a practicing epidemiologist in the Acting State Health Officer position, which includes:
 - Figuring out what data to define public health burdens and the needs of the state.
 - Interpreting the data.
 - Working with the systems that Oregon has in place to improve data collection
 - Applying epidemiology to real problems that Oregon is facing.
 - o Mel feels that the above are the essence of the Senior Epidemiologist position that is outlined in the CSTE Competencies.
 - o Mel feels very comfortable that his position and job description as the Oregon Acting State Health Officer duties are in line with the CSTE Competencies for Senior Epidemiologist.

Action Items:

- Mel is willing to write a message to the membership explaining his new position as Acting State Health Officer.

- Mel is willing to have individual conversations on concerns about his new position as Acting State Health Officer.
- Mel feels that this would be a great opportunity for CSTE to strengthen their relationship with ASTHO.
- Mel's wants to be clear that he wants to finish his three-year Executive Board term.
- Mel is not in favor of going back to the membership in June 2009 for re-election of his officer term.
- Mel stated that he has discussed with his supervisor his continuing as CSTE President-Elect and President, and his supervisor indicated his support.

Pat McConnon's Concerns:

- Clarify status: Mel's title: Acting Public Health Director and State Health Officer. According to Mel, at the end of June 2009, the Acting position will be re-evaluated, and then a determination will be made whether he returns as a State Epidemiologist or accepts the new position permanently.
- Pat feels if the Executive Board communicates this issue to the membership there may be some negative feedback.
- The Executive Board could consider telling Mel that as the Acting State Health Officer, he can continue as CSTE President-Elect, but as soon as he accepts the position as permanent State Health Officer, the Executive Board will have to bring the issue to the membership for a vote.

Executive Board Comments:

- The scope of the work of the State Health Officer position is not in line with a practicing epidemiologist.
- Is Mel Kohn's position as Acting State Health Officer violating the CSTE Bylaws?
- The first year Mel is in the role as the State Health Officer he would probably be close to the issues of an epidemiologist because he just left that position. However, the second and third years as the State Health Officer, his work load would increase and the issues would be broader, with epidemiology less prominent.
- Mel's new position could be a distraction for CSTE during the next eight months.
- The Executive Board's decision should reflect the needs of CSTE only.
- This discussion should be continued during the October Executive Board Meeting.
- Being a State Health Officer and President of CSTE is not appropriate.
- This issue needs to be addressed now and CSTE should not wait until June 2009.

Executive Board Options:

- The CSTE Bylaws allows for special meetings. CSTE would invite the State Epidemiologists on a conference call and brief them on Mel's new job position and allow them to vote by ballot through e-mail.

- Have the membership vote during the 2009 Annual Meeting on Mel's CSTE three-year term, if the membership has a problem with Mel being the State Health Officer.
- The Executive Board could send out a statement to the membership that their assessment of Mel's new position indicates it does meet the requirements in the CSTE Bylaws, and that they support his continuing to complete his term.

Action Item:

Perry and Pat will come up with a strategy to address this issue and forward it to the Executive Board.

Committee Structure

Pat will e-mail the Executive Board the revised Committee Structure for approval.

Action Item:

The Executive Board will review their areas and e-mail Pat with revisions.

Proposal for M-F Annual Meeting

This agenda item has been tabled until the next conference call.

Miscellaneous

The next Executive Conference Call is scheduled for Oct. 10, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. EST.

Continuation from 9-12-08

**Special CSTE Executive Board Conference Call
September 24, 2008**

Present:	Michael Landen	Melvin Kohn	Beverly Christner
	Perry Smith	Lakesha Robinson	Martha Stanbury
	Duc Vugia	Steve Ostroff	Tom Safranek

Absent:	Sara Huston	Patty Quinlisk	Jeff Engel
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Agenda

Continued Discussion related to Mel Kohn's Acting State Health Officer Position as it relates to his status as an Executive Board Officer.

Perry's Comments

- Perry talked with other Executive Board Officers and several other members of CSTE, including Past Presidents, and the majority of the people he talked with had a conceptual problem with a State Health Officer being the CSTE President.
- Perry was not prepared for the amount of concern about a State Health Officer being President of CSTE.
- Perry reviewed CSTE's Bylaws for options available for the Executive Board on Mel's position change. However, the CSTE Bylaws don't address the issue of a CSTE President being a State Health Officer.
- The Executive Board or full membership could decide to clarify what a practicing epidemiologist is by definition or whether or not it includes being a State Health Officer.
- There is no mechanism in the Bylaws for the removal of an Executive Board member.
- Options presented:
 - o The Executive Board could vote and give Mel their sense of whether or not he should finish out his term. The vote would not be binding.
 - o The Executive Board or the general membership could vote on defining the issue on whether a State Health Officer is a practicing epidemiologist.
 - o The vote can be now or next June.

Perry's Personal View

- Mel as an Acting State Health Officer meets the definition of a practicing epidemiologist and he should continue to serve out his term.
- The CSTE Bylaws would have to be revised to define what constitutes a practicing epidemiologist.
- The discussion caught him off guard since he feels that this issue is a very rare event. He is very comfortable in allowing Mel to finish his term.

Mel's Comments

- Mel's primary consideration and motivation for running for CSTE President-Elect was *what can he do to make CSTE thrive*. This motivation has not changed.
- The only way to go forward and lead as President is to have the endorsement from the Executive Board.
- Mel feels that this discussion is helpful and a healthy discussion because it clarifies who we are as epidemiologists, what we stand for and what makes us who we are, and it's always helpful to have that clarified.
- Mel would like the Executive Board to disentangle the question of what the membership response is going to be from what they think is the right thing to do in this circumstance.
- Mel has pledged that if the Executive Board supports his continued role in CSTE now but in the future finds itself in the middle of a fire storm, he will resign.

Motion

Michael Landen called a motion to propose that we hold a special meeting with the state and territory representatives, have a discussion and vote of confidence (Mel to continue to his elected CSTE term) Martha seconded. The motion carried in favor in calling a special meeting.

Discussion/comments on the Motion

- There should be some type of action taken:
 - Modification to the Bylaws to avoid being in this circumstance in the future.
 - Clarify who is eligible to hold office within the organization and add the criteria for removal of an officer.
- Concerns about having a special meeting of this nature, in particular if we are uncertain about the direction it is going to go and what the potential outcome is.
- There should be steps taken before the special meeting is called:
 - The Executive Board decision on this issue is needed.
 - The Executive Board decision communicated to the membership with options provided:
 - Do you support this and do we move ahead?
 - Do you feel that we need to have a conference call to discuss further?
 - Do you support this now or should we have this discussion during the annual meeting?
- Practicing epidemiologist is a broad concept and some State Health Officers do practice epidemiology.
- We are making a huge mountain out of a mole hill.
- The Executive Board to express their perspective to the membership and provide them with the opportunity to provide feedback. Communicate to the membership there will be a deliberative process to avoid similar circumstances in the future by

the Executive Board addressing this in the CSTE Bylaws, calling for a special meeting or having the discussion at the next annual meeting.

- The interpretation or changing of the Bylaws is the Council's decision and not the Executive Board's decision.
- When the Council elected Mel into office, they voted for Mel as State Epidemiologist.
- The questions for the Executive Board and the membership are:
 - o What is a practicing epidemiologist?
 - o Will Mel be a practicing epidemiologist in his new position?
- It is appropriate to get our membership involved and it's a good idea to do it now and use the conference call approach.

The Executive Board Votes

Executive Board Members	Yes/ In favor of holding a special meeting	No/Not in favor of holding a special meeting
Melvin Kohn	abstained	abstained
Michael Landen	X	
Steven Ostroff		X
Perry Smith		X
Martha Stanbury	X	
Tom Safranek	X	
Duc Vugia	X	
Sara Huston	Absent	Absent
Patty Quinlisk	Absent	Absent
Jeff Engel	Absent	Absent

Motion

Steve Ostroff called a motion that the CSTE Executive Board endorse Mel Kohn's continuation as President-Elect of CSTE for the duration of his three-year appointment (Presidency and Vice-Presidency) as long as he is able to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of the position. The motion was seconded.

Action Items:

- The Executive Board is to forward their votes to Beverly via e-mail by Sept 29.
- The counts should be presented.
- A group will be put together to work on the special meeting.

The motion was voted by the full Executive Board through email and the motion carried.

Draft October Agenda

This agenda has been tabled until the next scheduled conference call.

M-F Annual Conference Proposal

This has been tabled until the next scheduled conference call.

Conference Call

The next scheduled conference call is Oct. 10, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. EST.