

Disaster Behavioral Health Planning Steering Committee
Group Memory¹ of Meeting April 17, 2006, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Steering Committee Members Present	
Tarik Abdel-Monem (PPC)	Sue Adams (HHSS Division of Behavioral Health)
Pam Ashley (Region 6)	Don Belau (Geneva YRTC)
Lindy Bixler (MFT)	Joyce Crawford (South Heartland District Health Dept.)
Phyllis Dutton (OMMRS; Alegent Health)	Ingrid Gansebom (Region 4)
Theresa Gomez (Region 5)	Keith Hansen (NE HHSS)
Jim Harvey (HHSS Division of Behavioral Health)	Dan Hiller (NEMA)
Dennis Hughes (NE Dept. of Agriculture)	Thomas Jensen (NE Dept. of Agriculture)
Marty Klein (CISM)	Janice Mogen (NE Dept. of Agriculture)
Kristin Nelson (Region 5)	Lisa Osthoff (Region 1)
Travis Parker (LLC Community Mental Health Center)	Taren Petersen (Region 6)
Beth Reynolds (Region 3)	Marlo Roberts (Region 2) – by phone
Dianna Seiffert (HHSS Communications & Legislative Services)	Dennis Snook (Region 6)
Caroline Walles (Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska)	Cameron White (NE Dept. of Corrections)
Peg Williams (Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing)	Jack Wineman (Psychologist)
Robin Zagurski (UNMC)	
Deanna Beckman (Region 4)	Marilyn Reilly (Region 3)
Resource and Support Staff Present	
Denise Bulling (PPC)	Brooke Olsen (PPC)
Stacey Hoffman (PPC)	

Announcements

1. **Next meeting:** late August/early September 2006
2. **CISM Conference**, June 2-3, Grand Island. **Register online at:** www.cism.nebraska.edu
3. **Nebraska Disaster Behavioral Health Conference**, July 13-14, Omaha. Registration **coming soon** at: www.disastermh.nebraska.edu
4. **Tabletop exercise on July 12** will address an avian flu scenario. All **Regional Behavioral Health Coordinators should plan to attend.**

To Do

1. **Send list** of what you think our **funding priorities** should be for the next year to Stacey or Denise by May 8. (See notes section on Next Steps, p. 7.)
2. **Send suggested wording changes** to the **behavioral health regulations** to Stacey or Denise by May 8. (See notes section on Next Steps, p. 7.)
3. **Reaching Out...Nebraska – Regional Resource Request**
The **FEMA CCP for Katrina survivors** in Nebraska requests assistance from Regions in reaching survivors across the state. **Regional Disaster**

¹ These notes are taken from notes and flip chart pages developed at the meeting. An attempt has been made to summarize the discussion by identifying themes and placing items in categories such as “Lessons Learned” and “Review”. Please let the NU Public Policy Center know if you notice any errors or omissions.

Behavioral Health Coordinators should contact Pam Ashley (pashley@regionsix.com) to assist in coordinating responses in their coverage area. This may be a good opportunity for Regional disaster volunteers to get exposed to some of the activities they may be helping with in the event of a disaster. Please also **send Pam the following resources** to help her work with you to coordinate outreach activities in your coverage area:

- a. General resource referral contact point (other than 211)
- b. Resource Directories (sample or contact info)
- c. Network of Behavioral Health Network Providers (from Regional Behavioral Health Disaster Response Plans)
- d. List of Summer/Fall community events (e.g., disaster readiness, health fairs, psych first aid, jazz festivals, etc.)

Statewide Updates

1. Thomas Jensen (**Dept. of Agriculture**) introduced State Veterinarian Dennis Hughes, and the recently hired Homeland Security Veterinarian, Janice Mogen. Dr. Mogen will act as a liaison between the Dept. of Agriculture and other State agencies engaged in emergency planning and response.
2. Dr. Hughes proceeded to give us a brief introduction to **avian influenza**, and described the Dept. of Agriculture's response if high path avian influenza is detected in Nebraska. Briefly, the response will involve:
 - a. Sending a diagnostician to the site.
 - b. Investigating the producer whose flock is infected (check for new birds, new people on the site, etc.).
 - c. Samples will be sent to a certified testing site in Ames, Iowa, for confirmation.
 - d. A **quarantine zone with a 3 to 6 mile radius** will be set up around the infection zone.
 - i. The Dept. of Ag will focus on animal control and rely on police/local response to focus on people, and on volunteer organizations to ensure that people have adequate food, water, medications, etc.
 - e. Other flocks will be tested within the quarantine zone and surrounding control and surveillance zones to determine the extent of spread of the disease.
 - f. All infected flocks will be "depopulated".
 - g. **People will be allowed to leave the quarantine zone.**
 - i. They will be **disinfected, and encouraged to stay elsewhere during the time of the quarantine** if they don't have to be in the quarantine zone.

1. Farm owners and farmhands are expected to have to move in and out of the quarantine zone daily.
- ii. **Pets** can also be disinfected; they **may be held for observation** to determine whether they have contracted the disease.

The **Dept. of Agriculture** has the **authority** to control animal diseases. This may involve restricting the movement of animals, killing infected animals, and disinfecting people who may have come into contact with infected animals. The Dept. of Ag does not have authority to restrict the movement of people in and out of quarantine zones.

It is also important to note that in many instances, there is unlikely to be a federal disaster declaration in the event of a Dept. of Ag response to animal disease. **FEMA does not respond to agricultural disasters.** This also means that a **FEMA Crisis Counseling Grant cannot be applied for** if there is an animal disease outbreak. Systems to meet the behavioral health needs of people in and around the quarantine area, including **Regional disaster behavioral health responses, will have to operate without the expectation of additional funding.** This highlights the importance of having community disaster behavioral health volunteers who can participate in the Regional response.

3. **Risk Communication** - In March, Ron Edmund presented a **two-day workshop** on message mapping. Public information officers from various agencies, as well as behavioral health professionals invited to serve as behavioral health Risk Communication Specialists attended. The main thing they practiced in putting together messages was **"27-9-3"** – say it in 27 words, 9 seconds, and with no more than 3 main points.

This group will begin **meeting once a month** to start **preparing various mental health messages** that can be ready when a disaster or emergency event occurs. Work is also being done at the PPC to create and distribute **messages appropriate for various cultural groups** in Nebraska.

Behavioral health Risk Communication Specialists have been recruited from around the state. In the event of an emergency or disaster, the **governor will be able to call on** this cadre of specialists **as needed** to work with public information officers.

4. **CISM** – Reaching the end of the first year of the update process. New policies will be revealed in June at the annual CISM conference. Also **working to identify new services to offer** to responders. Wants to coordinate with the Regions so that CISM is serving responders, and Regional behavioral health responders will be free to serve others in need

The CISM conference is June 2nd and 3rd in Grand Island. Register online at www.cism.nebraska.edu

5. **Disaster Chaplaincy** – Caroline distributed a working document containing the mission and description of the program. Interchurch Ministries has also put together a **pandemic response sheet for congregations**, because the sheet for faith-based organizations available at www.pandemicflu.gov was aimed more at faith-based social service agencies. This will also be **available soon** for widespread distribution, after any changes suggested by the Center for Biopreparedness.

Caroline noted that at a Church World Service conference she discovered that **providing spiritual care in a disaster** situation is unique to **Nebraska**, and that we are **being looked to as a model** in this area. She has also found clergy here in the state excited to be working in cooperation with the Regions, and thanked everyone for their openness to the need for spiritual care in a disaster response. The cooperation between clergy and the Regions **may be especially helpful in the case of an agricultural disaster**, since no FEMA money for a crisis counseling program will be available.

To assist in advancing the **Nebraska Ecumenical Disaster Response Network** (EDR Nebraska), **Denise will be emailing** to members of the steering committee **6 questions** regarding how disaster chaplains can assist in a disaster response. **Please take the time to respond** to these questions, as it will help provide direction for better coordination between the EDR Nebraska program and other aspects of disaster response.

Regional Updates - Highlights

1. **Region 5** – Theresa Gomez & Kristin Nelson
 - a. Will be going to El Paso, Texas to conduct a training.
 - b. Organizing “meet and greet” meetings over the next few months to become familiar with the currently trained disaster volunteers.
 - c. **Promoting greater ability to serve** various cultures in Nebraska by working with culture centers to recruit and train people to help more fully serve **cultural needs**, including bilingual services.
 - d. Biggest concern is **sustainability**. In anticipation of the grant ending in September, positions are being merged into ongoing Regional funding. The **main question is how to continue psych first aid trainings**. Toward this end, money from training the training in Texas may be used for funding programs in a future disaster, and other sources of funding are being investigated.
2. **Region 4** – Ingrid Gansebom & Deanna Beckman
 - a. Deanna Beckman is the new Disaster Behavioral Health Coordinator for Region 4

- b. **Biggest challenge** is covering the **large area** (northern part of Nebraska from just north of Omaha all the way over to Cherry County). Region 4 would like to have **another psych first aid Train the Trainer**, so that they can have trainers all across the region, and offer psych first aid training in communities across the Region more easily. They will discuss this further with Robin Zagurski.
 - c. Sustainability plans are still in the words.
- 3. **Region 3** – Beth Reynolds & Marilyn Reilly
 - a. Establishing relationships with UNK and Hastings College to get students involved as volunteers
 - b. **Sustainability is a priority** for Beth Baxter (Region 3 Administrator). Several Regional personnel (including Marilyn) have been trained as **back-up Regional Disaster Coordinators** and are continuing to remain updated on disaster response preparedness. Region 3 also believes that providing **more Train the Trainer sessions** will serve to help the program grow.
- 4. **Region 2** – Marlo Roberts
 - a. A Train the Trainer session is scheduled in North Platte for April 26.
 - b. The Region is providing **more frequent trainings to small groups of people** rather than waiting to form a large training group. This strategy is working well to build a base of volunteers.
 - c. Working with West Central District Health Department to badge volunteers.
 - d. **Sustainability** – Region 2 has several offices spread across its coverage area. At least one **psych first aid training** will be offered **through each office annually**. Holding trainings at Regional offices helps to decrease the cost of trainings so that they can be sustained.
- 5. **Region 1** – Lisa Osthoff
 - a. Lisa was recently hired as the new Emergency Services Coordinator for Region 1. Part of her job description involves serving as the primary Disaster Behavioral Health Response Coordinator.
 - b. **Sustainability** – The Disaster Response Coordinator position is already **incorporated into ongoing funding streams**, and the expectation is that most disaster preparedness and response activities can be merged with ongoing funding. Region 1 has been without a Disaster Response Coordinator for some time, so have not yet submitted a Preparedness and Response Plan to the State. Lisa is setting **development of a Plan** as one of her priorities.
- 6. **Region 6** – Taren Petersen & Pam Ashley
 - a. Video available on DVD – “Disaster Behavioral Health: A New Field of First Responders” – Can also be viewed online at www.disastermh.nebraska.edu

- b. **2nd video is being finalized** – To be played during volunteer processing, covering safety issues and the disaster response structure (Incident Command Structure)
 - c. Working to recruit volunteers among ethnic groups prevalent in Omaha to increase ability to reach out to more people after an emergency or disaster
 - d. Sustainability – Currently working to find a way to sustain the Regional Disaster Coordinator position, because if the position can be sustained, the activities will follow.
- 7. Reaching Out... Nebraska** – FEMA Crisis Counseling Program through Region 6 with Hurricane Katrina survivors
- a. 166 forced evacuees arrived in Omaha Sept. 10
 - i. They were angrier sooner than is typical with disaster survivors
 - ii. Evacuees were allowed to bring their pets – these were taken care of near the civic center so people could visit their pets
 - b. Initial response (various agencies):
 - i. Social Service / Community Response
 - ii. Housing was a priority
 - iii. Basic Needs – Food, clothing, household goods
 - iv. Employment for some of the evacuees
 - c. **Main stressors for evacuees:**
 - i. Losses, evacuation, relocation
 - ii. Basic Needs
 - iii. Disaster Assistance paper maze
 - iv. Status of home & belongings in New Orleans
 - v. Cultural differences (race, city)
 - d. **Reaching Out...Nebraska program elements**
 - i. Nebraska **outreach workers recruited to reflect culture of Katrina survivors**
 - ii. FEMA Crisis Counseling Program training was conducted by C.J. Johnson (Region 5) – having someone in the state certified to do this allowed the program to **begin operating quickly**
 - iii. Outreach, educational presentations arranged by the program and at community events, and support groups were the main activities of outreach workers
 - iv. 1-800 Number (Rural Response Hotline)
 - v. Individual crisis counseling with a psychiatrist
 - vi. Outreach flyers, educational brochures, and referral information for other community resources
 - e. **Main Challenges**
 - i. **Finding and keeping track of evacuees** – especially those brought to Nebraska by other agencies (e.g., The Salvation Army), and spontaneous evacuees who came to Nebraska on their own
 - ii. **Protecting confidentiality vs. meeting the needs** of survivors

- iii. Draw the **line between crisis counseling and case management** – nearing an agreement for other agencies to take over case management, so it will be easier to draw the line
 - iv. **Clients with high level of needs – including pre-existing needs** which that have intensified since the hurricane
- f. Lessons Learned**
- i. We have resources and experiences to build on in the state
 - 1. Southeast Nebraska Tornado CCP experience
 - 2. Region V
 - 3. Public Policy Center
 - ii. **Relationships are important.** Information often flows informally.
 - iii. It is important to know community resources for basic needs as well as social service needs – and the program helped the Region learn more about these
- g. What's Next?**
- i. Regular Services Program started April 1
 - ii. Two new outreach workers in Lincoln
 - iii. Awaiting news on case management partner (funding from UMCOR)
 - iv. Expanding focus to reach evacuees state-wide
 - v. National Guard –one appropriate outreach worker is dedicated to working with the Nebraska National Guard troops who responded in the Gulf

Next Steps

1. There are two **current pressures** on the direction of behavioral health emergency programs:
 - a. **Sustainability** – current funding is being cut back (from the federal level on down)
 - b. Need for planning to address behavioral health aspects of **public health emergencies**, like pandemic influenza

We need to set **priorities**. **Send your comments on the following to Denise or Stacey by May 8.**

- **What do we want to accomplish in the upcoming year?**
- **What do we need to address that we haven't addressed yet?**

2. Revision of Regional Governing Board Regulations

The current version of the proposed revision is close to the original wording (see attached document outlining changes). **Send** an email to Denise or Stacey by May 8 with your **suggestions for improving the wording**.