

**DALLAS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE**

Minutes  
April 15, 2010

*The meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Commissioner Wiley Price. The minutes were distributed and approved.*

**Zachary Thompson, Director** mentioned a statement noted in the *Dallas Morning News* regarding the decrease in tuberculosis cases (TB) in Dallas County. He thanked everyone for their efforts which contributed to the reduction in the tuberculosis cases. Mr. Thompson mentioned that Dallas County would continue working harder to ensure that the numbers of TB cases remains low. In addition, he announced that Dr. Wendy Chung, chief epidemiologist was recognized as the Best Doctor in D-Magazine.

Mr. Thompson mentioned the priority of the utilization of weatherization funds is to weatherize approximately 1100 houses this year. He stated that Dallas County's weatherization program is one of the only programs up and running; actually doing – 9 million this year and another 9 million next year. In addition, Dallas County has eight (8) contracts with various cities for weatherization services.

**Commissioner Price** requested that an article regarding the Weatherization program/information be included in the next Dallas County's Newsletter.

**Morgan Kohut, Entomologist** discussed West Nile Virus in great detail. She stated that there was an increase in 2009 from the previous year, 2008. Currently, there are 30 fixed sites; samples are obtained weekly. The staff is primarily testing mosquito pools or standing water where mosquitoes breed easily. Other cities can bring samples to Dallas County and the samples can be tested weekly, as well.

Morgan mentioned that in most cases, rainfall after the hot and dry weather does have an affect on the increase of the West Nile Virus. With a variety of climates in Texas, the West Nile Virus transmission can take place year round. There seems to be an increase in the number of mosquitoes in September. As a result, the potential carriers of the West Nile Virus to some extent have been identified. Ms. Kohut said that it has been reported that 16 confirmed human cases affected by the virus were tested in 36 mosquito pools in Dallas County. The virus can be transmitted from one to

another by a mosquito infected by the virus. No evidence was found on human to human direct transmission. She also illustrated the transmission of the West Nile Virus through mosquito bites. Ms. Kohut further said that mosquitoes are active at dusk and dawn and they like standing dirty water or wetlands. Furthermore, she said that on blue-jay birds, mosquito bite test will only be documented. She further mentioned that mosquito-borne diseases which affects 16 years of age or younger was found in 2 mosquito pools in 2009, was identified as La Cross virus (Asian type mosquito). Surveillance activities on this daytime biter mosquito have begun in Dallas County and are still causing concern. Ms. Kohut said that it is imperative to control mosquito population, by various techniques such as: mosquito repellent, product application and spraying activities. These techniques should be conducted before the spring season.

Commissioner Price mentioned that there had been some law suits regarding mosquito spraying, but it's imperative. He also asked, "How do we get the campaign out?" West Nile is here, how do we deal with it? Zachary responded by saying, most municipalities send out inserts, will that continue? He asked those present at the meeting.

Morgan mentioned that Billboards would be a way to get the word out about WNV. Karen Petties also suggested putting the message on buses, which is free. Mr. Thompson mentioned that he wanted to get some messages that we could buy out; by having a branded message. How do we incorporate that? Then he went on to say, that Tony Jenkins will push to get the information started regarding the West Nile Virus.

*Perri Kittles* mentioned that when the City of Coppell gets a complaint regarding mosquitoes, they actually go out to the house and give the homeowner repellent. The City also works with the Homeowner's Association.

*Dr. Shelley Stonecipher, Veterinarian* with Zoonosis Control presented on Rabies. Rabies is an epidemic in Texas and is a serious concern for society. Rabies can be fatal if appropriate and timely treatment has not been done. It is a disease transmitted from animals to human, if bitten by an infected animal. Some animals keep the virus going.

Awareness and education is very important to decrease the risk of rabies. Dogs and cats are the most common domestic animals that transmit rabies to humans and other animals. In particular, cats wander around the bushes and meet with different species of animals; they are exposed to or are bitten by another animal which carries rabies. It could be unnoticed if cats particularly have been bitten or have contracted rabies when they mix with people. Other domestic animals like sheep's, cows, goats and rabbits can also transmit this fatal disease if infected animals bite them. Rabies can be transmitted to humans from the bite of infected animals. Up-to-date vaccination of dogs and cats

against rabies is advisable. Other animals like bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes are considered to be the five high-risk animal species. However, the transmissions of rabies from squirrels are still unclear. In a laboratory test done in 2009, raccoons and skunks are considered as extreme high-risk animals for rabies cases.

Dr. Stonecipher stressed the seriousness of rabies as a viral disease which will affect the nervous system. Because of a long incubation period of the disease, the change in the animal's behavior is a sign to promote the fatal transmission to humans and other animals.

In the past in the state of Texas, it has been documented from the samples of Texas Animal Rabies Cases that bats with rabies have killed domestic, as well as wild animals. In some cases, bat bites to small children, sleeping or mentally challenged persons may be unnoticeable. At any rate all bites should be reported immediately to the animal control office. Any mammal bite to a person will potentially be a risk for rabies. Transmission of rabies occurs when there are open wounds or scratches from animals. It has to be reported to the local rabies control authority, if such an exposure is known. Dr. Stonecipher stated that the wound should be washed thoroughly with soap and water, immediately, reporting the bite to the local rabies control authority for action. In such cases, the animals will either be quarantined or euthanized to test the brain tissue. By law, even individual owned and vaccinated pets can be quarantined and observed for signs of rabies.

In 2004, a human rabies case was reported one person was killed in Texas. The rabies was transmitted from an Arkansas organ donor.

Dr. Stonecipher in her closing statement said firmly that all bites have to be reported immediately to authorities for necessary testing. She warned that negligence in reporting the situation on time would result in human deaths.

***Dr. John Carlo, Medical Director/Health Authority*** started his presentation by emphasizing the lack of appropriate ventilation systems in indoor areas; removing cigarette smoke from inside buildings still exposes the second hand smoker to various health risks. He mentioned the studies made during the last 25 years have shown that second hand smokers are at risk of tuberculosis, heart disease and lung cancer. He also mentioned that the study further details the link between smoke exposure and depression, and also dementia and breast cancer.

Dr. Carlo mentioned that educating business owners and knowing the importance of the smoking ordinance, related to the health of second-hand smokers, including the employees around the area

will in fact decrease the number of smokers and will also improve their health in general. These combined efforts will make the Dallas community much healthier.

Dr. Carlo continued by saying that the expansion of new smoking ordinance went into effect April 10, 2009, prohibiting smoking in bars, billiard halls, and other work areas. Additionally, a fine of \$200.00 has been set for business owners or smokers that do not comply with this ordinance. He said that the smoking ordinances cover most of the larger cities of Texas, but 80% of the public is in favor of the smoking ordinance.

Dr. Carlo emphasized the concern regarding the high risk of public health to the exposure of second hand smoking. The expansion and restriction of indoor smoking is a safety and benefit to the public health.

Dr. Carlo appreciated and thanked those who assisted him from the City of Dallas and the Smoke Free Dallas Coalition in providing the necessary data for his presentation.

Commissioner thanked the committee members for their attendance.

*The meeting adjourned at 11:08 am.*