

DALLAS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE

Minutes  
July 15, 2010

*The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Commissioner John Wiley Price. The minutes were distributed and approved.*

**Zachary Thompson, Director** briefed the Committee on the start date of back-to-school vaccination activities. He mentioned that the activities were scheduled to begin Saturday, July 17, 2010 at Antioch Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church on Hampton Road in Oak Cliff. He stated that Dallas County campaigned early enough to bring children in for vaccines, and that there will be enough vaccines this year. Last year, Dallas County vaccinated approximately 45,000 children during a two- month period. In addition, he mentioned that vaccinations would be administered based on the children's immunization records. Mr. Thompson extended condolences on behalf of Dallas County Health and Human Services and the Public Health Advisory Committee, to the City of Coppel due to the loss of their Mayor.

**Commissioner John Wiley Price** thanked Antioch Baptist Church and those individuals instrumental in making the event a success. He also mentioned that Dr. Steven Wilson would be the Interim Health Authority until the position is filled. Lisa Chambers, new Director for Office of Security and Emergency Management was introduced to the committee members.

Prior to introducing the presenters, Commissioner Price mentioned that Dallas County has been a part of the Prostitution Diversion Initiative (PDI) since its inception. He went on to introduce Sergeant Louis Felini and Dr. Martha Felini (husband and wife). They established the Prostitution Diversion Initiative (PDI) in Dallas. Originally, the idea had nothing to do with prostitution. The biggest concern was the increase in the crime rate in areas with truck stops, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Sergeant Felini runs a department with seven individuals in the City of Dallas. Sgt. Felini discussed in great detail the main focus of PDI was to help prostitutes get off the streets, and by doing so, that would possibly eliminate drug trafficking, human trafficking, theft and homicides, which are major concerns of the community, both, locally and nationally. Sgt. Felini stated that there are approximately 12.5 million truck drivers in the United States; causing an increase in the number of prostitutes that are dumped and killed at truck stops, daily. The PDI program gives women a choice, either receive treatment for their illness, such as drug addiction, mental disorder, and etc. or go to jail. The majority of the women chose to better themselves. The

PDI program consisted of 8 months of planning. There were many issues and concerns: triage, treating women onsite for STDs, prostitutes are not always able to leave, CPS will take their children, and etc. There are many organizations working individually to alleviate the problem but none were working collectively. Many of the prostitutes are substance abusers; using multiple drugs; crack, cocaine, meth. They have mental health issues: bipolar, many women report more than one (1) condition. However, the program (PDI) must assess one (1) major condition. Many women have asthma, high rates of stomach cancer, viral connection or other health issues.

**Dr. Martha Felini, Asst. Professor**, University of North Texas Health Science Center at Ft. Worth started her presentation with the information obtained from the PDI Preliminary Data dated, October 2007 to May 2010. Dr. Felini illustrated the success of the PDI effort. It was noted that out of 491 victims contacted on the streets, half of them decided to receive treatment for sexually transmitted diseases and some mental health issues, such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or major depression. Moreover, about 300 serial killers from truck-stops have been identified and numerous deaths have been investigated.

Dr. Felini stated that it's imperative to bring this life changing strategy into effect by bringing the resources to the streets and applying law enforcement. This will definitely have a major impact on the prostitutes on the streets. This system will have an adverse affect on these victims' lives and will also give them chances to recover from a life-time addiction and move forward with a new life. She then added that based on this strategy, the PDI, in collaboration with various government organizations, have established a long-term on-the-road services with a choice of "*new life or jail*" system. The outcome, however, has shown progressive changes in some of these potentially high risk victims' life style. The PDI still continues to work hard with the development of this fruitful strategy. For additional information, please refer to the following website: <http://www.pdinewlife.org/>

**Mr. James Bernier, Senior Planner** of Public Health Preparedness introduced himself to the Committee. He then discussed the role of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) in various events. He mentioned the concept of the "Working together for a Healthier Dallas County" in the previous year of 2009. The Department has made various pre-event exercises such as communication drills, full-scale and tabletop exercises. Primarily, regular trainings have been given to the Staff who is involved in the preparation of bioterrorism prevention and response system. Mr. Bernier discussed the Dallas Medical Operations Center (DMOC) and how the H1N1 outbreak was handled. He also mentioned the coordination of information guidance and logistics and communication between

hospitals and the media. Mr. Bernier concluded his presentation by saying that the community public health education and training by means of health fairs, presentations, updates on vaccinations and risk factors for diseases will continue as deemed necessary.

**Mr. Juan Rodriguez, Epidemiology Program Planner** also added to Mr. Bernier presentation by saying that DCHHS has provided the necessary services above and beyond minimum requirements. He mentioned that Influenza and heat illnesses are not reportable. However, due to the collaborative efforts with other cities, DCHHS received the information. Juan thanked everyone for their collaborative efforts.

**Dr. Wendy Chung, Chief Epidemiologist** mentioned Back-to-school immunization fliers had gone out to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. She also indicated that we haven't found a way to get the children vaccinated earlier.

*The meeting adjourned at 10:54 am.*