

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

MINUTES

JULY 17, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M. by Chairman, Commissioner John Wiley Price. The minutes were distributed and a motion to approve the minutes was moved by Barry Jenkins and second by Perri Kittles?

Commissioner John Wiley Price mentioned that they're getting lots of questions regarding the unaccompanied young people. We've been asked to reconsider placing them in the communities; so much misinformation out there. They all will be self-contained. If it's education - everything will happen on those campuses especially the health side. If there are issues, they will be quarantined, as well. I'm dealing with those issues in my district; protests have begun.

Zachary Thompson, Director thanked Barry Jenkins, City of Mesquite and his staff for reaching out to Health and Human Services (HHS) regarding the Real Time PCR testing for Dallas County citizens. Mr. Thompson commended Barry Jenkins for contacting HHS and the State for allowing that to happen.

Bradley Pierce, Senior Planner, PHP, provided a summary of Public Health Preparedness Full-Scale Exercises **Operation Best Southwest** and **Operation Thunderbolt**. **Operation Best Southwest** was held on Saturday, May 31, 2014. The scenario involved a terrorist attack using aerosolized anthrax in suburban neighborhoods. The key purpose was to test the ability of HHS and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), to staff, set up and run (4) four Point Of Dispensing (PODs) simultaneously; provide just in time training; and for MRC to dispense mock medications to the public.

Operation Thunderbolt was held over two days, Friday, June 6 and Saturday, June 7, 2014. This was a full scale mass casualty and mass fatality exercise. The scenario was a hurricane made landfall on the Texas coast and moved northward and caused an outbreak of tornadoes in Dallas County. The key purpose was for HHS and the Dallas County Medical Examiner's Office, to test components of the recently updated Fatality Management Plan.

Operation Thunderbolt provided an opportunity for the Medical examiner's office to practice conducting an initial assessment of a mass fatality incident. In addition, Operation Thunderbolt allowed DCHHS and the Medical Examiner's office, to test and improve public messaging strategies; and improve coordination between DCHHS and the medical examiner's office.

Commissioner Price thanked the Department (HHS) for showing up on Saturdays. There were other members of the Department present, as well: Mr. Thompson, Dr. Perkins, etc.

Dr. Wendy Chung, MD, Chief Epidemiologist provided an overview of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). MERS is an illness caused by a virus (more specifically, a [coronavirus](#)) called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). MERS affects the respiratory system. Most MERS patients develop severe acute respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath.

Health officials first reported the disease in Saudi Arabia in September 2012, and they later identified the first known case of MERS occurred in Jordan in April 2012. So far, all cases of MERS have been linked to countries in and near the Arabian Peninsula. This virus has spread from ill people to others through close contact, such as caring for or living with an infected person. MERS can affect anyone. However, there is no evidence of sustained spreading in community settings. To increase the likelihood of detecting MERS-CoV infection, CDC recommends collecting multiple specimens from different sites at different times, after symptoms onset. For suspected MERS cases, health-care providers should collect the following specimens for submission to CDC or the appropriate public health laboratory,

MERS-CoV was first reported to cause human infection in September 2012. As of July 14, 2014, 834 Lab confirmed cases; with 288 deaths. The mortality rate is 50 percent. The majority of cases were in Saudi Arabia. The median age of persons with laboratory confirmed MERS-CoV infection is 49 years with 65% cases in males. Incubation period for MERS-CoV is two to fourteen days. Dallas County Health and Human Services Laboratory department does test for MERS.

Committee Reports

Vikki Yeatts, Chairperson. *Clinical. (Absent)*

Jim Cummings, Chairperson. *Public Health Preparedness. (Absent).*

Bill Alsup, Chairperson. *Environmental Health.*

Jason Chessher, Chairperson. *Legislative. (Absent).*

Commissioner Price, provided the committee members with a handout of the frequently asked questions from the community regarding unaccompanied children.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 A.M.