

State Camp Safety Advisory Council (SCSAC) October 18, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Members

Present: Dawn Ewing, Eric Bacon, Dr. Thomas Welch, Robert Scheinfeld, Gordon Felt, Douglas Pierce, and Meir Frischman

Members

Absent:

Department of Health Staff

Present: Michael Cambridge, Roger Sokol, Brian Miner, Timothy Shay, Dan Lang, Kristen Navarette MD, and James Maurer

Eric Bacon called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m. at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center Meeting Room 2, Albany, New York. A quorum was present.

Council Administrative Business

Mr. Shay reported that the first order of business was the election of a new Chairperson. Dawn Ewing was nominated and unanimously elected to the position.

Mr. Shay noted that two vacancies remain on the council, representing for-profit and not-for-profit camps. He also noted that Ms. Ewing's term expired on January 1, 2018 and she is currently in the process for reappointment. Mr. Bacon's term is expiring on January 1, 2019 and Mr. Scheinfeld on July 11, 2019. Council members with expired terms continue to serve on the Council in their current position until they are reappointed, replaced or resign.

The minutes from the February 28, 2018 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Cambridge announced the appointments of Dr. Gary Ginsberg as Director of the Center for Environmental Health and Dr. Kristen Navarette as the Center's Medical Director. Mr. Shay noted the departure of Mr. Eric Wiegert, who was the Recreational Environmental Health Section Chief with oversight of the Children's Camp program. Mr. Scheinfeld requested a Department of Health organizational chart, which the Department agreed to provide.

Harmful Algal Blooms

Ms. Keleigh Reynolds of the Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection gave a presentation on harmful algal blooms (HABs). Ms. Reynolds noted that HABs may cause illness in people and dogs through multiple types of exposure including physical contact, ingestion, and inhalation. HABs have been increasing in frequency in New York State and impacting surface water supplies, beaches, and other recreational water activities in which participants have exposure to water. The Department has provided HABs training and guidance to local health departments (LHDs) and posted information on its website.

The Council discussed HABs and asked what measures could be taken by camps to prevent them. Mr. Cambridge commented that there have been statewide initiatives involving multiple agencies to identify HAB resolution and prevention strategies but there are no simple solutions. Mr. Shay noted that camps with beaches should have received information from their LHD regarding HABs and what to do if suspicious blooms occur at their beach. The Council recommended that information on HABs response and prevention be sent to all camps, since camps without established beaches may be located on or adjacent to water bodies or may take trips to beaches impacted by HABs. The Department agreed to address the topic in its annual Children's Camp Program Issues Memorandum and report out at the next meeting on statewide initiatives to prevent HABs.

Mr. Scheinfeld commented that the Council had previously discussed and supported legislation that would restrict the use of pesticides at camps, which may be used to treat HABs. He requested that pesticide use at camps be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Preliminary Overview of the 2018 Season

Mr. Shay stated that there were no fatalities and no nonfatal drownings reported for the 2018 children's camp season. The Department is working on obtaining incident data from LHDs for 2018. However, preliminary review of submitted data suggest injury and illness trends are similar to previous years. No vaccine preventable diseases or unusually large outbreaks were reported.

As recommended by the Council at the last meeting, guidance was provided to LHDs for distribution to camp operators directing camp operators to notify LHDs of key staff departures during the season to ensure policies and procedures are in place to safeguard campers and that staff are replaced with a qualified individual. The Department did not receive any inquiries regarding the guidance and was not notified of any key staff departures this year.

Mr. Shay reported that the revised Children's Camp Safety Plan template discussed at the last meeting was distributed prior to the season as well.

Camp Incident Statistics

Mr. Shay reported that since the last Council meeting, the Children's Camps Incident Summary Reports for years 2016 and 2017 have been drafted and are currently under administrative review. The final reports will be shared with the Council when released. Mr. Shay reviewed the preliminary incident trends from the 2017 report with the Council.

At the last Council meeting it was requested that the Department look at injuries associated with Organized Games and Playground Activities. A five-year analysis (2013 – 2017) was done for each activity.

There were 308 playground injuries identified that met the criteria in Subpart 7-2 as being a reportable injury. Analysis of the injuries found that monkey bars had overwhelmingly the highest percentage of injuries associated with them. The majority of those injuries were fractures due to falling. It was also noted that the majority of all playground injuries were fractures with the cause listed as falling or stumbling. Dr. Welch commented that the number

and type of injuries associated with playgrounds is typical of those seen in an emergency room.

Mr. Shay reviewed the Consumer Protection Law that requires playgrounds to be constructed and maintained in accordance with Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Handbook for Public Playground Safety, which applies to children's camps. The Council discussed playground injuries and recommended that the Department provide information to camp operators regarding the injury trends and need to comply with CPSC's Handbook for Public Playground Safety. The Department agreed to include this information in its annual Children's Camp Program Issues Memorandum and on its website. The Department will also look at adding information to the Children's Camp Safety Plan template during its next revision.

Mr. Shay presented Organized Game injury data that showed between 2013 – 2017 there were 689 injuries reported associated with 130 different activities. One reason organized games may have a large number of injuries associated with them is because they are widely played by camps and include a large variety of games and activities. Gaga, a dodgeball type of game, had the highest number of injuries associated with it and was discussed in greater detail. Of all the organized game injuries, the most common injury was a fracture and the most common cause was falling or stumbling. The Council discussed organized game injuries and had no specific recommendations for them.

Medication Administration Initiative

Mr. Shay reviewed discussion from the last meeting pertaining to the administration of "as needed" medications including limitations imposed by State Education Law when the camp does not have an on-site physician or nurse, or during extended camp trips. At the last meeting, the Council recommended that the Department explore options to allow specially trained staff to administer medications, similar to what is allowed at Daycare programs that are regulated by Office of Children and Family Services. Mr. Shay reported that the Department has discussed the issue internally and is generally supportive of the initiative and exploring possible legislative solutions.

Inflatable Water Slides

Mr. Shay discussed standalone inflatable water slides that impound water at the base as a splash pool. The concern with these slides is that the water is not disinfected or filtered and could lead to disease transmission. As a result, they are not allowed for use by the public at any setting including children's camps, schools, campgrounds, etc. Water slides that do not impound or recirculate water are not subject to the requirements of Subpart 6-1 of the State Sanitary Code and may be used.

The Council inquired how camp operators know these types of slides are not allowed. Mr. Shay responded that the Department has provided guidance in response to inquiries. The Council recommended that this information be provided to all camp operators, so they are aware. The Department agreed to include information regarding this in its yearly Children's Camp Program Issues Memorandum.

Other Business

Mr. Scheinfeld said that there were news reports of a camp counselor that was arrested for alleged sexual abuse of multiple campers at an overnight camp. He asked the Department if they could speak to the incident specifically regarding any deficiencies with proper staff background checks prior to employment at the camp. Mr. Shay confirmed that the incident was investigated by State Police and the counselor, who was also a school teacher, was arrested. During the LHD's investigation for compliance with the State Sanitary Code, no deficiencies were identified related to the camps hiring practices or screening through the State Sex Offender Registry.

The Council invited comments from the audience. Carol Ann Lemon from Malkin & Ross discussed a program that is being looked into that would allow schools to donate epinephrine auto-injectors, which would expire prior to the next school year, to nonprofit children's camps. Ms. Lemon asked if the Council would support or have advice on establishing such a program. Mr. Shay stated that the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services oversees the use of epinephrine auto-injectors. Dr. Welch stated that epinephrine auto-injectors are a prescribed medication, so they may not be transferable to another entity or person. Mr. Shay asked Ms. Lemon to contact him directly and he would assist as much as possible with this effort.

Next Meeting/Adjournment

The Council adjourned at 12:24 pm. The next two meetings are tentatively scheduled for February 28, 2019 and October 17, 2019.