

State Camp Safety Advisory Council (SCSAC) February 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Members

Present:

Dawn Ewing; Douglas Pierce; Thomas Welch, MD; Eric Bacon; and Meir Frischman

Non-Members

Present:

Gary Ginsberg, New York State Department of Health (DOH)
Roger Sokol, DOH
Dan Lang, DOH
Timothy Shay, DOH

Due to concerns with COVID-19 and limitations on gatherings, the Council Meeting was held virtually using the Cisco WebEx platform. In addition to the non-members listed above, 106 individuals were registered for the meeting including camp operators, directors, health department staff, and other interested parties. Ms. Ewing called the meeting to order at 10:34 AM. Mr. Shay provided ground rules for the WebEx meeting and stated that public comments would be heard at the end of the meeting.

Council Administrative Business

Ms. Ewing held roll call; a quorum was present with all members in attendance.

The meeting minutes from November 30, 2020 were not available for approval at the time of the meeting. They will be provided to the Council as soon as possible.

Mr. Shay noted that Dr. Welch, Mr. Bacon and Mr. Frischman continue to be in the process for re-appointment to their positions. There are currently four Council vacancies: two representing for profit camps, one not-for-profit camps, and one consumer representative.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Mr. Shay reviewed the vaccine preventable disease discussion from the last meeting at which time the Council stated it wanted to consider the issue more and report back to the Department with additional thoughts on the matter.

The Council's discussion reaffirmed their thoughts from the last meeting which were that it would be difficult to obtain immunization records for older adult and international and the discussion was concluded.

COVID-19 Discussion

Mr. Pierce, chairperson for the committee formed to collect COVID-19 information related to children's camp operations and to discuss the 2021 camp season, reported on the committee's

activities and findings. The committee's written report was reviewed with the Council members. It found that there is information the committee agreed with available from CDC, American Camp Association (ACA), New York State Camp Directors Association (NYSCDA) and others for best practices for camps to operate during the pandemic. Mr. Pierce concluded with the following from the committee's report:

1. The mental and physical health of children has been adversely impacted by many of the necessary measures undertaken to prevent the spread of SARS-COVID-19.
2. Regulated summer camps have a long record of promoting children's mental and physical health with developmentally appropriate activities.
3. Medical groups, regulatory agencies, and professional associations have developed guidelines for safe opening of in person activities in schools and camps.
4. The experience with limited camp opening in New York in 2020, as well as in other jurisdictions, suggests that such facilities can operate safely with careful procedures in place.

The Council discussed COVID-19 and children's camps operation in 2021. Mr. Pierce made a motion for the Council to accept the findings and recommendations of the committee's report including the opening of overnight camps and increasing the cohort sizes of campers. The motion was unanimously passed by the Council. Mr. Bacon expressed concerns with when guidance would be issued and requested that it be provided in a timely manner to allow camps to prepare for the 2021 season.

The Department thanked the Council for their work and will elevate the Council's determination within the Department.

Other Business

No new business was introduced.

Public Comment Period

The meeting was opened for public comments. Two comments were made thanking the Council for their work and supporting the opening of overnight camps and increasing the camper cohort size.

Next Meeting/Adjournment

The next Council meeting was scheduled for April 7, 2021. The Council adjourned at 11:40 am.