

# **State Camp Safety Advisory Council (SCSAC)**

## **April 30, 2009 Meeting Minutes**

### Members

Present: George G. Coleman, Jordan Dale, Dawn Ewing, Gordon Felt, Robert Geraci, Douglas Pierce, Robert Scheinfeld, and Patricia Skinner

### Members

Absent: Judith H. Reilly

### Department of Health Staff

Present: Richard Svenson, New York State Dept. of Health (DOH)  
Michael Cambridge, DOH  
Douglas Sackett, DOH  
Timothy Shay, DOH  
James Maurer, DOH  
Amanda Long, DOH  
Felix Mrozek, DOH  
Bruce Phillips, DOH Division of Legal Affairs  
Alithia Rodriguez-Rolon, DOH Office of Governmental Affairs  
Roxanne Brady, DOH Bureau of Chronic Disease Services (BCDS)  
Rachael Kramer, DOH BCDS  
Nathalie Pierre-Philippe, DOH BCDS

Chairperson Jordan Dale called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room, 547 River Street, Troy, New York. Mr. Shay called the roll; Judith H. Reilly was not present.

The minutes from the November 12, 2008 SCSAC meeting were unanimously approved.

### Old Business

- **State Camp Safety Advisory Council Administrative Business – New Appointment**

Mr. Dale introduced new Council member Patricia Skinner, Executive Director of the Capital District Childcare Council, Albany, New York. Ms. Skinner will represent children's interests on the Council.

The Council accepted a request to move the Bureau of Chronic Disease Services (BCDS) and the Office of Governmental Affairs (OGA) discussions ahead of other agenda items.

- **Sun Protection Initiative at Summer Camps**

Roxanne Brady, Rachael Kramer, and Nathalie Pierre-Philippe from BCDS discussed "Sun Protection Initiative at Summer Camps." Ms. Pierre-Phillips said the goal of the initiative, funded by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was to encourage

preventative behaviors in children for sun exposure. The Council provided feedback about the educational materials BCDS staff distributed to all attendees during the meeting and suggestions for evaluating the effectiveness of their programs.

Mr. Geraci suggested that summer Parks and Recreation Programs could be valuable to get information to children and said he would provide Ms. Kramer with contact information for the New York State Parks and Recreation Society. Mr. Shay said as a result of the initiative BCEHFP has added a section on sun protection to the camp safety plan template.

- **Legislative Issues/Updates**

Mr. Svenson introduced Alithia Rodriguez-Rolon of OGA, who was present to answer any questions the Council had regarding legislative bills. Ms. Rodriguez-Rolon explained that the Department is limited in the number of legislative bills that can be introduced each year, and that this year a bill pertaining to day camps was not selected. Ms. Rodriguez-Rolon said that recently a bill, which proposes regulation of day camps with two or more non-passive activities and raises the permit fee for camps to a maximum of \$200, has been reintroduced by Assemblymember Paulin.

Mr. Coleman inquired about the Department's opinion of the bill. The Council was informed that although the Department has not officially commented on the proposed legislation, any legislation with a financial impact on state and county/city resources would be problematic. There was discussion about the permit fee and inspection fees imposed by LHDs. Mr. Dale read a paragraph from a letter to the Council from former Interim Center of Environmental Health (CEH) Director Dr. Nancy Kim, which said that the Department would work with the Council to explore new ways of allocating resources for camp inspections. He said there are too many children at programs that are not regulated as camps, and the Council and Department need to explore options to use existing resources to regulate more camps. He suggested a committee for the issue.

Ms. Ewing said because of the current definition of day camps, she was concerned how parents would know if a children's program was regulated as a camp. She said there is a need to get parents to ask the right questions. Mr. Shay said BCEHFP is proposing to add a paragraph to the brochure entitled "Children's Camps in NYS" to provide more information to the public about programs regulated as camps. Additionally, BCEHFP intends to revise the DOH website for Children's Camps to include similar information.

Mr. Pierce, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Geraci, and Ms. Ewing volunteered to participate on the committee. Mr. Cambridge will respond with a name for a Department representative for the committee, and BCEHFP will look to identify LHD representatives.

Mr. Svenson said when the Council last discussed the day camp definition, they considered the level of risk of activities. He said other programs, such as Food Protection, classify operations based on level of risk, and inspect the high risk operations more frequently than the medium and low risk ones. Mr. Svenson also reminded the Council that the Department is mandated by Public Health Law (PHL) to inspect all camps twice annually.

Mr. Dale asked for a volunteer to chair the committee, Mr. Coleman volunteered.

Mr. Scheinfeld said from a parent's perspective, the current number and frequency of inspections at camps is appropriate. He said he cannot see reducing the number of inspections by DOH at camps, or giving any thought to teaming with ACA on inspections. Mr. Dale said the committee is tasked to find an appropriate balance.

### **Old Business (continued)**

- **2009 Camp Program Updates**

- Fact Sheets – Mr. Shay said the fact sheets for lifeguarding, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and first aid were updated for 2009, and a new fact sheet “Qualified Swimming Pool Water Treatment Courses and Certification” was added. The fact sheet “State Sex Offender Registry Search Procedures” was updated based on the August 5, 2008 PHL change and Department of Criminal Justice Services policy changes for submitting search requests.
- 2008 was the first year since the mid-1990s that updated data has been available to estimate the total number of children attending camps in New York State. It is estimated that there are 900,000 children attending regulated children's camps in New York State, up from the previous estimate of 650,000.
- 2008 Injury/Illness Charts/Graphs/Trends – Mr. Shay said the number of camper injuries in 2008 was fairly consistent with previous years. The number of rabies exposures increased in 2008 compared to 2007, which was an especially low year, but was consistent with reports from previous years. Mr. Scheinfeld asked if any of the background checks picked up on staff involved in abuse cases. Mr. Shay said background checks are reviewed during allegation of abuse investigations, but he was not aware of any abuse involving a staff listed with the sex offender registry. He added that several of the abuse cases in 2008 were by other campers. Mr. Sackett said the number of concussion injuries increased in 2008, but it may reflect that coaches are better at identifying concussion injuries and symptoms. The Department will continue to monitor and provide guidance to camps as appropriate.
- Updated: Procedures for Handling Outbreaks at Camp – Mr. Shay said there was a significant increase in the number of gastrointestinal (GI) outbreaks at camps this year ; however, the investigations did not show causes besides person-to-person transmission. Guidance for procedures for handling outbreaks at camps has been expanded to include additional information about the identification, prevention, control and reporting of outbreaks. The Council discussed the need to be proactive about distributing information about swine flu. Mr. Coleman suggested camps refer to the ACA website swine flu page at [www.ACACamps.org/hottopics/swine\\_flu.php](http://www.ACACamps.org/hottopics/swine_flu.php). Mr. Cambridge said people can also be directed to the Department's website, and that the Department is assessing the need to distribute swine flu information to camp operators.

- **Interactive Written Safety Plan Guide**

Mr. Shay reported that the interactive safety plan template is being finalized and should be available to camps within a few weeks. Mr. Shay emphasized that the template is not required to be used by camps with a current approved safety plan. The template should be used for new camps or camps with a safety plan that needs substantial revision. Mr. Scheinfeld said the safety plan template would help to address inconsistencies among safety plans and inconsistencies with camp inspections. The Department will look at a way to ensure existing plans address all the components of the new template.

- **Status of Amendments to Subpart 7-2 of the NYS Sanitary Code**

Mr. Cambridge said the proposed amendments were still being reviewed within CEH, and will not be in effect for the 2009 season. Mr. Sackett said the next steps are to obtain CEH approval, send the amendments to the Division of Legal Affairs for review, then to the Governor's Office of Regulatory Reform (GORR), and then upon approval by GORR the amendments would be published in the State Register for public comment.

Mr. Dale asked what progress had been on the amendments since the last Council meeting in November. Department staff said there were concerns within CEH about the impact on staff resources which have been worked out at this point. Mr. Sackett said an updated timetable for the rulemaking process would be provided to the Council.

Mr. Dale asked if the Department should incorporate the automated external defibrillator (AED) initiative into the current amendments to Subpart 7-2 since the proposed amendments are still under review by CEH. Mr. Cambridge said there has been some internal discussion at the Department about whether or not to move ahead with the AED requirement. Mr. Coleman suggested they hold off with the AED amendment and go ahead with the current amendments to 7-2. Mr. Sackett said that it is appropriate for the Council to make a formal written recommendation to the Commissioner of Health on their recommendations for AEDs.

Mr. Dale asked if a formal recommendation should also be made to move the medical issues white paper along. Mr. Sackett said the delay with moving forward was due to competing priorities and complexity of the issue. A formal recommendation would not be helpful to resolve the issue.

Mr. Dale said there needed to be more ongoing and open discussion, and a more transparent process.

- **Staff Immunization Recommendations**

As a follow-up to the past meeting discussion of whether the Department should consider immunization requirements for camp staff, Mr. Shay reported that the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases at camps is low, immunization requirements would be inconsistent with the federal J1 visa requirements, and vaccine standards and availability vary by country. As a result, a decision was made not to pursue the issue of staff immunization at this time. However, the Department has prepared and distributed to camps a

recommendation for vaccinations, including an attachment for preventing measles importation.

- **Publicizing the Types of Children’s Programs that are Regulated as Camps in New York State**

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting during the legislative issues discussion.

### **New Business**

- **Camper Supervision Between Activities**

Audience member Colin Stewart addressed the Council about camper supervision in-between activities. He said in 2008, there were five injuries during challenge course activities, compared to twenty-five camper injuries that occurred in-between activities. He asked if the Council would consider what could be done to reduce these types of injuries. He suggested supervision between activities needs to be enforced, including the ratios of campers to staff. Mr. Stewart said more accountability by staff was needed, and added that the emotional safety of campers was also in jeopardy during times of reduced supervision.

Mr. Shay said the camp regulations state that “visual and/or verbal supervision must be maintained during activities” and “adequate supervision is required at all times.” The Department’s policy is to allow brief breaks in counselor visual/verbal supervision when campers go between activities as long as an accountability system is in place to ensure campers arrive at the next activity. Additionally, the safety plan is required to address supervision in-between activities. The Council members' discussion included that camps need to comply with the existing regulations and educate staff about their responsibilities between activities.

Mr. Shay stated that in 2008, 22 of the 25 injury reports for incidents that occurred between activities addressed supervision, and that only one incident identified supervision to have been inadequate. Mr. Dale asked how this number compared to past years. Mr. Shay said the Department will look at the statistics and discuss during the next meeting.

- **Traveling Overnight Camps**

Mr. Scheinfeld discussed his concern that many traveling overnight programs for children are not regulated as children’s camps in NYS. He discussed three categories: overnight camps that send campers to areas across the country for a majority of the summer; tour camps that are based in New York but organize trips out-of-state (not currently regulated); and local facilities that take 3-4 day trips (if not at a single location for 72 hours or more, then it is not considered a camp). A fourth category was suggested for trips that go through New York State but are based outside of New York. Given the ongoing work with the day camp definition, Mr. Scheinfeld said the Council should probably prioritize its efforts and address indoor camps with high risk activities, then single purpose camps, and then traveling overnight camps.

- **Department of Labor Regulatory Authority**

In response to a request from the Council, the Department has looked at how the Department of Labor (DOL) regulates amusement devices at camps. DOL staff have stated that camps are required to obtain permits and follow regulations when amusement devices are located at camps. Specifically, DOL has responsibility for waterslides 20 feet or greater in height, go-cart courses and any tower or climbing wall with a belay system. Rope courses are not considered amusement devices that are regulated by DOL. Mr. Sackett said in the case of waterslides over 20 feet, the DOL reviews plans, but there is no inspection or follow-up unless something goes wrong. Mr. Dale asked whether the Department should oversee these amusements at camps if DOL is not doing inspections.

Audience member Gene DeSantis said that he believed that the DOL regulations were never intended to cover amusement devices at camps. Mr. Dale asked if the Department would partner with DOL, and what Department inspectors should do if they see these devices. Mr. Pierce said a lot of camp directors do not know that they need permits for these devices. Mr. Cambridge said the Department would be happy to continue their dialogue with DOL; however, the Department would not want to absorb DOL's duties since the Department does not have the expertise in this area. Mr. Cambridge said the Department will look into how to assist DOL and how to educate camp directors about amusement devices.

- **OMRDD Joint Visit Program**

Mr. Shay reported that in the past DOH conducted joint inspections with the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) to ensure the needs of disabled children are met at camps. Approximately twenty-five joint visits have been conducted a year. Due to resources, the agencies have decided to limit joint visits to new facilities, camps with significant negative findings from previous visits, or other camps that DOH or OMRDD staff identify as needing a joint visit. OMRDD will continue to consult with DOH on matters that deal with developmentally disabled campers.

Mr. Dale asked for comments from the audience; there were none.

Proposed agenda topics for the upcoming meeting included:

1. Consideration of a regulation to require that all camp health centers have an Epi-pen.

The Council adjourned at 2:12 PM after tentatively scheduling the next Council meeting for either Thursday, October 22, 2009 or Tuesday, November 10, 2009.