

**New York State Department of Health
State Camp Safety Advisory Council Meeting**

**AGENDA
October 20, 2021
10:30 A.M.**

1. Roll Call/Quorum Determination
2. Welcome/Council Administrative Business
 - Approval of past Meeting Minutes
 - Council Membership Update
3. Preliminary Overview of 2021 Season
 - COVID-19 Updates
4. Licensed Professionals at Camps Legislation
5. Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
6. Other Business
7. Public Comments
8. Next Meeting
9. Adjourn

State Camp Safety Advisory Council (SCSAC) October 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Members

Present: Dawn Ewing; Douglas Pierce; Thomas Welch, MD; Eric Bacon; Meir Frischman; Jamie Sirkin; and Randy DeFrank

Non-Members

Present: Gary Ginsberg, New York State Department of Health (DOH)
Roger Sokol, DOH
Dan Lang, DOH
Christine Westerman, DOH
Sheri Ford, DOH
Timothy Shay, DOH
Bryon Backenson, DOH
Jason Riegert, 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, 56 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 10:36 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. Two new council members were introduced and welcomed to the Council:

1. Jamie Sirkin was appointed to the Council to represent for-profit camps. Ms. Sirkin is a director of Summer Trails Day Camp in Somers, NY in Westchester County.
2. Randy DeFrank was appointed to the Council to represent not-for-profit camps. Mr. DeFrank has extensive experience with the Boy Scouts involving risk management, advisory councils, and program accreditation in NYS and northeast.

Mr. Shay noted that there are two positions still vacant on the Council representing for profit camps and consumers. He stated that anyone interested in one of these positions should contact him.

Mr. Shay and Mr. Ginsberg reviewed changes within DOH's staff and presented a new organizational chart outlining the administrative and managerial changes. In December 2021 Dr. Mary Barrett will assume the role of Commissioner of the Department of Health; Roger Sokol, Ph.D. is now the Deputy Director of the Center for Environmental Health, Daniel Lang, MS, PG is now the Director of Strategic Operations, Christine Westerman is the Director of the Division of Environmental Health Protection, and Sheri Ford is now the Director of the Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection.

The meeting minutes from November 30, 2020 were approved unanimously, and the February 2, 2021 meeting minutes were approved with edits proposed by Mr. Bacon.

Preliminary Overview of the 2021 Children's Camp Season

Mr. Shay announced that the incident data for the 2021 children's camp season is being compiled and analyzed. The preliminary review of the data shows that other than COVID-19 illness reports, the number and types of incidents reported is consistent with past years.

Additionally, there were two camper fatalities reported at regulated children's camps this season. Each was medically related but were not attributed to COVID-19. No reports of drownings or non-fatal drownings have been received. There were two fires reported in camper bunks, which did not result in any reported injuries. There were four beach closures and one camp's water supply impacted because of Harmful Algal Blooms.

Mr. Shay also noted that outside of New York City it is estimated that 75% of camps listed as active in our statewide database were issued permits to operate this season. This is up from the estimated 50% that were issued permits in 2020 but is still down from the estimated 95% issued permits in 2019. It is not easily determined if camps issued a permit to operate did, but the data gives us a general sense of what occurred.

COVID-19 Discussion

Mr. Shay acknowledged the two Council meetings occurring between the 2020 and 2021 children's camp season where there was extensive discussions and recommendations from the Council for camp COVID-19 policies and procedures. The input from the Council was greatly appreciated and used along with information and best practices from other resources such as the American Camp Association, New York State Camp Directors Association, and CDC for the development of the State guidelines for camps. He also noted that the State guidelines and recommendations for camps were revised multiple times prior to the start of the season. However, since the statewide vaccination goal was reached, the governor lifted and archived the State's children's camp guidelines along with most other COVID-19 facility specific guidelines shortly before the camp season started. With the removal of the State's minimum standard for operating, children's camps were free to choose to lift all or some restrictions, continue to adhere to the State's archived COVID-19 guidance, or implement other health precautions for campers and staff. Camps were also not required to supply DOH with pandemic operating plans and therefore not a lot of information is available on the procedures camps employed to control the spread of the disease. Mr. Shay reported very preliminary data on COVID-19 cases associated with children's camps (regulated and nonregulated) based on two sources of data – information directly received by the Department from local health departments, and from CommCare, the data platform used by the State to track COVID-19 cases. The Department will be further assessing the available data to determine the impact on children's camps.

The Council commented that there was excellent collaboration and communication amongst all parties involved with managing camps through the pandemic. Ms. Ewing asked if it would be helpful if the camping community could survey camps to get more specific information on the protocols used to control the spread of COVID-19. Mr. Shay responded that the additional information could be helpful.

Ms. Ewing thanked the council for their input on the COVID-19 guidance.

Licensed Professionals at Camps

Mr. Shay reported on legislation that was signed into law to allow regulated children's camps to employ certain licensed professionals to better serve the mental and physical needs of children during their summer camp experience. The amendments to Public Health Law relate to a

camp's ability to hire certain health care staff and will not result in any changes to the Sanitary Code. The legislation included a prohibition for EMTs being the health director; however, the governor reached an agreement with the Legislature to reinstate the ability of EMTs to serve in this role. The agreement also clarifies that the services may be provided during the time a camp has a valid permit to operate. This agreement was included in the Approval Memo for the legislation. It is the Department's understanding that the legislation will be revised during the next legislative session.

The legislation becomes effective on 7/16/22. One year after it was signed into law.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Mr. Shay reviewed the vaccine preventable disease discussions from previous meetings and provided three possible items that the Department is considering. Mr. Shay stressed that at this time these items are only being considered and the Department is seeking input from the Council before moving forward with any proposed amendments to the State Sanitary Code. The first proposal under consideration would be to require all campers to provide official vaccination records prior to attending a day or overnight camp. The second proposal would require campers at overnight camps to provide evidence of immunity against measles, mumps, and rubella. The third would require staff of overnight camps to provide official vaccination records. This would not be a requirement for evidence of immunity but to provide records. If staff are not vaccinated, they would provide documentation indicating such.

The Council replied that utilizing school vaccination records could help to achieve results for school age campers, but also reaffirmed their thoughts from previous meetings that it would be difficult to obtain immunization records for older adults and international staff, and for out of state campers. It was also noted that staffing is becoming an issue for camps and this could add to the problem for obtaining staff. The Council agreed that the issue should remain on the agenda for further discussion and awareness.

Other Business

Mr. DeFrank inquired about follow-up from past Council discussions to permit specially trained camp staff to administer over the counter medications to campers. Mr. Shay acknowledged past discussions which the Council and the Department were supportive of amendments similar to Office of Children's and Family Service (OCFS); however, it would require legislative amendments to either or both State Education Law and the State Sanitary Code. Mr. Shay was supportive of exploring this issue more. The Council proposed that this topic be discussed further at the next meeting.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments for this meeting.

Next Meeting/Adjournment

The next Council meeting will be scheduled in the near future. The Council adjourned at 12:17 PM.