

**Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
Board of Directors Meeting
September 15, 2020**

**APPROVED MINUTES
June 16, 2020
1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
2601 Agriculture Drive
Madison, WI 53718**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Dr. Robert Corliss, Vice-Chair Charles Warzecha
Secretary Dr. James Schauer, Jeffery Kindrai, James Morrison,
Dr. Richard Moss, Greg Pils, Steve Geis, Gil Kelley

WSLH STAFF PRESENT: Dr. Dan Kurtycz, Dr. Pete Shult, Dave Webb, Jan Klawitter,
Kristine Hansbery, Allen Benson, David Webb, Cynda
DeMontigny, Kevin Karbowski, Steve Strebel, Camille
Danielson, and Nathaniel Javid

DNR STAFF PRESENT: Zana Sijan, Steve Geis

GUESTS PRESENT: None

Chair Charles Warzecha made a motion to call the meeting to order at 1:05 P.M. Jeffery Kindrai accepted the motion and Dr. Richard Moss seconded the motion. The meeting was called to order at 1:05 P.M.

Item 1. ROLL CALL

Chair Charles Warzecha initiated the roll call of the Board. Nathaniel Javid conducted the roll the call of the Board members. All Board Member seats or their designated representatives were present. There were no attendees on the public telephone line.

Item 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve the minutes of the March 24, 2020 Board Meeting as submitted. **Chair Charles Warzecha** entertained a motion to approve the minutes, so moved by **Barry Irmen**. **Dr. Robert Corliss** seconded the motion. The voice vote approving the minutes was unanimous.

Item 3. REORGANIZATION OF AGENDA

There was no request to reorganize the agenda.

Item 4. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

There were no public appearances.

Item 5. BOARD MEMBERS' MATTERS

Charles Warzecha noted that COVID-19 continues to be all consuming. Barry Irmen mentioned that he has appreciated all of the support with testing in this time and the turnaround time has been excellent. Charles Warzecha noted a few retirements within DHS, and these positions interact with the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. This will be a significant recruitment, and on an interim basis, Charles Warzecha will fill in these roles.

Item 6. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WSLH OPERATIONS

■ David Webb, WSLH Environmental Health Division Director

David Webb summarized the WSLH response to COVID-19 in this time. Mr. Webb noted that in mid-March we have activated our Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). We managed throughout safer-at-home orders, and we were declared to be essential. We worked with our stakeholders for engagement about essential services. Because of this, we quickly shifted into incident command mode to consolidate and coordinate communications. In order to have an effective teamwork response, we needed to address infrastructure and staffing, workload impacts, state and UW emergency operations, and our campus and DOA partners. As far as infrastructure and staffing, at our three facilities, we had to re-engineer our front desk, work with the DOA on more intensive cleaning, limiting visitors and vendors, imposing restrictions on travel, lowering staff density, and making masks and hand sanitizer readily available. Also, we used significant inter-divisional support to our Communicable Disease Division to enhance capacity. Mr. Webb presented pictures to the Board of some of these modifications such as the front desk areas. Mr. Webb also presented some data on WSLH staffing including staff working at the lab, versus working remotely, and on leave. COVID-19 has impacted each division's workload differently. There has been an increase in workload with COVID and PFAS, but a minimal impact in Proficiency Testing, Newborn Screening, Human Resources, Finance and IT. There has been a moderate drop in work for Forensic Toxicology, Clean Water Act work, Cytology, and Cytogenetics. There has been a large drop in OSHA, Beach/recreational testing, and discretionary monitoring.

For the Emergency Operations Center, there has been much UW and state efforts including daily interactions with DHS, frequent communications at various levels with the UW, WisCON support for PPE, DOA building management to assist in preparedness, aid in PPE distribution including masks and hand sanitizer, and helping navigate communication. Lastly, as far as operational changes, we have had numerous communications and guidance to reconcile, visitor access and review of each circumstance, mask and leave usage, and working together.

Jim Morrison thanked David Webb for his presentation and the work the WSLH is doing. Mr. Morrison asked about supply chain and if there had been any interruptions. Dr. Jamie Schauer replied that this will be address in Dr. Alana Sterkel's presentation later in the meeting. Jeffery Kindrai asked about the varying guidance that is available. Dr. Schauer reiterated that since we are part of UW campus, and campus employees, we will be following campus guidance.

Item 7. PFAS RESEARCH UPDATE

■ Dr. Martin Shafer, WSLH Environmental Health Division

Dr. Martin Shafer gave an update on PFAS research initiatives that are ongoing or recently completed. Some of the initial studies have been focused on atmospheric transport, processing and deposition is underappreciated and under-studied. There are different PFAS compounds we need to consider including carboxylic acids, sulfonates, fluorotelomers, and sulfonamides. We decided to determine if the NADP infrastructure would be acceptable for measuring PFAS depositions (composition in the rain and detected in the terrestrial environment) using current sample collection methods. We broadened the number of PFAS compound evaluated (few studies quantify more than 20 compounds). We next needed to initiate a synoptic overview study of PFAS concentrations in precipitation across the US, knowing that the extant data is quite limited. Lastly, we needed to improve the quality assurance documentation of PFAS precipitation studies (there is limited QA in many of the few published studies).

In summary, the outcomes of the efficacy study was that the loss of PFAS is minimal for compounds of carb number <10 under current National Trends Network (NTN) protocols, so the current NTN protocols work for a broad range of PFAS compounds. Alternate handling/collection protocols can be implemented to address losses of longer-chain compounds. Overall, precipitation and air are effective monitoring matrices for detection of trends. Dr. Shafer presented graphs showing the levels of PFAS at 30 sites. Some of the concentrations are significant along with fluctuations. We can then convert these concentrations to depositions. Eventually, we hope to get enough data to develop maps to help us understand where PFAS are sourced from along with regional and global indications of where PFAS is.

We have developed a standardized robust protocol (SOP) for PFAS wet-deposition measurements using the NADP-NTN infrastructure. This incorporates optimized analytical methods, serves as a model for other emerging contaminants, and could support some other state-wide and regional deposition work that we are doing. Dr. Shafer noted that there are major unresolved issues such as the role of point, regional and global emission sources at a given location. One of the exciting studies going on right now, is a WDNR study collecting weekly samples for 14 weeks looking for 36 PFAS compounds at all 7 NADP-NTN sites in Wisconsin. Dr. Shafer also noted another study funded by the WDNR on the assessment of the impacts of PFAS in municipal wastewater effluents and land-spread biosolids on Wisconsin Ground-and Surface waters.

Dr. Shafer noted some PFAS collaborations with NADP and the EPA along with WSLH and WDNR. Dr. Shafer explained the expansion of synoptic sampling using NADP infrastructure over time. Also, the WSLH has initiated development of an expanded comprehensive method for PFAS in human serum. The goal is up to 40 compounds and this effort is in-part supported by a \$50K grant from the Association of Public Health Laboratories. Dr. Shafer reviewed some

PFAS methods for drinking water, non-potable water, wastewater, solids, and tissues. Dr. Shafer noted the status of our PFAS accreditation all these methods as we are awaiting WDNR accreditation in these methods.

Item 8. COVID-19 TESTING

■ Dr. Alana Sterkel, Communicable Disease Division, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Dr. Sterkel presented an overview of COVID-19 at the WSLH. February 5th was the first case of COVID in Wisconsin and the WSLH officially started testing on March 2nd. Staff have been cross-trained to meet the exploding demand. We have worked with WDHS to set tier testing criteria to allow us to focus on high risk patients. There were some issues with the supply chain that threatened to shut down testing; however, our strategy for testing diversification allows us to source multiple supply lines and we never went down. Through our Wisconsin Clinical Laboratory Network, we have helped 68 labs in Wisconsin start testing to date, with 25 more in the works. So far, we have tested over 17,000 specimens at the WSLH. In addition, we have had to manage the challenge of continuing other mission critical work.

Dr. Sterkel reviewed some different equipment that have been used and how we have upgraded in this time to increase our capacity. At first, we started at a 50 tests per day capacity and now we are at 500 tests per day capacity. This equipment can be used with other testing methods which further proves it's utility. Although we are currently at 500/day capacity, for the future we plan to have an 800 or more/day capacity. The greatest bottleneck in testing is the pre-analytical stage which includes data entry and specimen processing. As far as serology, we are employing three surveillance strategies. These include a 1000 samples/month partnership with SHOW, a 1000 samples/month partnership with other surveillance sites, and lastly collecting data from other labs. Another testing approach we have taken has been through sequencing. This is detail that allows for genetic comparisons and phylogenetic tree assembly and can be used by epidemiologists for outbreak response.

Dr. Sterkel noted that we have been able to obtain funding totaling \$21, 844, 104 from ELC emergency funds, ELC Cares, and ELC Enhancing Detection. We have also been able to improve efficiencies as we've progressed to help us save costs. Dr. Sterkel explained the outreach done through the Wisconsin Clinical Laboratory Network (WCLN) via their detailed webpage on the WSLH website. This includes information on validation panels, 10 webinars, lab messages, an email listserv for community discussion, and providing technical consultation. Dr. Sterkel presented the collection kits timeline from March until June and a live survey that was employed to monitor testing services throughout the state. Dr. Sterkel presented data on laboratories actively testing, laboratories planning to test, and current state capacity along with state and federal goals.

Dr. Sterkel noted that the WSLH has been asked by campus to support massive testing of students and faculty. We were clear that this could not be absorbed into our existing testing efforts, but we are working with the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to develop a plan to meet the needs of campus. Overall, the WSLH is a valuable resource for Wisconsin's COVID-19 pandemic response through testing, leadership, and technical expertise. Diversification in test strategies has allowed us to continue to meet the needs of our clients

through maintaining a 48 hour turnaround time and never stopping testing. The external partnerships we have strengthened Wisconsin's response to the pandemic.

Item 9. WASTEWATER SURVEILLANCE OF SARS-COV-2 IN WISCONSIN

■ Dr. Martin Shafer, WSLH Environmental Health Division

Dr. Shafer noted that our overarching goal of this project is to determine whether, and to what extent, the SARS-CoV-2 virus is circulating in communities, both large and small, across Wisconsin. While testing individuals for the virus can provide definitive evidence of the virus in the population, it is not always practical. SARS-CoV-2 is shed from humans in their fecal matter. Sanitary sewer systems collect and aggregate wastewater to a central location and by the time it reaches the plant, it is a well-mixed sample of many households and businesses; thus by sampling the influent at the wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) a representative snapshot of the whole community served by WWTF can be obtained. This study is designed to tell us if transmission is increasing or decreasing in a given community. It also tell us if COVID-19 is circulating in the community and can serve as an early warning potential. This approach is not designed to replace existing public health surveillance systems, but to supplement them.

Dr. Shafer provided a synopsis of the study approach so that the data is robust. This will run for a one-year period. The data will be used for public health action, acting as an early warning system, elucidating the correlation between wastewater viral RNA concentrations and population epidemiology of COVID-19. The data will be released by the DHS to the public. Last, Dr. Shafer noted the ways in which we are working to establish best practices including weekly calls and method sharing and participating in various studies.

Item 10. FINANCIAL REPORT

■ Kevin Karbowski, Chief Financial Officer, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Mr. Karbowski presented the statement of income to the Board for the period of July 1, 2019 through April 30, 2020. Our year to date expected loss was \$150,664. Due to COVID-19, our year to date actual loss is \$1,181,122. This leaves us a significant variance of \$1,030,458. Mr. Karbowski reviewed some of the larger variances on the income statement that are mostly the result of the effects of COVID. Most of these variances are due to COVID, losing money on newborn screening and clinical testing. This is offset by additional COVID work. We are hoping this loss will improve over the next few months. As far as working capital, our available working capital has decreased by \$1,415,614. This is mainly because of the amount we lost on operations and we needed to purchase newborn screening equipment. Although newborn screening is currently not operating in the black, we need to make the purchases in order to maintain accreditation. Dr. Schauer noted that although we show a loss this year, we had a profit the last two years, so this has somewhat evened out. Dr. Schauer also noted that as far as newborn screening, we have to continue funding it as it is an essential program. Overall, our available working capital as of April 30, 2020 is \$7,959,700. Mr. Karbowski presented the contracts summary totaling \$4,363,101 divided amongst the WDNR, Department of Justice,

Association of Public Health Laboratories, and WDHS. Mr. Karbowski had the Board refer to the packet for more details.

Item 11. FY21 BUDGET APPROVAL

■ **Kevin Karbowski, Chief Financial Officer, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene**

Mr. Karbowski noted that due to COVID-19, we have had to make some major changes to the planning of our budget. We are assuming a slow shift to normal operations over the next several months. For total support and revenue on an accrual basis, we are budgeting \$51,825,336. For expenses on an accrual basis, we are budgeting total expenses of \$52,031,595. This gives us a net operating loss of \$206,259. This is more or less a break-even budget. Mr. Karbowski noted that we are expecting increases in COVID dollars and an increase in PFAS dollars that will help us in the future. Mr. Karbowski noted some things we are monitoring with newborn screening expenses. Dr. Schauer noted that we do expect additional funding with an additional workload. Mr. Karbowski noted that expenses in the lab are relatively stable, with the exception of salaries in making offers to new employees to attract them to the University.

Mr. Karbowski noted that the WSLH is seeking the approval of the Board for this FY21 budget. Jeffery Kindrai made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Barry Irmen seconded this motion. There was no discussion at the WSLH FY21 Budget was approved.

Item 12. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

■ **Kevin Karbowski, Chief Financial Officer, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene**

Mr. Karbowski noted that we asked WSLH employees to submit proposals for innovation project grants as part of our Strategic Plan. We received twenty proposals, and of those twenty, four have been completed. These completed projects are a data tracking database, development of water analysis method, improved zika test kits, and enhanced recycling at our Agriculture Drive facility. Eleven additional projects are close to being done. Unfortunately, we had one project that could not be completed as we could not find an acceptable piece of equipment to purchase for the project. We have several other projects on hold due to COVID-19 and staff turnover.

Item 13. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

■ **Cynda DeMontigny, Human Resources Director, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene**

Ms. DeMontigny provided the HR update for the period of March 11 through June 5, 2020. We had a total of 6 recruitments, with one in our Disease Prevention Division and our Environmental Health Division, two in our Communicable Disease Division and Administration, and none in our Laboratory Improvement Division and Occupational Health Division. As far as staff turn-around,

we had four hires in our Environmental Health Division and one in our Disease Prevention Division, one resignation each in our Communicable Disease Division and Administration, three resignations in our Environmental Health Division, and two resignations in our Disease Prevention Division. We had one retirement in Administration.

Item 14. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

■ Dr. James Schauer, Director, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene

Jan Klawitter reviewed some of the WSLH recent events with the Board. These include articles in UW SMPH Quarterly and the Blastomycosis journal. Also, Ms. Klawitter noted some of the items that were touched on in the earlier presentations about PFAS in human serum research along with wastewater surveillance of SARS-CoV-2. Ms. Klawitter also noted the NADP Spring Meeting, which happened virtually this year. Ms. Klawitter had the Board refer to the packet for more details on these and other recent events.

Dr. Schauer noted there were no water boil notices for this period.

Dr. Schauer noted that there was a state soils lab that was operating on campus, but we will be merging with them in the coming months. This will be a soil health lab and will fit in well with what we do. This will be about 1% of the WSLH financial operations and we will give more updates to the Board as we move forward.

We will be following up on filling the vacant WSLH Board seats. Dr. Schauer asked the Board for any input they have. We would make recommendations to the Governor's office, but the ultimate decision would be with the Governor's office.

Charles Warzecha thanked the WSLH for all of the remarkable work and leadership they have provided in this time for the COVID-19 response.

Chair Charles Warzecha made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 P.M. **Jeffery Kindrai** accepted the motion and **James Morrison** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:



James J. Schauer, PhD, P.E., M.B.A.
Secretary, Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene Board of Directors