

Pima County Board of Health Minutes
October, 2015
Room 1108, Abrams Building
3950 S. Country Club Road
Tucson, Arizona 85714

**Approved
December 9, 2015**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. Horowitz called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Attendance was as follows:

Mr. An
Mr. Elías - Absent
Mr. Emich
Mr. Gastelum
Mr. Geoffrion
Ms. Gonzales
Dr. Horowitz
Ms. McComb-Berger - Absent
Mr. Rojas - Absent
Dr. Smith
Ms. Trowbridge

A quorum was established.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Gastelum led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. MINUTES ADOPTION

- Adopt Board of Health September 23, 2015 Minutes

The motion was made and seconded (Dr. Smith/ Mr. Gastelum) that the September 23, 2015 Minutes be adopted as written. The motion carried 8-0.

4. Director's Update and Report on Homelessness

Dr. Francisco García, Health Department Director addressed the Board to provide them an update on homelessness issues and anti-poverty initiatives. During the last six months a cross department committee has been meeting regularly to discuss the low income individuals and the support provided to them in a variety of different settings. One of the challenges discussed was the issues with the homelessness camp earlier in the year which quickly engaged the City and the County to develop a response to the issue. County Administrator asked the Health Department to look into a possible food code amendment as a tool to achieve a solution but it was determined that a short term solution to mitigate waste produced by homeless inhabitants was not conducive via this method and collaboration efforts should continue to research other policy options.

A survey conducted by the Institute for Social Justice, funded in part by the Health Department, was designed to capture information from the occupants of Veinte de Agosto Park. What the

survey showed was that about half the population of the camp occupants have a serious mental health issue and/or been engaged with a behavioral health system. Our RBHA at the time called all the shelters to look at their capacity and it was determined they did have room to absorb some of these people even in January; however, due to the restrictions imposed by the shelters - such as alcohol, drugs and pets - deter homeless individuals from seeking shelter.

Another report titled “Service Gaps & Opportunities in Ending Homelessness in Pima County”, commissioned by Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness, further illustrates that there is capacity in shelters but the restrictions they impose are deterrents to the homeless population; therefore, there exists a need for “low demand” shelter space that do not require a lot of the restrictions seen in other shelters.

Cenpatico is the new RHBA in Pima County. At meetings, the County has been discussing homelessness issues with Cenpatico in order to obtain their buy in as they are an important player in combating the problem. They are owned by a national corporation, Centene and can bring their national experience to bear on the homelessness issues; also, they have recently hired a Homeless Services Administrator who will interface with County, City, and other sister agencies and jurisdictions.

Dr. Garcia introduced Javier Herrera, Health Department Program Coordinator to brief the Board on what the City has been doing to deal with the homelessness issue as the City has been the central coordinating point. Javier shared the City of Tucson’s new draft resolution adopted by the Mayor and Council which looks at updating City code eliminating an individual’s ability to encamp on sidewalk spaces thereby eliminating some of the larger encampments from forming. The draft code also provides provisions to prohibit all alcoholic beverages at certain locations. As the Mayor and Council have some reservations regarding the revisions to the code since it could be perceived as criminalizing homelessness; they are looking at alternatives. One way is bringing a large group of individuals together that work in this arena. At the first meeting, County and City staff presented the services they provide to address homelessness and poverty issues. The second meeting was to have the providers at the table to talk about what they are doing and the challenges they face. The anticipation is that this group will evolve and develop the foundation needed for the coordination of effort for the services needed.

DEQ Updates:

Beryllium monitoring study for Materion –

Ms. Ursula Nelson, Director PDEQ addressed the Board to give an update on Materion regarding the results of the six month air study funded extension which continued monitoring from March 25 to September 25, 2015. Materion operates particulate detectors as part of the part of their permit that was revised on April 29, 2015. In March, the PDEQ briefed the SUSD School Board regarding the extension and potentially discontinuing the monitoring at the end of September 2015. The school board passed a motion to discontinue the monitoring if no beryllium was detected during the six month extension. The study determined that no beryllium was detected during the six month monitoring so it was discontinued on September 30.

TIAA Superfund Site – 1,4 Dioxane -

Ms. Nelson briefed the Board on the Tucson International Airport Area Superfund Site. PDEQ contracts with the TIAA to monitor the numerous wells in the area. A couple of years ago while monitoring the wells in a mobile home park, 1,4-dioxane was found in the well water. PDEQ asked the Health Department for assistance; who in turn contacted ADHS to do a health assessment of the area. ADHS evaluated ingestion, inhalation and dermal exposure at 0.35 ug/L and determined the water is safe with a very low cancer risk and protective of human health for non-cancer risk but recommended continued monitoring.

Ozone Air Quality Standard -

Ms. Nelson briefed the Board on the ozone air quality standard. The United States Environmental Protection Agency revised the National Ambient air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone from 75 parts per billion to 70 parts per billion on October 1, 2015. As required by the Clean Air Act, EPA is required to periodically review the health standard for certain air pollutants to ensure the protection of public health. Ozone can irritate the airways causing coughing, wheezing, a burning sensation, shortness of breath, and it can aggravate asthma and other lung diseases, as well as make the lungs more susceptible to infection.

EPA will use data from 2014 through 2016 to determine if air quality in Pima County violates the new standard; Pima County will not know until next year if we are in violation of the new standard. Currently we are 69 ppb and the standard is 70 ppb. Pima County residents can take certain actions to help reduce the ozone in our atmosphere such as choose a cleaner way to go to work at least once a week such a carpool, transit, bike or walk as often as possible.

6. Update on Glyphosate and Imazapyr

Dr. Francisco Garcia, Health Department Director introduced Mr. Kerry Baldwin, National Resources Division Manager, PC National Parks and Recreation to give an update on Glyphosate and Imazapyr. Mr. Baldwin will present an overview of how PC works to protect human and pet safety in County parks and invited the Board to review the printed handouts from the NRPR regarding Pesticide/Herbicide Use Procedures.

Mr. Baldwin introduced Sherry Barfield, Assistant Operations Manager NRPR to speak about PC's weed management and pesticide spray system which is regulated by the State Office of Pest Management under the State Agriculture Department; who regulates the types and use of chemicals. In order to avoid using chemicals, PCNPR employs management practices to avoid if possible, the use of chemicals by first determining the level of the problem. Most of the chemicals that are applied are used to control plant life that has been determined to be of a detrimental nature and cannot be abated by weeding due to the size of the problem. If the problem is insects, it is mostly seasonal. When chemicals are used, the PCNPR does not use any product with more than a Warning label (next levels are Caution and Danger) in order to use the lowest toxicity level to the applicator. In order to protect people and their pets from chemical exposure, the chemicals used to control insects do not have a re-entry period and the location can be entered immediately upon drying. PCNPR does not provide prior notification of spraying locations and times unless they are aware of someone in the area that has sensitivity to the chemicals being applied. Another measure used in the regimen to reduce weed population is pre-emergent which greatly reduces the number of maturing plants.

Mr. Baldwin addressed the Board regarding the herbicide Glyphosate which is designed specifically to work on green plants by inhibiting the growth formation of the plants. Glyphosate has been available since 1974 and there is an abundance of information regarding the effects on humans. Research has found that once the product dries it doesn't easily penetrate the skin and accidental ingestion is excreted back out through the system without causing any harm; therefore, human toxicity is extremely low. Glyphosate is the primary herbicide used to remediate Buffelgrass as burning as a means of remediation will only make it stronger and more proficient. The product does not affect ground water as once it makes contact with the soil it is absorbed immediately into the ground. Due to the high cost, helicopters are not used by PCNRP for spraying Buffelgrass; rather, localized hand spraying methods are employed as well as weed remediation.

Imazapyr can also be used as an application to control Buffelgrass but PCNRP prefers not to use this chemical due to the toxic ingredients it contains which are harmful to humans and animals; therefore it is rarely used except in some remote locations.

7. Holiday Schedule

The Board voted to have the next meeting on December 9th; thereby combining the November 25 and December 23 meetings.

8. CALL TO AUDIENCE

The following speakers from the audience addressed the BOH members:

Jim Verrier, 4026 E Paseo Dorado, Tucson, AZ 85711 addressed the BOH commenting on his concerns with Glyphosate and Imazapyr with respect to data he collected on the aforementioned chemicals. He submitted 50 abstracts on Glyphosate and the effects on animals after being ingested and a 1994 dissertation from Utah State University titled "The Effect of Climate and Spittlebug on Buffelgrass Productivity in the Sonoran Desert" by Martha H. Martin-Rivera. He cited certain arguments from the aforementioned material which contradicted points made in Mr. Baldwin's presentation.

Albert Lannon, 13141 W. Cmo de Coredo, Tucson, AZ 85743 representing the Avra Valley Coalition addressed the Board regarding his concerns on the harmful effects of Glyphosate and Imazapyr spraying by Tucson Water on humans and animals, specifically aerial spraying in the Avra Valley area in the Saguaro National Park.

John Scheuring, 241 E Fieldcrest Lane, Tucson, AZ 85737 addressed the Board to point out an "urban myth" regarding a Federal program in Texas that is said to be actively breeding better, stronger varieties of Buffelgrass. He asked that this myth not be repeated to others as it has gotten a lot of Arizonians enthusiastic; however, it simply doesn't exist.

9. SUMMATION OF ACTION ITEMS AND PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Horowitz gave a summary of the agenda items.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.