

**Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
Board of Directors Meeting
December 18, 2024
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

APPROVED MINUTES

Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

<1:00 PM – 4:00 PM>

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair Greg Pils (DNR) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gil Kelley |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vice Chair Dr. Christopher Strang | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hasmik Mkrtchyan |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secretary Dr. James Schauer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zana Sijan (WDNR alternate) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Robert Corliss | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Becca Fahney (WDNR alternate) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Jon Audhya (SMPH) | <input type="checkbox"/> Paula Tran (DHS alternate) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Mark Werner (DHS) | <input type="checkbox"/> Anna Benton (DHS alternate) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jessica Blahnik | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Sheryl Bedno (DHS alternate) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gina Green-Harris | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andrea Poehling (SMPH alternate) |

WSLH STAFF PRESENT:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Errin Rider | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Camille Danielson |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allen Benson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tip Vandall |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevin Karbowski | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Sterk |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jan Klawitter | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nancy McLean | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Strebel | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Al Bateman | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Conklin | |

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GUESTS PRESENT: N/A

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Item 1. ROLL CALL

Chair Greg Pils called the meeting to order at 12:59 PM.

At 1:00 PM Chair Greg Pils initiated and conducted the roll call of the Board members. All Board members or their designated representatives were present except for those excused. INDICATED ABOVE

Andrea Poehling is attending in place of Dr. Jon Audhya.

Item 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

At 1:03 PM, Chair Greg Pils entertained a motion to approve the June 26, 2024 minutes as submitted. Chair Greg Pils moved for approval and Dr. Chris Strang seconded. A voice vote to approve the minutes for the record was passed and accepted.

Item 3. REORGANIZATION OF AGENDA

None

Item 4. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

None

Item 5. BOARD MEMBERS' MATTERS

WSLH Director Dr. Jamie Schauer said the WSLH is working with Gov. Evers' office on the appointment of new members to fill the private environmental laboratories and the local health department positions on the Board.

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BUSINESS ITEMS:

Item 6. RNC/DNC Preparedness Activities – Meshel Lange, Dr. Alana Sterkel and Dr. Martin Shafer

Meshel Lange and Dr. Alana Sterkel discussed the WSLH's preparedness and response activities in regard to the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee and the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Notably, the Laboratory Response Network, coordinated by the CDC, funds testing for chemical (LRN-C) and biological (LRN-B) response at public health laboratories, including the WSLH. Ms. Lange and Dr. Sterkel gave a history of the WSLH's LRN-B and LRN-C activities. Ms. Lange said that the WSLH's Chemical Emergency Response Unit trains upwards of 500 first responders around the state annually as part of their LRN-C activities and has been asked by CDC to mentor other LRN-C labs on outreach and training to the first responder communities in their states. Ms. Lange and Dr. Sterkel explained that the WSLH participated in the 2024 DNC and RNC as a response partner, with planning committees starting up to 18 months before the event itself. Other planning partners included the FBI, Secret Service, EPA, US Postal Inspection Service, military assets, HazMat, local law enforcement, DNR, DHS, local and state public health, National Guard Civil Support Team, and WEM. In the months leading up to the convention, the WSLH provided lab tours, presentations and network building opportunities for planning partners. Dr. Sterkel noted that there was a lot of turnover at partner agencies due to COVID-19 and that efforts have been made to rebuild some of these communication networks through one-on-one meetings, email exchanges, and in-person lab meetings. Ms. Lange shared some of the impactful 24/7 emergency response and unknown substance testing capabilities at the WSLH, and Dr. Sterkel discussed tabletop exercises with the LRN-B, LRN-C, UW-Madison Responsible Official and Milwaukee Health Department Laboratory. Dr. Martin Shafer provided an overview of the WSLH's wastewater surveillance activities surrounding the RNC. The WSLH - in collaboration with the WI Department of Health Services, UW-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Health Department Laboratory - comprise the Wisconsin Wastewater Surveillance Program, one of six programs nationally recognized by CDC as National Wastewater Surveillance Centers of Excellence (NWSS/CoE). As a NWSS/CoE, the Wisconsin program is charged with helping define the mission of wastewater pathogen monitoring nationally. Large event surveillance is a priority use-case under evaluation by the WI CoE and the RNC wastewater monitoring activities were implemented in addition to the routine wastewater monitoring at 45 wastewater treatment facilities throughout the state. Monitoring was at community level in Milwaukee for a few weeks prior, during, and after the RNC. Fourteen pathogens (including respiratory viruses, enteric viruses and bacteria, and viruses causing vaccine-preventable diseases) were monitored during the RNC Study. RNC monitoring testing and reporting was conducted daily by the WSLH over the 4-week study. The laboratory turned-around the pathogen assays within 24-hours of sample receipt during the convention week. The team developed pathogen specific notification and action plans (i.e. who will be informed and how notifications will work).

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Item 7. Preparedness and Response for Emerging Infectious Diseases Du Jour – Dr. Al

Bateman Dr. Al Bateman introduced himself as the Director of the WSLH Communicable Disease Division (CDD). He informed the Board that there are always new diseases and/or outbreaks happening worldwide – from the spread of the Oropouche virus endemic to the Amazon to the Dengue fever surging in Latin America and the West Nile virus found in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He outlined the WSLH’s general preparedness and response actions, including continuous situational awareness, communication to clinical laboratory and public health partners as well as the general public, planning for responses in-lab, and ensuring national involvement via relevant scientific committees and organizations. Dr. Bateman explained that the concept of continued situational awareness involves fine-tuning CDD’s responses based on current situations that have the ability to change rapidly (e.g. COVID-19) or slowly (i.e. Mpox). Dr. Bateman said that communication – both internally to CDD staff and WSLH leadership and externally – is a crucial component of CDD’s preparedness and response. External communication is routed through WI Clinical Laboratory Network (WCLN) messages and to individual WI clinical labs that reach out to CDD. CDD also works with DHS to coordinate cross-agency messaging as needed. Planning and responses in the lab include validating and onboarding a new test or onboarding a higher throughput test. Training and/or hiring additional staff is a top priority – alongside forwarding positive cases of rare diseases to CDC for further testing. Dr. Bateman also discussed H5N1 Avian Influenza. CDD has been staying up to date on the evolving situation and keeps in contact with the WCLN and internally as the situation evolves. Testing specimens from people with respiratory symptoms and known exposure to H5N1 alongside performing surveillance for H5N1 in cats sent in for rabies testing has been conducted. Dr. Bateman provided an overview of the Mpox spreading in Central Africa. With an Mpox re-emergence in just a two year span of time, CDD is staying up to date on the evolving situation and communicating to WCLN and internally at WSLH. Similarly, Dengue Fever in Latin America as well as the West Nile Virus is being tracked amidst evolution in these cases. The testing of specimens and sending positives to CDC for confirmation and serotyping is occurring on a regular basis. In terms of Oropouche virus, CDD is staying up to date on the evolving situation and has worked out new DHS testing approval workflows to ship to CDC for testing when this time arises. At present, CDD is not conducting any testing for this virus due to a lack of cases.

Item 8. Financial Report – Kevin Karbowski

WSLH Chief Financial Officer Kevin Karbowski presented the financial report for FY24. Last year the WSLH budgeted to lose around \$493,157, however only ended up losing \$170,616. The revenue for this period amounted to \$67,928,900. Expenses were \$68,099,516 compared to the

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expected \$64,190,366. The large positive variance can be attributed to CDD's clinical activity alongside over budgeting by Cytology. Grants for this period are \$700,000 more than anticipated due to the DHS employees who get their payroll from UW-Madison, thereby increasing our salaries in the process. In terms of supplies, WSLH labs are purchasing more supplies due to an increased amount of testing, as well as a 6% to 8% inflation rate for supply costs.

Item 9. Contracts Report – Tip Vandall

WSLH Financial Manager Tip Vandall presented the summary of contracts executed since September 2024. She shared that there is a new biennial contract signed at the end of the fiscal year amounting to \$80,000, coupled with a new contract of \$10,000 and 18 renewals worth \$5,836,372.65. This leaves our contracts report with a grand total of \$5,926,372.64.

Item 10. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **FDA LDT Final Rule WSLH Strategy – Dr. Errin Rider**

WSLH Associate Director for Clinical Lab Services Dr. Errin Rider explained that the FDA LDT Rule involves a 4 year phase-in plan; with year one requesting the final rule be published, stage one requiring medical device reporting (MDR), stage two involving registrations/listing, phase three quality system requirements for records, and stage four and five premarket approval application submission. It is imperative to note that 'currently marketed' LDT tests are required to meet stage one, stage two, and only records requirements for stage three. Any tests implemented on May 6, 2024 or after must meet requirements for phases including all quality system requirements in stage three. Dr. Rider said that new LDTs beyond this point can move forward and can be implemented under her approval – with the caveat being that any new LDTs be discontinued before May 6, 2026. A premarket approval submission number will need to be provided when listing new LDTs. Dr. Rider added that we will continue operating with current testing unless we need to perform some sort of modification. Any new LDTs under emergency response testing fall under FDA Section 564 for immediate public health response. Dr. Rider stated that we hope any unmet needs testing will be driven by the CDC – however this is not something known or clarified at this time. With classic Cytogenetics and Cytology testing falling under the 1976 type LDT and FDA approved testing – we can proceed with this testing accordingly. However, we cannot initiate automation and have to stick with our current testing. She said the WSLH is hoping that our partnership with UW Health and SMPH would position the lab to continue

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developing testing technologies and provide up-to-date testing and consultation services. However, this is still in discussion and hasn't been confirmed.

- **UW Position Cap Update – Nancy McLean**

WSLH Human Resources Director Nancy McLean provided background on the UW-Madison Position Cap dating back to December 2023 when the UW System Board of Regents approved an agreement between the Universities of Wisconsin and state legislative leadership to move forward priorities of UW campuses. This agreement included a provision that required the Universities of Wisconsin to institute a system-wide cap on hiring a range of positions for three years beginning January 1, 2024 with some exemptions. Some of the SJD exemptions include – but are not limited to – positions that fall under Professors/Assistant Professors, Data Scientists, Instrumentation Technologists, and Research Analysts. She informed the board that Deans and division heads (including WSLH Director Dr. Jamie Schauer) will ultimately be responsible for managing their unit's individual caps and that FTE numbers cannot rise above individual caps. Submissions to recruit new employees will be denied if said department has reached their individual cap. Ms. McLean stated that only 150 out of 350 WSLH positions are under this cap, with most WSLH positions being exempt as they are funded 100% by grants and contracts. WSLH HR continues to work with hiring managers to meet the UW position cap requirements and fill our positions with the best qualified candidates. Hiring managers must now fill out a justification form if we want to advance a current position.

- **Key Public Health Notices – Camille Danielson**

WSLH Environmental Chemistry Program Director Camille Danielson provided an overview of a variety of key topics and public health notices dating from June 11th to August 30th of 2024. On June 21st, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announced that one of its partners, Disability Rights Wisconsin, had a security breach exposing the protected health information of 19,150 Wisconsin Medicaid members. The DHS and DRW continue their investigation into this incident and addressing any complications from this data security incident. On July 9th, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) published its 2023 Annual Drinking Water Report; estimating that more than 99% of the public water systems in Wisconsin met all water quality standards for contaminants. This impressive achievement was made possible by public water system owners and operators, the DNR and many partners alongside additional funding. Most of this additional funding went towards lead service line replacement and addressing emerging contaminants. By the end of 2023, more than 1,860 Wisconsin public water systems obtained PFAS monitoring test results according to the DNR's established drinking water standard for two PFAS chemicals. On July 11th, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources announced three new regional Secretary's Directors, effective July 14th. On July 18th, DNR announced they are assisting with the investigation

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of a manure spill that occurred in eastern Outagamie and western Brown County, which resulted in a fish kill in Dutchman Creek. While a definitive source has not yet been identified, it is concluded that there is no known threat to surrounding drinking water wells. However, it is recommended that people and pets avoid the surface waters of Dutchman Creek. On July 26th, DNR confirmed the detection of emerald ash borer (EAB) in Burnett County, which means the pest has now been confirmed in all 72 Wisconsin counties. EAB is expected to eventually kill more than 99% of Wisconsin's white, black and green ash – and concerned landowners should contact a forestry professional and consult the state's EAB Information Resource webpage to discover management options. Ms. Danielson shared that DHS' UpliftWI is going strong after its one year launch. UpliftWI is known as a warmline, a non-emergency program designed to defuse difficult situations before they become a crisis through conversations and connections between people with similar life experiences. The peer support for mental health and substance use received over 16,000 calls in the first year alone. On August 5th, DNR announced a new grant program that will provide municipal community public water systems with the funds to conduct community outreach efforts in support of ongoing or upcoming lead service line replacement projects. On August 15th, DHS announced the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line has expanded its text-based Live Vape Free program to include young adults ages 18-26. The program supports young Wisconsinites on the path to ending their use of nicotine and vape products and will provide people over age 18 with two weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy if medically eligible. On August 20th, DNR announced the release of the Wisconsin Water Explorer, a web-based tool that can help Wisconsin residents address concerns about the quality of water in their local lakes or rivers. On August 29th, DHS confirmed two Wisconsinites have died and another was hospitalized because of West Nile Virus illness. Additionally, WNV has been detected this year in mosquitoes, animals, and healthy blood donors whose blood screened positive for WNV.

- **Public Relations Report – Jan Klawitter**

WSLH Communications Manager Jan Klawitter provided highlights from the Public Relations Report. Dr. David Gay, Katie Blaydes, Dr. Jamie Schauer and Dr. Martin Shafer co-authored a journal article titled *Widespread Impacts to Precipitation of the East Palestine Ohio Train Accident*, which was published in *Environmental Research Letters*. This paper had hundreds of news stories written about it. WSLH Director of Forensic Toxicology Kayla Neuman was approved as a new member of the National Safety Council – Alcohol Drugs and Impairment Division in 2024. She attended the Consensus Meeting to discuss updating the recommendations for drugs in the Tier I and Tier II categories for DUID. In 2023, the WSLH embarked on a new program hosting 17 undergraduate summer interns as part of the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) Public Health Laboratory Internship Program. This summer the WSLH has 18 interns – and one of last year's interns was hired for a full-time job at the WSLH. The

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Wisconsin Wastewater Surveillance Program (WSLH, DHS UW-Milwaukee, and the Milwaukee Health Dept. laboratory) in collaboration with the Water Environment Federation (WEF) organized and ran a two-day conference on the UW-Madison campus that was well attended and well received. The tour covered case studies of effective wastewater surveillance, wastewater data communication, and ethical/equity considerations for wastewater surveillance. The WSLH Communicable Disease Division (CDD) again successfully competed for a 5-year Regional Laboratory grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to perform testing to identify and control the spread of antimicrobial resistant organisms in 6 Midwest states. Additionally, CDD successfully competed for a 5-year Bioinformatics Regional Resource (BRR) grant from the CDC to support 6 Midwest states in bioinformatics analyses of infectious diseases as well as successfully competed for a 5-year Bioinformatics Training Lead grant. Noel Stanton, Brandon Shelton and Meshel Lange with the WSLH Chemical Emergency Response unit are co-authors with UWSMPH and DHS collaborators on *Determinants of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PHFAS) exposure among Wisconsin Residents* published in *Environmental Research*. UW Assistant Professor Heather Barkholtz co-hosted a symposium along with Dr. Emanuele Alves of Virginia Commonwealth University titled *Advances in Forensic Toxicology* at the American Chemical Society (ACS) fall meeting. They hosted speakers from around the country and offered the first session focused on forensic toxicology to occur within the ACS. It was well attended and they were asked to consider hosting another symposium next year.

- **National Biomonitoring Project – Meshel Lange**

WSLH Chemical Emergency Response Manager Meshel Lange discussed the three-year CDC National Biomonitoring Cooperative Agreement received by Wisconsin. Wisconsin is one of only six states to receive the competitive grant. This cooperative agreement focuses on exposure assessments for at-risk populations and is a collaborative effort between DHS, SHOW, and WSLH.

Adjourning

At 2:57 PM, Chair Greg Pils entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion to adjourn was offered and seconded by Dr. Chris Strang, and all who were present approved. Chair Greg Pils adjourned the meeting at 2:58 PM.