

California Public Health/Prevention Medical Leadership Forum
24th Conference Call Meeting
Tuesday, October 8, 2019, 8:15-9:30 am PT
MINUTES

Call in: (515) 604-9094 Access Code: 457-029-043#

1. Roll Call by Institution, with Introductions of Newcomers

CAPM: Mark Horton (Forum Chair), Ron Hattis (Forum Secretary), Susan Bradshaw, Don Lyman.

DHCS: Karen Mark

CMA: Samantha Pellon

OPSC: Wadsworth Murad

Western Univ. SOM: Maryam Othman

Kaiser Permanente SOM: Rose Rodriguez

UC Davis SOM: Diana Cassady

UCLA SPH: Jonathan Fielding

Guest speakers: Franklin Pratt (LA DPH), Robert Schechter (CDPH)

2. Minutes of July 9, 2019 Meeting (Attached to cover email)

Approved without additions or corrections.

3. California Department of Public Health: No representative today.

The new director and state health officer is Sonya Angell, MD.

4. Department of Health Care Services: Karen Mark

The director has resigned. Acting director is Richard Figueroa. A Quality Strategy will be released for public comment in November. As of July 1, extra payment will be allowed for trauma screening, Medi-Cal children will be covered for this service annually, adults once in lifetime. No special indications will be required.

5. Today's Special Topic - Immunizations: The Resistance Epidemic and How to Address It

Franklin Pratt, MD, MPHTM, Medical Director, Vaccine Preventable Disease Control Program, Los Angeles Dept. of Public Health

Robert Schechter, MD, Section Chief, Immunization Branch, California Department of Public Health

- a. What has led to the global increase vaccine skepticism in recent years; is there any evidence that it could be related to Russian propaganda to stir up discord?

Dr. Schechter said that the current era of vaccine skepticism goes back at least to the 1980s, starting with DPT vaccine suspected side effects, and the late 1990s, when a hypothesis was publicized that MMR might be related to autism and developmental disorders was promoted by Dr. Andrew Wakefield in London, who eventually lost his license. A paper he published, which was later retracted by the Lancet, was widely publicized. Over the past 20 years, the rise of the Internet has allowed rapid dissemination of vaccine misinformation. Recent reports have described how Russian bots may be contributing to the spread of misinformation. There are lower immunization rates related to mistrust of institutions in countries formerly belonging to the Soviet

Union, such as Ukraine, where a single well-publicized death of a single adolescent, one day after MMR vaccine, had increased concerns. Widespread measles in the Ukraine triggered outbreaks amongst Orthodox Jewish populations in Israel, which in turn has led to the recent outbreak in New York, the largest in the US in 25 years. Rabbis and other members of Orthodox communities were solicited to help convince the residents that vaccines were safe. Concerns about vaccine safety generally affect a small proportion of the population, but are sufficient to threaten herd immunity. Some local communities and schools have a higher proportion of unimmunized children, permitting transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases. Affected communities have included Waldorf Curriculum schools (in whose philosophy, originating in Switzerland and Germany childhood diseases are thought to be a natural part of development), Amish communities in Pennsylvania a few years ago, and Netherlands Reformed Church in British Columbia, in addition to the Orthodox Jewish community in New York already mentioned. Single events can be powerful disincentives. Suspicion of vaccines in the Philippines increased after reports of safety concerns in trials of a recently-introduced dengue vaccine. Because of high international travel, vaccine resistance in any country can have effects in the U.S. All 17 measles cases in Los Angeles this year began with an international introduction, so more attention is being devoted to travelers as a high risk population.

All states have similar school entry requirements, but laws differ regarding how exemptions from school entry requirements can be obtained also affect differences from place to place. This has been an area of political controversy in California.

b. Other impacts of this problem on outbreaks and disease incidence in recent years:

Dr. Pratt said that in addition to measles, there has been a pertussis resurgence, likely multi-factorial: due partly to resistance to vaccines, partly to limitations in the effectiveness of available vaccines, partly to lack of public concern about pertussis, due to past successes, and possibly partly due to mutation of the organism. This year, pertussis is affecting L.A. County.

c. Suggestions on how to talk to concerned parents or patients?

Dr. Schechter emphasized that brief communication with patients and parents, using a non-judgmental, empathic approach, meeting them wherever they are on the spectrum of skepticism and accurate information, can be very powerful. The ability to persuade parents may depend on whether their decisions are based on a rational assessment of risks and benefits; if they are, they may be receptive to facts from a provider.

Medical education should put more emphasis on communication skills, not just on passing boards. Dr. Mark Sawyer at the Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego (affiliated with UCSD) has developed modules for primary care residents, including information on vaccines and on communicating the information. There are Web sites with information to assist clinicians.

d. Any public health education initiatives campaigns directed at the problem?

Dr. Pratt said there are state and local educational initiatives for clinicians and for working with the public. More could be done at the federal level, as there does not currently seem to be any major federal initiative to communicate the safety and benefits of vaccines, similar to what was done for tobacco. Ron Hattis expressed surprise that CDC is not more heavily involved. Mark Horton suggested having ASTHO asking the Surgeon General to develop a report on the subject.

6. General Discussion on Immunization Issues

Samantha Pellon was asked whether Physicians for a Healthy California (the former CMA Foundation) is doing anything on the immunization issue, and she said no, it was more focused on administering funds derived from the tobacco tax. She did report that the California Immunization Coalition has been active, and that a committee meeting is scheduled this week of the CAIR Immunization Registry. Mark Horton and Jonathan Fielding thanked Rob Schechter and Frank Pratt.

7. Selected Public Health Related Legislation that Passed (and Signed or Signature Pending) this Session

Text and history of all bills available at www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov

- **SB 276 (Pan), restricting immunization exemptions (including Governor's amendments) (signed)** http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB276
This bill was very controversial. Many people came to the Capitol to testify including a great number in opposition, in spite of strong public support according to polls. Jonathan Fielding expressed appreciation to the Governor for signing the bill, and Ron Hattis extended that commendation to the Legislature. Don Lyman announced CAPM support at a hearing attended by so many opponents that in a rare measure, the balcony was opened up, and noted that bill author and committee Chair Dr. Richard Pan faced the microphone as people came to announce their opposition. Dr. Lyman said he was proud of Dr. Pan.
- AB 61 (Ting), Allowing more people to file a gun violence restraining order (sign. pending)
- AB 521 (Berman), Firearm safety training for physicians (sign. pending)
- AB 1669 (Bonta), Controls on sale of ammunition at gun shows (sign. pending)
- SB 24 (Leyva), Requires UC and Cal State Student Health to provide medication abortions on site (sign. pending)
- SB 159 (Wiener), pharmacists may dispense HIV prophylaxis for 2 months (sign. pending)

8. California Medical Association: Samantha Pellon

CMA is part of the California Immunization Coalition.

The key policy issues on the agenda of the upcoming House of Delegates, later this month, include how to address homelessness (including treatment of medical care to homeless persons, and screening for housing instability), cannabis issues including a review of the 2011 policy (the Council on Science and Public Health headed by Don Lyman is to submit a report for review), augmented (artificial) intelligence, and “trauma-informed care.”

9. Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of California

Dr. Murad was participating as a substitute for the first time, but will become President in February 2020. Ron Hattis encouraged him to become familiar with Dr. David Canton, Chair of the new Public Health Committee. Immediate past-president Richard Riemer encouraged the formation of that committee and remains a booster. Dr. Murad likened the immunization issue to the earlier one requiring seatbelts. Dr. Murad noted that patients do not like being told what to do. Use of social media and involvement of younger, upcoming medical leaders, who have not lived through the days of terrible effects of vaccine-preventable diseases, have been suggested. There has been a recent resurgence of smoking among young people. OPSC will be represented this year at the CMA House of Delegates.

10. Health Officers Association of California (HOAC)

Kat DeBurgh was not present. Jonathan Fielding reported that he spoke on climate change at HOAC's educational session at its recent 50th anniversary meeting. He offered to share his 91-slide presentation with the Forum.

11. Other Updates from Schools of Medicine: No Reports

12. Updates from Schools of Public Health: No Reports

13. Next Meeting: A Tuesday Morning in December 2019, with the 17th Suggested, Agenda Ideas: The Vaping Epidemic and Vaping Lung Disease, with Presenters to be Identified; and Climate Change as a Continuing Public Health Emergency, with Jonathan Fielding as the Presenter

Don said that the steam emitted by vaping products is actually a dangerous emulsion. Jonathan Fielding said that restrictions can only be applied to legal producers like Juul, and could result in an increase in more dangerous black market products.

Submitted by Ronald Hattis, Secretary

Approved without additions or corrections on 12/17/19