



Nicholas A. Toumpas
Commissioner

José Thier Montero
Director

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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Arboviral Illness Task Force Meeting
Minutes
November 20, 2008

Arboviral Illness Task Force (AITF) Members in attendance (in person if not stated): Pamela Schnepfer, Tom Durkis, Christine Adamski, Katherine Rannie, Bob Wolff (for Stephen Crawford), Alan Eaton (via phone), Kyle Lombard, Fengxiang Gao, and Jason Stull.

Minutes from the October 30, 2008 meeting were reviewed. Jason Stull and Alan Eaton suggested minor edits. Task Force members approved the revised minutes. Lombard and Wolff abstained.

Jason Stull announced that an Arboviral Year-End meeting will be held on December 17, 2008 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the auditorium at 29 Hazen Drive, Concord. Surveillance, control, and response activities for 2008 will be discussed. The draft 2009 State Arboviral Illness Surveillance, Prevention and Response Plan will be distributed and discussed.

Jim Oehler suggested (via email correspondence) the following questions should be added as topics for the AITF to address (previously identified by the Arboviral Task Force Science Subcommittee):

- What is the level of risk reduction attained from the various control and prevention strategies (e.g., adulticiding, larviciding, personal protection, outreach and education, wetland management, etc.)?
- What level of disease risk is an appropriate goal for which to strive and what criteria should be used to determine that goal?
- How much existing mosquito breeding habitat is being treated and how much would need to be treated to reduce the risk of arboviruses? Are there locations (e.g., hard-to-reach swamps) in which treatment could dramatically reduce disease risk?
- What is the effectiveness of larviciding and adulticiding in reducing mosquito populations given New Hampshire's forested condition, dispersed human population, fragmented land ownership patterns, challenging mosquito population dynamics, and habitat ecology?

Members then discussed the Draft "State of New Hampshire Emergency Aerial Response Plan to Reduce the Risk of Mosquito-borne Disease." NH agencies and partners began work on this document in 2007. As significant improvements have been made to the document in the past 6 months, AITF members were asked to review and discuss the plan. The overall concept is to put in writing the process for determining the when, where, and how of emergency large-scale aerial pesticide application should it be deemed necessary, in order to maximize beneficial public health effects and minimize deleterious human, animal, and environmental effects.

The following items were discussed in detail:

- Plan name. A suggestion was made to incorporate the words “Aerial Pesticide Application” into the title.
- Consider adding additional benefits of aerial spraying, such as an awareness opportunity for the public to practice personal prevention measures.
- Review and incorporate evidence from studies evaluating the efficacy of aerial spraying over habitats similar to New Hampshire’s (e.g., dense canopy cover).
- Determine which group should review and make independent recommendations regarding the appropriateness, timing, and location of aerial spraying. AITF members discussed if this group should be the AITF, Mosquito Control Committee, or another group. Given recent legislative changes to the membership and tasks of the Mosquito Control Committee, NH DHHS will consult with legislative advisors and will bring comments back to AITF for further discussion.
- Consider edits to clarify the public health concerns that are caused by an increase in mosquito populations due to a natural disaster.
- Consider edits to clarify that the special permit process for pesticide application allows for the design of spray programs on a case-by-case basis.
- Adjust language surrounding the requirement of dual certification for aerial applicators to reflect future changes currently under review.
- Jason Stull will work with NH DES on wording of the human water supply section to clarify no spray zones and address concerns of water supply protection.
- There was a concern of the ability to adequately assess risk based on current town-based mosquito surveillance protocols. Although this remains a concern, these data still may be helpful. Limiting evaluation to long-term (e.g., multiple-year) mosquito trapping locations may further assist in evaluating this measure.
- There was a concern regarding the possibility for various State agencies to determine aerial spraying exclusion zones, while not allowing the same opportunity to individual landowners. Normal permit regulations require prior notification of spray dates so that property owners may request their properties not be sprayed. When a state of emergency has been declared, the Governor may waive this requirement. This area will be clarified in the plan.
- NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) and Fish and Game work collaboratively to maintain a statewide database of rare plant and animal occurrences and exemplary natural communities. This database is housed and maintained by the Natural Heritage Bureau within DRED. There is a concern that this database may not be appropriate for identifying no-spray zones for aerial application given the large area involved in such applications. It was suggested that a member of the Natural Heritage Bureau attend an upcoming AITF meeting to further discuss this issue.

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- Bob Wolff offered to provide suggested language for several areas of the draft addressed above.
- Additional minor edits were suggested and will be incorporated into the draft plan by Jason Stull.

Minutes submitted by:
Dianne Donovan
Arboviral Coordinator
Bureau of Disease Control & Health Statistics
Division of Public Health Services



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Arboviral Illness Task Force Meeting
Minutes
October 30, 2008

Task Force Members in attendance (in person if not stated): Jim Oehler, Pamela Schnepfer, Dennise Horrocks (via phone), Brian Lockard, Tom Durkis, Christine Adamski, Katherine Rannie (via phone), Richard French, Fengxiang Gao, David Rousseau (for Stephen Crawford), Alan Eaton, Jason Stull

Dr. Jason Stull opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. Dr. Stull gave a brief background of the Arboviral Illness Task Force (AITF). The AITF was established in 2000 to provide expertise in helping to minimize the risk to NH citizens of being exposed to and infected with mosquito-borne diseases [Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile virus (WNV)]. Through legislation passed in 2008, the AITF became recognized in law, with members clearly defined. He passed out a copy of the law. Dr. Stull mentioned that a quorum (at least 7 AITF members physically present) must be met at a meeting for voting to occur; if a quorum is met, all members (both physically present and those via phone) may vote. Outcome will be decided by majority vote. Dr. Stull mentioned that per changes in recent legislation, any meetings of advisory committees established by the general court (such as this Task Force) are considered public meetings under RSA 91-A:1:2. As such, meetings of the AITF will be posted and available to the public. Minutes of these meetings will be posted to the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services' (NH DHHS) website.

Dr. Stull next discussed the goals of the AITF, as defined in Legislation and highlighted by the Arboviral Task Force, and the roles and responsibilities of the group. Attendees identified the following items:

- ❖ Better understanding of NH-specific arboviral ecology, disease surveillance, mosquito vectors, and control/prevention strategies
- ❖ The role and efficacy of aerial spraying to control mosquitoes and reduce disease risk given NH's well-forested habitats
- ❖ Expert, diverse body to make recommendations as indicated for arboviral surveillance and control and State plan development/approval
- ❖ Educational efforts, especially to children
- ❖ Importance of interagency communications
- ❖ Prompt notification of local arboviral findings
- ❖ Mechanism for regular communication and sharing
- ❖ Exploring the role of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in improving our understanding of mosquito ecology and its use in local surveillance and control
- ❖ Investigating alternative sources of funding

Ms. Dianne Donovan (Arboviral Coordinator, NH DHHS) gave the group an update on the Arboviral activity for the year. Ms. Donovan stated that the number of NH municipalities funding mosquito surveillance and

control measures for 2008 was similar to 2007, with good surveillance coverage over southeastern NH. Specimen testing for 2008 by the NH Public Health Laboratories (PHL) was also similar to recent years, with 188 human patients tested, 7 animals, and 10,020 groups of mosquitoes. Eight groups of mosquitoes were positive for EEE, one was positive for WNV, and an emu was positive for EEE. No NH residents were diagnosed with EEE or WNV this year. The group was updated on the published arboviral findings from our neighboring states.

Ms. Donovan reported that this year the NH PHL increased the maximum size for mosquito testing from 25 mosquitoes per tube to 50. The change, instituted after discussions with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), appears to have been effective at reducing over-all costs, yet maintaining a sensitive test for detecting arboviral disease in mosquitoes.

Dr. Stull briefly reviewed recent arboviral reports and research. He summarized a visit by Dr. John-Paul Mutebi, an entomologist from the CDC, aimed at reviewing NH's arboviral program and surveillance strategies. A copy of the report was distributed to attendees. Dr. Stull mentioned that he sent Dr. Mutebi a summary of this year's mosquito season and he was optimistic of the results.

The group discussed regional risk estimates and how to better communicate our information to the public. Dr. Stull handed out Risk Maps for the state that are currently being posted on the NH DHHS website. The group discussed the use of the maps, how to improve, and utility in subdividing a municipality into multiple risk categories. Dr. Stull distributed a copy of the recently introduced arboviral results page available on the NH DHHS website. Despite these approaches, the group agreed that communication with the municipalities remains a challenge. It was suggested that a year-end summary report might be helpful to local Health Officers and elected officials in communicating the importance of funding arboviral disease initiatives, however such a summary should be provided by the end of October at the latest. It was also suggested that for all public communications the phrase, "mosquito pool" should be replaced by the phrase, "group (or collection) of mosquitoes," as the former creates great confusion for the public. The group also discussed surveillance, what parts of the State were under heavier surveillance, and how this affects our ability to detect increased disease activity. Dr. Stull distributed copies of a recently introduced brochure, "Stop Mosquito and Tick Bites." To-date, comments on the brochure have been positive. NH DHHS is also working with CDC on a brochure surrounding tick and mosquito-borne disease aimed at children. The discussion also included education issues, including working with schools, recreation centers, day camps and sports facilities. There was discussion of ways to educate the coaches and athletic directors about mosquito bite prevention and ensure such efforts translated into improved disease prevention practices.

The group opted to discuss the draft aerial spray plan at their next meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Kathie Capron
Administrative Secretary
Bureau of Disease Control & Health Statistics
Division of Public Health Services