

National Public Health Improvement Initiative (NPHII)
Call with Grantees – December 15, 2010
2:00-3:00pm ET

Summary of Call Remarks

Speakers: **Judith Monroe, MD**, *Deputy Director, CDC, Director, Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Health (OSTLTS)*; **Dan Baden, MD**, *Director, Division of Public Health Capacity Development*; **Craig Thomas, PhD**, *Director, Division of Public Health Performance Improvement*

Dr. Monroe: Hello, everyone, I hope everybody's doing well today. Thank you for joining us today to discuss the National Public Health Improvement initiative: *Strengthening Public Health Infrastructure for Improved Health Outcomes*. We have four goals for today's call. This is the first call that we've convened with all our grantees, so we first want to talk about one of the goals of this call, which is to make sure we're all on the same page. We also want to introduce our OSTLTS teams and the implementation steps, and go over the upcoming in-person meeting that's being planned for March 2011. Then we want to open up and hear what's been working for you, what could work better; we want to hear your questions and concerns.

So let me start out by congratulating all of you. We have 76 awardees on this cooperative agreement. This includes 49 states, 8 tribal partners, 10 urban jurisdictions, 5 territories, and 3 affiliated jurisdictions who received Component 1 funding. 19 awardees also received funding for Component 2.

As all of you know, we're in very challenging times right now in our country and public health faces challenging times. We've got the economic challenges and then we have the many management issues and certainly a lot of health issues that we need to deal with. So the goal of this initiative is to strengthen the nation's public health infrastructure in a very key way to systematically increase performance management capacity so that public health goals are effectively and efficiently met. So this is really a network. Those of you that have joined this call have all joined a network now to try to do that.

I wanted to take a moment to describe our new office that we have stood up. Within CDC I've been talking a lot about, as folks ask what we're doing, our primary focus, which is the field and our touch point, and the primary audience is the health officers. The health officers are at that system level. They're at the top of the health departments meaning that they are there to help all the programs rise and they have to think in terms of systems. So that's really the goal that we all work together to think more in terms of a system.

In public health, a strong infrastructure provides the capacity to prepare for, prevent, and respond to both the acute and chronic threats of our nation's health. As all of you know, the nation's public health infrastructure is really the foundation needed to deliver the ten essential public health services and the critical programs to all of our communities. In this era of health reform, the delivery of public health services and systems really needs to be transformed. We know that. We know we have a lot of challenges that we're facing. As individuals gain access to health plans through health reform we have a lot of transformation then to support behavioral and clinical changes to improve health. CDC will contribute to this transformation through its support to our partners at the state, tribal, local and territorial health departments and really with a focus to build and reengineer or integrate public health systems for continuous performance management, quality improvement, and accreditation readiness. We will work with subject matters within OSTLTS and across the CDC to provide technical assistance to you. So for example, the OSTLTS Public Health Law Program can provide technical assistance on law and policy topics related to priority public health issues. Our public health law program is really focusing on technical assistance now. Grantees with specific initiatives that use laws or regulations to improve public health outcomes can call upon Mr. Don Benken and his team in our Public Health Law Program to help.

At this point I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce our two division directors in OSTLTS. Dr. Dan Baden is Director of the Division for Public Health Capacity Development. Dr. Craig Thomas is director of the Division of Public Health Performance Improvement. Dan and Craig are going to speak to you about their staff and the work that they do and will be doing to support you in this initiative. So let me turn over to Dan Baden.

Dr. Baden:

Thank you, Judy. Hello. I'm very pleased to have this chance to talk to you as well, to tell you a little bit about our two teams from my division who provide project management and technical assistance.

By now, hopefully you've all had the chance to speak with your Senior Public Health Advisors, who were formerly referred to as SPRs. Our Senior Public Health Advisors have significant experience managing programs and initiatives and have an intimate knowledge of CDC activities as well as functions of the state, tribal, local and territorial health departments. The Senior Public Health Advisors will be your points of contact for strategic and operational issues. I'm delighted to tell you that we anticipate having a few more staff on board by January to help meet your technical assistance needs. Specifically, we'll be bringing on five project officers who will work with your Senior Public Health Advisors to provide you support. These are seasoned project officers and we're excited to have them on board.

The Technical Assistance Team, led by Miss Bobbie Erlwein has been working to develop technical assistance plans for Component 2 activities. The Senior Public Health Advisors will soon be reaching out to gather technical assistance needs for Component 1 and will be working with each of you to gather and understand your action plans for accomplishing your goals. Shortly after the holidays we'll begin developing guidance on the interim reporting requirements. We're also building our website to link directly to your sites and to provide descriptions of your projects. Over time, we hope to make that a valuable reference for grantees and a window to our own program. Remember, the Senior Public Health Advisors are your main point of contact for this program, so please feel free to reach out to them if we can assist you in any way.

In addition to CDC technical assistance, we have provided supplemental funding to five national public health partners to support this initiative. Our Partnership Supports Managers, under the leadership of Mr. Sam Taveras, work directly with the national partners in support of grantee training and technical assistance needs. These partners include: The Public Health Foundation, who will support performance management systems and provide technical assistance on performance management and quality improvement; APHA, who will provide technical assistance related to public health and health reform law and policy; ASTHO and NACCHO, who will work together on providing technical assistance relating to health information technology and systems development or redevelopment; and the National Network of Public Health Institutes, who will focus on providing technical assistance on evaluation and conducting an evaluation of the process and immediate outcomes of the National Public Health Improvement Initiative. The partners are proactively developing materials and tools and will also conduct group trainings within their category of work. These partners are working as a cohesive network to assure high-quality, timely, and coordinated technical assistance. They are poised to respond to your technical assistance requests via the Senior Public Health Advisors.

Now let me ask Dr. Thomas to introduce his teams.

Dr. Thomas: Thank you, Dan. Good afternoon or good morning to those on the call, depending on where you're residing. By way of introduction there are two major work efforts in our division that will be directed towards support of the initiative. The first is the Performance Improvements Managers' Network. The second is a focus on the evaluation of the overall initiative and I'll speak to each of those in just a moment. These teams will work very closely with Senior Public Health Advisors and the Partner Support Managers to ensure that our support of you, as being a grantee and the technical assistance is seamless and effective.

To start with, I'd like to discuss briefly the Performance Improvement Managers' Network. As Dr. Monroe indicated, this is an exciting opportunity for all of us to be engaged in a systematic way to integrate and improve performance management. All Component 1 awardees are required to designate a Performance Improvement Manager for this cooperative agreement who will participate in a national Performance Improvement Managers' Network. The intention of this network is to create a community and forum for connecting the Performance Improvement Managers to foster collaboration and communication, facilitate mutual support, and articulate and enhance quality improvement and performance management practices within state, tribal, local and territorial health departments. The network will also serve as a training forum to create a stronger understanding of topics such as performance management and quality improvement, national accreditation, best practices such as the community guide, and other topics identified by the network itself.

We anticipate initiating monthly calls. In-person meetings will also be included and some networking and training opportunities for the Performance Improvement Managers. This team will be coordinated by Miss Liza Corso, and the Agency and Systems Improvement Branch within my division. This Branch is also involved in leading CDC partnership efforts and supporting national accreditation, quality improvement, use of performance standards, state and community health improvement planning and other similar related topics, so they are well-positioned to support this new effort and the new network.

As I mentioned, we are very excited about this opportunity. For the first time ever, we will have a nationwide group of public health professionals comprised of state, tribal, local and territorial health departments focused on performance management and quality improvement practices. We're really looking forward to this network and everything that we can learn from each other. At this time, the Senior Public Health Advisors are asking each of you for the name and contact information of the Performance Improvement Manager, or if that person has yet to be brought on board, a designee that can participate in the interim. So this is a specific ask we have of you to please provide this information to your Senior Public Health Advisor, if you haven't done so already. We are eager to use this information to initiate communications among the participants of this network.

A second major, important activity is the conduct and evaluation of the National Public Health Improvement Initiative. This team is led by Dr. Timothy Van Wave. Work in this area has already begun with support and close collaboration with the National Network of Public Health Institutes as well as CDC scientists that specialize in program evaluation and leadership of

the various elements of the National Public Health Improvement Initiative program areas, some of those that have already been introduced during today's call. The entire evaluation effort will be formed and conducted through NNPHI and its contracts with input from the CDC Evaluation Team and your input as well. Evaluation will be organized around four categories of work described in the original funding opportunity announcement and the Performance Improvement Managers' Network. Evaluators will work with you and your Senior Public Health Advisors to collect the information and data in support of evaluating this initiative as it moves forward. There'll be much more information on the evaluation as we move forward, so stay tuned there. I'm going to now turn this back to Dr. Monroe to discuss the next steps and certainly open up the mics to hear from you.

Dr. Monroe: Thanks very much. We certainly have a challenging and exciting journey ahead of us. As I mentioned before, we will be convening our first in-person grantee meeting here in Atlanta in March of 2011. In addition to serving as an opportunity to convene the Performance Improvement Managers in person, we hope that that it will provide an opportunity where CDC subject matter experts and our partners can provide training and technical assistance to the grantees. We need your input on what should be included in this meeting and we'll certainly be reaching out to you in the next few weeks to get that input.

This has been helpful for us on our end and we knew that we needed to get with the network as quickly as we could. So really we appreciate everyone's time today. If you have any feedback, it's ostltsfeedback@cdc.gov. So you can send your comments and suggestions into that mailbox. You're going to think of things as you get into the work, and this is going to be dynamic work, there's no question about that. So a bit of a short timeline, we recognize that for having some impact, but hopefully will position us well for well into the future.