NPHII Close-Out Discussion

CDC Performance Improvement Managers Network Call

February 27, 2014

Today’s Speakers:  • Harald Pietz, CDC/OSTLTS
                   • Bobbie Erlwein, CDC/OSTLTS
                   • Dr. Judy Monroe, Director, CDC/OSTLTS
                   • Shicann Phillips, PGO

Moderator:          Melody Parker, CDC/OSTLTS

Troy (Operator): Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants are in the listen-only mode until the question and answer session of today’s call. At that time, all lines will be made live and interactive. Also, this call is also being recorded. If you have any objections please disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the meeting over to Ms. Melody Parker. You may begin.

Melody Parker: Thank you, Troy. Greetings and salutations everyone, and welcome to the February Performance Improvement Managers Network webinar. I am Melody Parker with the Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support (OSTLTS), and I am joined here today by many of my colleagues from OSTLTS. As you know, the PIM Network is a community that supports all National Public Health Improvement Initiative (NPHII) performance improvement managers (PIMs) in learning from each other as well as from partners and other experts. These calls will continue to give members of the Network a venue to learn about each other and share information about resources and training opportunities that are related to our work in quality improvement and performance management. Our discussion today is going to focus on closing out of the National Public Health Improvement Initiative. I know that some of you may be joining us for the first time today, so let’s review technology features for today’s call.

On the LiveMeeting site today, you can see other sites participating in the call by looking at the Attendees under the link at the top left of your screen. We’ll have two ways to facilitate discussion today. First, we strongly encourage you to type in your questions and comments as we go at any time using the Q&A box, which you can find by clicking Q&A in the toolbar at the top of your screen. Second, we will open the lines for discussion after our speakers have finished. Please mute your phone now either by using your phone’s mute button or by pressing star-6 on your phone’s keypad. Please note that we will announce the identity of those submitting questions via LiveMeeting. If you prefer to remain anonymous to the group in posing your question, please type “Anon” either before or after your question. Today’s call will last approximately one hour. The call is being recorded and it will be archived on the OSTLTS PIM Network web page.
We’ll have two polls today at the end of the call. Now these webinars are intended to be for and by you, and we’d like you to tell us how you’d like to see them continue now by clicking on a selection at the end of our time together today. But right now I’d like you to go ahead and have a look at the poll and consider these options as we have our discussion today. The first option is to see topics that are focused solely on sustainability like stories or examples from network members or brainstorming sessions. The second option is to continue with standard topics that feature the work and the products of PIM Network members and CBA partners. Would you like to see a mix of both? Is there something else that we haven’t thought of, and if so, please send your ideas to us at PIMNetwork@CDC.gov. For our agenda today we will start with the welcome and introductions. Those will be followed by OSTLTS leadership remarks, then the open discussion and the Q&A. After that will be the wrap-up, and I’d like you to look at those polls again for us then.

The first speaker that we have will be Dr. Judy Monroe, who is the director of the Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support. She will be followed by Shicann Phillips from the Procurement and Grants Office (PGO). Dr. Monroe, will you please take it away?

**Judy Monroe:** Thank you Melody, very much. And thanks all of you who are on the call for joining today. The last time I had an opportunity to join a call with you, I didn’t have a lot of support around me as I do today because we were on furlough back in October, so good to be with all of you. Let me just start out by saying to all of you how incredibly proud I am of the work that you all have done up to this point in time. I think the strides that you’ve made have already paid dividends. I hear about those dividends from your state health officers and in various meetings that I go to. I will tell you that NPHII has made a big mark, and so I’m just really proud of all that y’all have done. As you all know, change is upon us, and change is hard. And we know that there are some very real concerns out there. One of the things that we do want to do is finish strong with NPHII. We know that there’s a lot to figure out in terms of what this means for our staff and us as individuals, and as all of you are thinking about this I know you have concerns. What does this really mean with the changes with NPHII? So, we’re going to be working through those very real issues with you. We also need to plan for how to sustain this work wherever possible because we do think this is really important work.

Having said that, I’m really anxious to hear your all’s thoughts and questions, so let me end my opening remarks by mentioning some of the things that we’re working on to sustain the successes of NPHII. Project officers will be continuing to support you with technical assistance and input as we move forward. And additionally we’re doing several things: we’re developing individual reports on the work that you’ve done that can help you frame sustainability discussions in your jurisdictions; we’re exploring ways to sustain the PIM Network functionality; we’re exploring the feasibility and interest in the concept of a PIM association; we’re working internally to build support for continuing these efforts and accreditation readiness work via other new funding opportunities across CDC; and we’re telling the story of what worked and what was accomplished so that the importance and value of the program is very clear to those stakeholders that need to know about this work. We will be engaging with you on these topics and other topics as we really move forward to finish strong, and I do want to emphasize that
point. I think it’s just incredibly important for where NPHII is that we all stay focused. Despite the challenges we need to stay focused and really go out with a very strong finish. Let me end my comments there. Dr. Thomas, did you have anything? No?

**Bobbie Erlwein:** At this point maybe we could throw it to Shicann Phillips. She’s our grants management officer. Shi, did you have some remarks?

**Shicann Phillips:** Yes, thanks. Good evening, everyone. My name is Shicann Phillips, and many of you probably have hear from me before via email or phone call. And I just want to thank you all for taking the time out to speak with us this afternoon in regards to the final year of NPHII funds coming to a close. And mid-March, maybe the first week to mid-March, you all will receive a formal email from me. It will go to the PI as well as the business official, and it will be a formal notice regarding your year five funding from our end. It’ll be signed by the Office of General Services, the acting director, Terrence Perry, and it will include some instructions as well as some links that will assist you in requesting a no-cost extension. In regards to the no-cost extension, please be advised you must have unobligated funds and unfinished activities to accommodate those funds. And you’ll be able to request that extension. It’ll be from 30 days to one year that you can request. All of this will be detailed in the letter. Reports will be due 90 days past our close-out, and in your revised notice of award with the no-cost extension, you all will have close-out information in the letter that will be detailed for you, and you’ll also receive a formal letter from me. PGO is also planning some additional webinars to help answer your questions and concerns in greater detail than today. That’s it for me.

**Judy Monroe:** So, I think at that point, we’re done with our formal comments, and, Melody, if it’s okay with you we could open it up.

**Troy:** Okay, I’ll be opening all the lines up for question and answer. All lines are open and interactive. Yes, all lines are live and interactive.

**Laura Holmes:** Hi. This is Laura Holmes from New Hampshire. I have a question.

**Unknown:** Please go ahead with your question.

**Laura Holmes:** I have a quality improvement (QI) training contract in the very early stages, and I was wondering if I can extend the date I was originally having the contract end, 9/29, the end of the year four date. Can I extend the date through this no-cost extension of this contract?

**Harald Pietz:** Shicann, I think a basic question for you?

**Shicann Phillips:** As long as there’s nothing new and it was already approved in year four, yes.

**Gloria Holmes:** Okay, great. Thanks.

**Harald Pietz:** Other questions?
Jeremy VanderKnyff: Hey, this is Jeremy VanderKnyff from South Carolina. I appreciate you guys giving the comments. I just wanted to confirm that for year four activities we should still go ahead and redirect and apply for carry forward from year three funds as we would under normal circumstances?

Shicann Phillips: Yes, that’s correct.

Jeremy VanderKnyff: Okay, thank you.

Nancy Birkhimer: This is Nancy Birkhimer from Maine. I have a somewhat related question. We had been in the process of planning some activities that were not currently in our year four plan but we were planning on doing in year four. Are we still expected and/or allowed to add activities to the year four plan at this point?

Bobbie Erlwein: This is Bobbie, and we need to talk with you specifically about what you have in mind. It’s not unusual to tweak a work plan to modify something that was already kind of in the works like you said. Probably what you’re thinking about is going to be something we can accommodate, but I really think we should talk through that with the project officer (PO) so that we can deal with the specifics of it. We can’t start new work, all right? We can’t start brand new work, but we can certainly tweak the work that we have in the works, so to speak, so that we can get to a better state of completion on something. We could wipe out one QI activity for a different one. We do that sort of thing all the time, but we wouldn’t want to launch a brand new initiative at this stage of the game. So let us talk. I would say reach out to your PO and let’s talk through the details and make sure that it makes sense with where we are in the program. Does that sound reasonable? Am I making sense, Nancy?

Nancy Birkhimer: Yeah. Can you hear me?

Bobbie Erlwein: Yes, I hear you.

Nancy Birkhimer: Okay, sorry. Yeah, that makes sense.

Bobbie Erlwein: Perfect. Thank you.

Robert Hines: Hi, this is Robert Hines in Houston. I have a two-part question. The first question is beyond the obligated funds from year three, as we apply to carry those forward will that be added to any additional unobligated funds from year four in the no-cost extension. And, if so, the second part of that question is when we are renegotiating indirect cost rates, is it possible to lower that agreement so that we have a little bit more money available to spend?

Shicann Phillips: I’ll answer your second question first. Hey, Robert.

Robert Hines: Hey, Shi.

Shicann Phillips: To that question, yes. You can lower your indirect rate agreement, you just can’t go above. Say if it’s 22% and you all just want to utilize 10%, you have that right. You just can’t go over that 22%. You can do that. In reference to the unobligated funds, whatever you have left, you’re going to
have to submit in your request a Federal Financial Report (FFR), so if you have any funds that’s left over that you asked for in year three and you still have it left over in year four going into, technically not year five but the no-cost extension, yes, you can utilize those funds. You can use funds from year one, two, three, and four. Whatever you all have left over it can be utilized as long as you have activities to go along with that.

**Robert Hines:** Thank you.

**Joan Ascheim:** This is Joan Ascheim from Connecticut. I understand that we can move the funds into salaries, and my question is can we do an interim FFR before the end of the year so that we can keep staff on longer?

**Shicann Phillips:** Now, for year four we’ve already approved those funds for salaries. Any additional funds that you have left you can use it going into the no-cost extension, but that’s all that you all are going to be able to utilize.

**Joan Ascheim:** I understand that. I just wondered we can’t wait until September to do a final FFR if we wanted to move money into salaries because then people would be unemployed for a while.

**Shicann Phillips:** You want to send an FFR interim and then do a redirection. That redirection is going to be more than a hundred percent in some cases, and I’m not going to allow that. That’s going to be an unallowable cost. You’re going to have to wait at least the 90 days prior to the end of the budget period and then submit that. You’re going to have to submit a spending plan along with your request for a no-cost extension. You’ll be able to outline it then, but until then I can’t just allow you to do a redirection and move those funds, especially knowing that you all are trying to just cover year four’s no-cost extension. I’m not going to approve that.

**Bobbie Erlwein:** Hey, Shi, this is Bobbie. Can I make sure that I’m hearing you right? I think and you know I don’t always get it the first try, so fix me if I’m wrong here, but I think what I hear you saying is that within 90 days, at 90 days before we’re done, so 90 days before the end of September, folks can come in with an interim FFR and at that point ask to redirect funds.

**Shicann Phillips:** No. You’re going to have to have a spend plan along with that. This is going to be your no-cost extension you’re going to be submitting. It’s going to be detailed in your letter that you receive. It’s going to give you a deadline, but I just can’t let you redirect funds at this point knowing that you’re only trying to make sure you have funds in salaries to go forth in your no-cost extension.

**Bobbie Erlwein:** Follow-up question. If they come in at 90 days toward the end with the spend plan, and could that spend plan include salaries?

**Shicann Phillips:** Um-hum.

**Bobbie Erlwein:** Okay. So we’d need to come in 90 days before the end of the period with a spend plan saying how we’re going to spend all the funds remaining.
Shicann Phillips: Um-hum.

Bobbie Erlwein: I got it. So you can teach me, I can learn. I’m sorry if I muddied the waters. Did that help clarify a little bit?

Joan Ascheim: Um-hum.

Shicann Phillips: And, Joan, you have my number and email. We can always have a call.

Joan Ascheim: Yes, for sure. Thank you.

Luz: Hi, this is Luz in Ohio. My salary was paid from this grant. Is it possible to redirect the money for salary to provide support for local health departments?

Shicann Phillips: I mean, you can do a redirection, but once you submit that request I would have to speak with your project officer to ensure that you didn’t redirect a big percentage when they actually need you to finish off these activities. But we can’t stop you from submitting a request. You can submit that redirection request.

Bobbie Erlwein: And if I could piggyback on that, then Luz, I mean, it’s critical that we have the PIM role being filled.

Luz: Right. But they see value in me, so they have possibly found money somewhere else to pay my salary because we want to continue providing as much support as possible to our local health departments.

Shicann Phillips: Well, then that’s perfect. And what you can also do is notate in your redirection that your salary, you can say it’s in kind or paid for by the state or in another source. Just make sure you outline that so that we can be clear on that. That’s fine.

Judy Monroe: Your state health department is seeing value in this position?

Luz: Yes, and we have shared money with our local health departments from year one, and we don’t want to pull the rug from up under them like that. As you know, in Ohio accreditation is not voluntary, it’s mandatory.


Harald Pietz: Hi, this is Harald. We’ve got a few questions from online. We’ve already addressed, I think, Joan’s question. The second question was “Will answers to the questions typed into the chat be included in the FAQs.” I think we could say yes. Question three was from David Walton. “There has been talk in Delaware about an increased preventive health block grant to compensate for the loss of NPHII funds. Can you provide any information on this?”
**Judy Monroe:** Do you want me to take this? This is Judy Monroe. The prevention block fund, it is true, it has doubled in value, but the prevention block fund is flexible funding that goes to the state health departments, so we at CDC cannot direct how the health departments choose to spend that money *per se.* I mean, it’s flexible. There are some parameters around it, obviously, and guidelines, but it’s flexible funding, so we would not be able to tell you to direct that, but if health departments utilize the increased funding coming from the block grant, if they chose to use some of that increase to fill in this work or, you know, move forward accreditation, QI, all of those things, that would be allowable under the block grant is my understanding.

**Harald Pietz:** This is Harald. Just to add to that, we would encourage you to check with your block grant coordinator within your agency to just make sure that all that is coordinated appropriately.

**Judy Monroe:** Right. Yeah, the block grant is not within OSTLTS, so the block grant right now is in Chronic, National Center for Chronic Disease and Health Promotion, and so you’d want to go through that channel for those specific questions about the block grant.

**Bobbie Erlwein:** And this is Bobbie. If I could piggyback one more comment. I would tell you that I’ve heard from some of you that some grantees have already been working with the block grant to advance some quality improvement activities. So absolutely, I think going back to the block grant coordinators is exactly the way to roll with that idea.

**Judy Monroe:** Yeah, that’s my understanding. There are some states that actually are already using some of their block grant funding for QI activities?

**Harald Pietz:** As long as you can link it back to the Healthy People 2020 objective, and there’s certainly a chapter on public health infrastructure that we believe would be a good connection there. I’ve got more questions, but we’d like to hear from people on the line before I go to those, so other questions from the phone?

**Josh:** Um-hum. Josh from Virginia. I have an extra question about the salaries. At the end of the term I want to continue our accreditation efforts and some QI efforts, but to do that the main driving force would either be myself or my analysts. In terms of paying salaries, is that possible or do we need to find another way?

**Harald Pietz:** Can I ask a clarifying question, Josh? Paying salaries out of what?

**Josh:** Out of the no-cost extension funds.

**Shicann Phillips:** If you have funds left, yes. You can include that in your spend plan as long as you have unobligated funds.

**Josh:** Okay, all right. Thanks.

**Harald Pietz:** Any other questions from the phone?
Georgia Davidson: Yeah. This is Georgia Davidson from New York City. Just to clarify a question that I have with carryovers and redirect from year four. If we have carryover from year three and we’re carrying it over to year four, should we budget it assuming a no-cost extension, or do we budget it to spend by the end of year four?

Shicann Phillips: You budget to spend by the end of year four.

Georgia Davidson: Okay. Thank you.

Shicann Phillips: Um-hum.

Harald Pietz: Okay, other questions from the phone?

Nancy Birkhimer: This is Nancy Birkhimer, and I’m going to ask another follow-up about that. I actually have two related questions. We’re going to be asked to do a spend plan for a no-cost extension. If we have carryover from year three and we do a carryover request, then we will not have that available for the spend plan, or we should carry it over into year four and then put it into our spend plan?

Shicann Phillips: When you request to carry over those funds from budget year three to four, you’re saying that you’re going to utilize those funds within the year four. Whatever funds that you have not spent by the end of year four, within 90 days that you all have went back and looked at the programmatic activity that you all are going to complete, you can use that in your spend plan. But whatever you put in your budget when you submit it to me for a carryover, you should be using it as you stated in your work plan and in your budget.

Nancy Birkhimer: Okay. And when will you be expecting us to submit the spend plans?

Shicann Phillips: Well, you all will receive an email, and PGO is going to do actually two webinars with the grantees. And you all should be receiving that information from our special project department or policy.

Harald Pietz: Shi, I’ve got a question from online that I’d like to get into this right now. The question was “Please identify what a spend plan is.”

Shicann Phillips: It’s pretty much what you’re going to tell us if you have a million dollars left over and you want to utilize that in your no-cost extension, you’re going to tell us dollar for dollar how you’re going to spend that money and what it’s associated with in your goals and objectives to complete unfinished activities. Nothing new, but what you’re going to complete. We’ll be working closely with you all to get that done correctly, so that when you send it in it’ll be submitted correct the first time and not have to keep coming back to me with revisions.

Harald Pietz: Just to follow up, is there a prescribed template or format to do that in terms of like any of the 424s where you’re doing your budget, or is this just a narrative with some numbers behind it?
Shicann Phillips: Actually, I’ll give the policy, and I’ll get it back to you so we can be consistent across the board.

Harald Pietz: Okay, thank you.

Judy Monroe: But it doesn’t really sound different from a budget justification kind of approach.

Shicann Phillips: Well, it pretty much is the same.

Judy Monroe: It’s really not different from the thinking that we’ve always done around linking money to work, but we’ll get the right forms out. We’ll get that all out to you as soon as we can.

Harald Pietz: Super. Other questions from the phone? All right. While you’re thinking about your questions, we have a few more from Eileen Eisen-Cohen. “What is a spend plan?” I think that’s what we just talked about. “What kind of plan is a spend plan?” I think we’re just using different terminology than what we’ve used in the past, so hopefully you addressed that one.

Shicann Phillips: Budget justification, you know, what they won’t be allowed and things of that nature, and it’s the same thing if you were going into year five, the things that will not be allowable. It’s going to be the exact same thing.

Harald Pietz: Question we have from online is “Will we need to submit two separate budgets for unobligated funds for the no-cost extensions when pulling funds from two years, or will we only have to do one budget for a no-cost extension?”

Shicann Phillips: Right now, we’re still in year four. So if you’re going to submit a request for unobligated funds, it’s going to be due by May 29th. I think that’s the date I gave everyone was May 29th. After May 29th, you’re going to be getting ready to submit your request for the no-cost extension along with that budget, but right now we’re working on year four. Any unobligated funds right now, we’re all working on year four. This is not going toward your no-cost extension.

Bobbie Erlwein: But if they were going to draw money from year one and year two, do they have to do one budget narrative or two? Two different budget narratives?

Shicann Phillips: No. They’re going to do one budget, but they’re going to say if they have $10,000 from year one, we want to utilize $10,000 from year one going into the no-cost extension, and they can just tell me exactly what those funds are coming from.

Bobbie Erlwein: Got you.

Shicann Phillips: Along with the final FFRs that show that you all do have that money available.

Bobbie Erlwein: One budget that clearly says where the money’s coming from and what we’re going to use it for. I get it.
Harald Pietz: Questions on the phone again? Okay. While you’re still thinking of your questions, we have more coming in from online. From Claudia Siegel, “We have received the notice of termination from Terrence Perry which says the no-cost extension request is due at the end of May, so we basically have to submit the carryover request, get it approved, then submit the no-cost extension by May 31st with a plan for using any unexpended funds that may be there even though we may not know what will be unexpended by the end of May. So there’s a little bit of a cart and a horse thing here.”

Shicann Phillips: I didn’t know. I received the letter yesterday, and Bobbie and I talked about it. I was actually going to send it out. I didn’t know they received their letter already. As soon as I get back, I will talk to my team lead and branch chief to see how we’re going to move forward. Because we actually had a deadline of May 29th to submit their carryover requests. Now they’re telling me they want them to submit their spend plan to request a no-cost extension in May as well, so . . .

Bobbie Erlwein: Let us straighten it out internally, and we will clarify that discrepancy for you as soon as we have a minute. Good to hear you got your letter. Thank you. We’re moving fast here, so apologies that we don’t have all the ducks quite in a row, but we will get them lined up. If that’s right, yeah?

Shicann Phillips: Um-hum.

Harald Pietz: Again, the opportunity for the phone?

Bob Richardson: Yes, this is Bob Richardson in Pennsylvania.

Harald Pietz: Please go ahead, Bob.

Bob Richardson: Yes. I just want to verify if I heard correctly. In a carryover request during year four, during this year, we can request funds from not only year three but from other previous years into year four?

Shicann Phillips: Yes.

Bob Richardson: Okay. Thank you, thank you. And that’s all done in one carryover request?

Shicann Phillips: Yes, just submit the FFR associated with each budget year showing that you have those funds unobligated.

Bob Richardson: Okay, thank you very much.

Harald Pietz: Good question. Other questions from the phone, please?

Geoff Wilkinson: This is Geoff Wilkinson in Massachusetts. Is there a specific deadline for carryover requests?

Shicann Phillips: It was May 29th, and from my understanding that’s the same time that your request for a no-cost extension has to be in PGO, so I have to go back and speak with my team lead and branch
chief to see how we’re going to move forward. I’ll let Bobbie know, and she’ll send an email out to you all giving some more clarification on that.

**Geoff Wilkinson:** Thank you.

**Harald Pietz:** We’ve got them piling up here. From Karen, a lot of states have been depending on NPHII funding for Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) accreditation fees. Now that NPHII is going away, what are some other sources of funding we can turn to? It will be difficult to secure state general funds for that purpose in our state, especially since it has not yet been clarified whether PHAB accreditation funding opportunities in the future that non-accredited entities would not be eligible for. Think that’d be to push that to Dr. Monroe?

**Judy Monroe:** Yeah, so let me start with that and then others can chime in if they have other thoughts. But one of the things and I don’t know if everyone’s aware of the new standard funding opportunity announcement (FOA) template. The FOA template here at CDC was standardized in the last couple of years, and there’s a checklist. Everyone across all the CIOs, if they’re ready to write a new funding opportunity, they have to go through a checklist. One of the questions on the checklist is to ask themselves whether or not the funding, the authorization from Congress for the funding that is funding this opportunity allows accreditation expenses to be part of that, and if so, within CDC it’s up to 5% that or there’s not even a percent.

**Harald Pietz:** There’s no percentage.

**Judy Monroe:** Across all of the CIOs, when they write new funding opportunities, if authorized by Congress, as long as it doesn’t go against congressional language, they can authorize part of that funding for whatever program that might be to go toward accreditation, because accreditation is so cross-cutting and it really supports all programs. That has been in effect now for a couple of years. One of the things I don’t think we’ve had a chance to go back yet to see how many of the FOAs might have that language written in there. Because it takes a little while, you know, this comes out and then new funding opportunities are being written. That would be an opportunity, depending on which of those FOAs do have accreditation expenses allowed. You know, if an FOA is coming out of chronic disease, the funds allowable for accreditation have to support that program. They have to be supporting chronic, or they would have to support STDs or wherever the funding stream is coming from. That’s at least one thought that I would have. Others? Any other thoughts at this point in time?

**Bob Richardson:** This is Bob Richardson from Pennsylvania again. Could I follow up with a question regarding that?

**Judy Monroe:** Yeah, sure, sure.

**Harald Pietz:** Go ahead, Bob.

**Bob Richardson:** When it says the funding can be utilized for accreditation, is that accreditation fees?
**Harald Pietz**: Um-hum.

**Bob Richardson**: Or can some of that funding be utilized for accreditation readiness activities?

**Judy Monroe**: Yeah. It would probably be both. But the thing is, so here’s the issue, though. You as the health department writing then your proposal, when you’re applying for the funding opportunity, you would then need to write in that you do in fact want to use a portion of the funds for accreditation, and tell them what you’d be using that for. It would actually be your decision how you’d want to write that in. And then you’d have to have an agreement with the program.

**Bob Richardson**: Right. That’s good information to know because that’s a possible way to spread the cost and also the activity across the department. But thank you.

**Judy Monroe**: Yes, exactly. One of the things . . . I guess the other thing I would say about that is because this was relatively new and because NPHII was alive and well internally, we have an opportunity now to make sure that the program has more visibility across senior leadership and across CDC that that is an opportunity within the new FOAs. So that would be on us to do that, and then your all’s part, if it gets written, the language would be then to seize that opportunity when you’re writing the application.

**Bob Richardson**: Good. Thank you.

**Harald Pietz**: Thank you. Other questions from the phone?

**Geoff Wilkinson**: Yeah, it’s Geoff Wilkinson in Massachusetts again. I just want to state the obvious. It’s a shame that this has happened and we appreciate all the support for public health infrastructure that you have supported. Judy, it also came as a surprise, and is there anything that you are able to tell us about what happened?

**Judy Monroe**: You know, I will tell you it was a surprise to us as well. I mean, that’s the most I can say. I mean, this was through the omnibus, and it was a congressional decision, and so we were as surprised as you were.

**Geoff Wilkinson**: Yep. Thanks.

**Harald Pietz**: Thank you. Thank you for the comment. Other questions from the phone?

**Beverly**: This is Beverly from Alaska.

**Harald Pietz**: Beverly, go ahead.

**Beverly**: Okay. Kind of in line with that, I guess what I’m wondering has been some discussion that they had been looking at trying to get some sort of a cooperative agreement starting after this next year to continue some of the NPHII-like activities. Is that still being looked at, and if so, I would like to also put out there that perhaps we can start getting some reports or talking points, things that we can use with our congressional members to begin educating them.
**Harald Pietz**: Dr. Monroe, you want a first shot?

**Judy Monroe**: Thanks for that. I guess what I would say is that in the aftermath of the omnibus coming out and everyone beginning to realize that NPHII was zeroed out and that we are hearing from partners and others in the field that this is a loss that is being felt. There’s a lot of negative impact being felt. And so I think there is a growing interest in trying to advance something, not that we can do this year but maybe the next. But, if you all wish to support something like that, that’s certainly your opportunity.

**Harald Pietz**: Dr. Thomas?

**Craig Thomas**: Hi, good afternoon. This is Craig Thomas. Just wanted to add to that by saying that of course CDC and OSTLTS is planning or have been planning on a new cooperative agreement cycle, another five-year grant, so that work will always continue. It’s not certain whether we’ll get the funding. That’s the challenge. But we do, and will be proactive in terms of our ability to come up with opportunities to sustain the work. I bring that to your attention because a lot of this, as Dr. Monroe mentioned, is out of our control. What we can control is helping you get the messages to the right people about the impact that NPHII has had. You’re going to hear a lot more from us in the upcoming months about ways that we can help you communicate and work with your governing entities. The grantee meeting in April is a great opportunity for us to have those kinds of conversations. We’re working hard on this end, although you probably aren’t seeing that, to figure out ways to better support you. And the project officers will play an instrumental role in getting feedback from you into our plan, so stay tuned.

**Harald Pietz**: This is Harald. I would just say it did catch us by surprise, and it’s not just us but many people in the department and at CDC are now, and it’s coming to the attention of others, and more people are looking at that. And we just had this call with the regional health administrator, so you might hear or see an opportunity for them to reach out to you or your health officers, and you should certainly help that opportunity to support your state health official with materials that you’re doing. Get every venue we possibly can aware of all the great work that was going on through your efforts.

**Judy Monroe**: This is Judy Monroe again. I think the other thing, in terms of how NPHII, what level the attention had been drawn, I have heard from several states where the work, the accomplishments that were being made with improving. Whether it was decreasing the amount of time to get contracts out the door, or if it was HR issues. Some of the big health departments made some major strides in improving their human resource systems. Those kinds of successes caught the attention of state legislators and governors, and so we know in the states that NPHII has definitely caught the attention in a very positive way by folks like that, so enough said.

**Harald Pietz**: So, other questions from the phone?

**Robert Hines**: This is Robert Hines in Houston. And my question, actually Dr. Monroe touched on it a little bit. But I was interested to know how NPHII was using some of the data and success stories as far
as presenting that information to congressional members and how the rest of the CDC actually viewed this particular program.

**Judy Monroe:** I think you know that, we are packaging the successes, and what’s interesting about NPHII is that it does take time to ramp up and to begin to actually accomplish those things. Especially in the last six months I know that I’ve heard some of the really robust accomplishments because it just took that long to ramp it up and actually then get the results. We will be packaging those. Harald mentioned, you know, we did have a call with the regional health administrators. They would like this information so they can talk with health officials about the successes and show them the data. We certainly welcome from you all any suggestions for how we should package. I mean, if there are particular things that would be more helpful to you to see the data and the successes packaged in a way that would be more impactful as you take them out to the stakeholders to show.

**Harald Pietz:** This is Harald. Just to follow up on it, any stories that you have that were from last year or from before when in your IPRs or APRs, that you have more data around because now you’ve had more time to close them out and sift through them. We’ll take follow-up on anything that you have submitted to us originally, if you want to send it to us. I don’t care what it’s got, you know. We would prefer if it had good data and measures, return on investments, costs avoided, whatever. We will take those and take those earlier stories and refresh them with updated information that you can supply us.

**Judy Monroe:** And I’ll add this, because I’ve asked Dr. Thomas to make sure that we do this. Here within OSTLTS one of the things I want to see happen is a publication on NPHII. NPHII has been mentioned in a lot of publications already, and especially around accreditation, NPHII has been referenced and so forth, but we haven’t had that sentinel article on how this national improvement, the impact it’s had because these were public dollars. Honestly, we need to capture the results of this for the four years that we had it. And so that would be another way that we’ll be disseminating this. I would like this to be a pretty high profile publication.

**Bobbie Erlwein:** We will take the stories at any point in time and in any format because you know I love them. You can send them in to your POs or certainly to the team mailbox. Don’t feel like you have to wait for report time. Send them now, send them often. Thank you.

**Judy Monroe:** Yeah, don’t be shy. This is not a time to be shy.

**Harald Pietz:** We’ve got a couple of questions I want to take for the people that are typing in on the chat. We have a question from Laura as a follow-up, “When should we expect to receive the email with the spend plan template?”

**Shicann Phillips:** As soon as I get back to the office I’m going to speak with my team lead, see if there is actually a formal template, send Bobbie an email letting her know that it’s just like a budget justification that you all will submit, how you submit it with your original budget.
Bobbie Erlwein: Probably we’re talking next week. I’ll get an email out to you, but we’re moving quickly is what I hear from you, Shi, and then most likely just be an email early next week.

Harald Pietz: Okay. And we have one more from Tammy. “It would be beneficial if we could find a formal or informal way of sharing what other states are planning to do once their funding ends. I have been asked to develop a plan and try to find alternative funds, but I doubt I will have much success. It would be helpful to know of other solutions. Thank you.”

Bobbie Erlwein: I’m happy to jump in on this one.

Harald Pietz: Bobbie, please.

Bobbie Erlwein: Couldn’t be happier to hear this question. This is exactly what I think we were hoping would happen. NPHII has always just thrived with peer-to-peer support, and that’s what you’re talking about. You’re going to have the survey question at the end that talks about sustainability. That’s certainly one way we can continue to dialogue. I know that as we worked to prepare the grantee meeting this is a focus for all of us. I am open to what other forms we need to create. If we need to have more calls or create smaller calls with different groups of grantees, do tell us. Give us a sense of where you want to go with that in addition to the grantee meeting of potentially using these calls. I am open to try to work with you to get that done, so I’m excited about this. I truly believe it’s the way forward if we share information about what each of you finds that works. So happy to have that question. I hope I’m making sense.

Judy Monroe: Yeah. And I’ll just share something that no one’s heard yet. I literally just got off a call that I had earlier this afternoon with someone that had been a CEO of a health system. They stepped out of that role and has actually been helping the innovation center at CMS. But in talking with this individual, she shared with me that when she was the hospital CEO, or system CEO, that she saw the value in the partnership with the health department, and actually their hospital gave the health department a million dollars a year. There was a relationship there. As we think creatively about what’s happening across our health system transformation and the new relationships with other partners, there are some models out there, but I think we do need to share these stories. I don’t know that I’d ever heard a hospital CEO said, yeah, we gave a million dollars to the health department. This was a pretty progressive CEO who, I think, was before her time in terms of understanding that population health was where it was at and you needed to get out of the hospital to save money and keep people out of the hospital, you have to get out in the community. It was a very enlightening conversation. But I think we need to think broadly and think creatively.

Harald Pietz: This is Harald with another follow-up question that we received online. “I was considering reaching out to the PIM Network to see how many grantees and states were going to continue despite the loss of NPHII funding. Is this something that you could help coordinate? Just trying to get some data to help with the sustainability here, i.e., X number of states are planning to continue with QI/PM
activities but are utilizing state general funds or other funding source. Also curious, which states had offices beforehand, and how does this impact accreditation activities?”

**Judy Monroe:** I’m going to jump in, not necessarily or maybe a comment, but just a question or just to plant a seed. I was just out online, and I just sent around to senior leadership yesterday a graph of what’s happened to state budgets. I was state health officer in Indiana at the time that the recession hit, and, being a cabinet member I received the state budget month-to-month, so we always had those conversations. We always saw what the state revenue was. And along with the decrease in the state revenue came more cuts to the health department. But if you look at the graphs, some of the states and overall nationally were not only at, but back up above the height of where we were before the recession, some states are above that. I guess a question to you all, are you all seeing in your health departments, as state budgets are rebounding? Is money starting to come back to the health department?

(Several people laughing and talking at once).

**Harald Pietz:** If you do, speak up. This is Harald. But, you know, to kind of go back to the earlier point, we here in OSTLTS and I personally make the commitment to continue these PIM calls for as long as we can keep going. We will either run them through here, or we’ll get a national partner to provide technical assistance for as long as we can irrespective of whether we get funding directed to support NPHII. That is going to continue. Bobbie said it. I just wanted to restate it. You know, you’ve got the commitment that we’re not just going to, you know, try to pull the shutters and close up shop at this point. Not going to happen.

**Bobbie Erlwein:** I’m intrigued by the idea of wanting to have some data around this. I think that is such a great idea, and I’m pretty sure we collected some information about who had offices prior to NPHII and that sort of thing, so let us go back and look at those data and see if that can’t jump start the conversation. I think the PIM Network listserv has always functioned extremely well for sharing information, and Melody I know will comment if I’m out of bounds here, but certainly this is the topic of the day, so we should use that forum to share success stories and to start gathering some information. I’m not committing at this point to formally gather information, that’s a whole big commitment, but we can certainly look at what we have and get that out to you. And then let’s talk through what we need in terms of data and see where we can go with it. Sound reasonable?

**Harald Pietz:** Yes.

**unknown:** I think that a good idea also is to maybe create some kind of a short survey for moving forward. What are the areas that have committed to keeping these functions? And to collect this information for the whole nation would be a good way of looking at this. Maybe there is money that comes from CDC through other grants, and some of these grants actually have to return money to CDC at the end of the year. They possibly could invent some of these improvement accreditation activities within these plans themselves.
**Bobbie Erlwein:** Yeah, I know. You’re making perfect sense. And it occurs to me that we’re right on the brink of finalizing the template for the interim progress report. I think it would be a small thing to add a few questions to gather some of these key data points, so I think you’re right on the money, and let me take a look at that IPR before we release it to you so we can try and get some of these questions in there. So if you have concrete ideas about what specific data points you need, it would be really helpful if you would shoot me a note with that so that we can make the questions certainly not burdensome but focus where we need them to go. That would be hugely helpful. It’s a great idea.

**Harald Pietz:** I’m going to take the facilitator prerogative as we’re wrapping down. Jobin has a question that we’d like to give him an opportunity to ask on the phone. Are you still with us?

**Beverly:** This is Beverly in Alaska. I have a final question.

**Harald Pietz:** Go ahead, Beverly.

**Beverly:** A lot of the talk today has been around the things that the states can do and what’s available to the states through block grants and some of the other areas and what’s happening with their funding. I’m with one of the tribal entities, and would be very interested if there’s anything that’s being looked at. This has really provided an opportunity to the tribes that just really hasn’t been there before to build some of the infrastructure, build some partnerships, and do some very important work. And without the funding, I’m afraid it’ll be lost. I didn’t know if there was anything in particular you could speak to regarding tribal entities.

**Judy Monroe:** We had our tribal advisory committee here just last week, and we heard the same thing from them, how important this funding was to tribes and really to help build the infrastructure. I know that Ursula Bauer was there from Chronic. She heard the message as well because she sat through the two days. And so senior leadership here at CDC, I mean, will be thinking about this. And I don’t have an answer right now concretely. I can’t give you a concrete answer because we don’t have a ready solution, but we’re well aware of how meaningful this was to the tribes and we’ll work to try to come up with a solution.

**Georgia Davidson:** And so you’d asked for the question from Jobin before. This is Georgia Davidson from New York City. I just want to get clarification from something I’m not sure if I understood from Shicann before. There sort of seemed to be some question about how when we revise the budget, whether it’s for a redirect or for a no-cost spending plan, any kind of limitations on what we can ask for? I mean, I know that if there’s a certain percent of the budget goes from PS to OTPS we need to request it from you, but you said a hundred percent change in the budget you wouldn’t approve. Are there any major limitations we should know about how we can move money around?

**Shicann Phillips:** It’s always been 25% threshold for a redirection. But whenever you’re redirecting funds from contractual and salaries, you always have to submit that request because that could possibly be a change in the scope. Other than that, if you’re moving money from travel to supplies and things of that nature, you can just send me an email and let me know that you’re redirecting those funds.
**Georgia Davidson:** Okay, great. So in a situation, say if we wanted to move everything from contractual into PS for the no-cost extension, you know, there’s no alarms that go off. We just need your approval.

**Shicann Phillips:** Well, when you get ready to do your no-cost extension, that’s something separate from your redirection. That’s two separate things. A redirection request, like right now we’re currently in year four. You can do a redirection within year four. However, you’re talking about your no-cost extension. You’re going to submit a totally different budget and you’re going to allocate those funds where you see fit. But if you’re asking for things like a new computer and iPads and things of that nature, that’s going to be unallowable at this point because we’re focusing on closing down and, you know, just finishing up all unfinished activities at this point. That’s two different things. If you’re going to do a redirection you could do that now.

**Judy Monroe:** Okay. But the no-cost extension, that sort of like zeroes out your budget. You start all over again. But then there’s going to be some serious limitations on what we can spend it on.

**Georgia Davidson:** Okay, thank you.

**Judy Monroe:** And, Georgia, of course all of this has to make sense from a program point of view.

**Georgia Davidson:** Oh, yeah, of course. Exactly. I misunderstood something that Shicann said before and it sounded like there were certain limitations to how much we can move around and put in certain places and things like that.

**Harald Pietz:** Hi. This Harald. I’m sorry, we’re at the end of the time so I’m going to cut us off. But we’re only at the end of the time for this block of an hour. Melody’s going to get us to the close-out. I do want to remind people that there is a call at 7:00. If we didn’t get to your questions you can always ask questions of your POs. You can always ask questions of Bobbie, myself, so we’re going to do that at 7:00 Eastern Time. Thank you.

**Melody Parker:** Thanks, Harald. I did send the email with that information out to everyone on the Network. Thank you to everyone for participating in this first call today, and thanks ahead for the one at 7:00, which, again, you’ve been forwarded that information for in case you have colleagues that you know that were unable to make the call today. Please note that the poll that we discussed earlier about the future of the PIM Network webinar series is on your screen now. Please continue to vote as we close out today. Again, any additional feedback about this, any other questions, anything else that you need to tell us, that you need to ask us, you can contact us at PIMNetwork@CDC.gov. We will have another session. We will have another webinar. It is scheduled for March 27th and again, based on your feedback, we’ll select that particular topic. Always remember that you can view and download these calls and any of the materials that came with the calls from the PIM Network webinar series on the OSTLTS Network web site. Again, thank you to everyone in the room. Very special thanks to everyone on the call, in the field, our PIMs, and everyone that has been part of the NPHII grantee family. Again, thank you, and we’ll see you next time.
Troy: Thank you. This now concludes today’s conference. All lines may disconnect. The leaders can hold for post-conference.