



National Tuberculosis Controllers Association Executive Board Conference Call Minutes September 17, 2009

I. Attendees

- A. Phil Griffin, Carol Pozsik, Jon Warkentin, James Watt, Iram Bakhtawar, Michael Leonard, Christie Chesler, Kathy Kolaski, Kathy Hursen, Sue Etkind, Jim Cobb, Charles Wallace
- B. CDC Staff: Phil Talboy, Kashef Ijaz, Joe Scavotto
- C. Guests: None

II. NTCA Board Discussion Items

- A. Secretary's Report – Carol Pozsik (in Denise Ingman's absence)
 - o Approval of minutes was delayed till next meeting as there were no minutes sent.
- B. Treasurer's Report – Carol Pozsik (in Kristin Rounds's absence)
 - o The last draw down of Federal Cooperative Agreement funds will take place next week leaving a zero balance in the Payment Management System Account.
 - o The first draw down of new funds will take place in mid-October.
- C. President's Report: Leave of Absence – Phil Griffin
 - o Phil Griffin announced that he is a candidate for a kidney transplant possibly in November or December.
 - o He will not be working for two months following the transplant.
- D. Executive Director's Report: Awards Committee Requested – Carol Pozsik
 - o Carol Pozsik announced that Mike Holcombe has requested that NTCA form an Awards Committee. Sue Etkind mentioned that Massachusetts has formed a similar committee for "TB Heroes" and it has been well received.
 - o There was discussion and the Board concurred.
 - o Mike has agreed to chair this new Committee.
- E. Technical Instructions Relating to Children <10 years of age
 - o Sue Etkind reported that Deb Sodt has worked on a Committee to address changes to Technical Instructions (TIs) relating to children <10 yrs of age. Jeff Starke, MD has added his recommendations.
 - o There will be a one-day Consultation October 5 at CDC to discuss the proposed changes in these (TIs).
 - o Jon Warkentin agreed to represent NTCA address comments on the draft TIs sent out today.

-
- The Board was asked to send comments to Jon prior to the CDC Consultation.

F. Expert Consultation on TB Patient Care Issues

- Phil Griffin reported on a Consultation in Washington, DC, initiated by NTCA Board Members Kim Field, Sue Etkind, Carol Pozsik (as Executive Director), and Phil (as President of NTCA). The Consultation was requested with Julie Scofield, Executive Director of NASTAD (National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors) and Joann Carter, Executive Director of RESULTS International.
- The group representing NTCA presented the issues facing State TB Controllers regarding expert treatment and hospitalization, access, and payment for these services on a regional basis; drug costs; inadequacy of TB Medicaid Waiver to meet program needs both in state and across state lines; and other issues. Not all issues can be solved at once. Sue Etkind, Chair of Patient Care Committee, will send the formal minutes of that Consultation to the Board and will seek Board approval to move forward.
- Question: Is the Board prepared to face the first challenge presented to us at the Consultation: that is, to have access to emergency drugs to treat difficult MDR and XDR patients? We must start somewhere on this huge task. CDC cannot provide money for us for drugs; this must come from HRSA (as does the drugs for HIV). State inventories should be established. We must work through the process.
- The Board voted for Sue Etkind to select the first committee to tackle the issue of drugs for patient treatment of LTBI and disease. Must have knowledgeable clinician(s) represented on the group.

III. CDC Discussion Items

A. Comments on the CoAg Application Guidance Document

- CDC had elicited comments from the Board and other TB Controllers regarding the recent CoAg Guidance for preparation of the grants.
- Following were some of the comments made:
 - It did not read as a continuous document. Flow was not consistent, and items such as HIV were overlapping.
 - NTIP and other items were repeated in several places in the document.
 - Bureau Director of one state TB program said the TB application guidance was the most disorganized that he had ever seen.
 - It is very difficult for low-incidence states to complete this application, when it is difficult for large programs.
- Kashef Ijaz stated that it is difficult to respond to these comments because requirements are set by PGO, and DTBE must follow them.
- Surveillance was discussed at the July conference call and Dr. Navin's group was to respond. Active and passive surveillance was to be covered. No document has been forthcoming as was requested. Phil Griffin will talk to Tom Navin and request that a Dear Colleague letter be sent.

-
- Phil Talboy stated that CDC will listen to these comments and will follow through with PGO.
 - Charles Wallace suggested that a Webinar be held to discuss each section of the Guidance so that everyone can hear and ask questions.
 - Early next year, Carol Pozsik will request comments from the TB Controllers and get them back to CDC DTBE.

B. Request for CoAg Distribution Information by State

- Phil Griffin stated that NTCA has requested a chart from DTBE (as was done in 2005) that shows the funding distribution across the US TB programs.
- A Senator has asked for this information and has said that this is public information. PGO has refused to give it, saying that it is illegal to do so. Other programs have been able to get this information.
- If they continue to say no, NTCA will get them on a conference call with some Members of Congress. Phil Griffin will request this information from Gustavo Aquino.

C. IGRA Guidelines

- IGRA Guidelines have been cleared by the DTBE Branches.
- Revisions are going to Phil LoBue, and he will approve.
- They will get to the TB Controllers by December 2009.

D. ACET Meeting

- Phil Talboy announced that ACET will meet October 27 and 28.
- There will be a discussion about the TB problems in the US Territories. Janet O'Connor from SPC and RoyLinn Wade from the Department of the Interior have been invited to do long-range planning with CDC DTBE.
- The Compact of Free Association was reviewed by Congress several years ago, and residents of the Territories can freely come to the United States without any immigration screening.
- Iram Bakhtawar has data on cases that have immigrated under this Compact.
- Kashef Ijaz stated that it is the responsibility of employers of these persons to do TB screening. CDC cannot mandate that it be done prior to travel to the US.
- Phil Griffin stated that there has been no response to put a floor on TB funding for the Pacific Islands. After 2010 (after each adjustment to the Formula), he will be discussing budgets with Dr. Castro.

IV. Next Meeting

The next NTCA conference call will be October 8, 2009, at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time. There are too many conflicts to hold it on the third Thursday, October 13.

Minutes submitted by Carol J. Pozsik, Executive Director.
(Recording for Denise Ingman)