

**Louisiana Birth Defects Monitoring Network
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

Friday, September 11, 2009, 2:30 pm
OPH State Laboratory
3101 West Napoleon Ave
Metairie, LA

Attendees:

Dr. Floyd Buras, Chair

Dr. Susan Berry, OPH, CSHS

*Keybo Griffin, OPH, LBDMN**

Julie Johnston, OPH, LBDMN

Adrienne Katner, OPH, SEET

Dr. Lyn Kieltyka, OPH, Maternal and Child Health

Dr. Yves Lacassie, LSU Health Sciences Center

Darcie Olexia, OPH, SEET

Judy Otto, Spina Bifida of Greater New Orleans

*Christy Patton, OPH, LBDMN**

*Nancy Roach, OPH, LBDMN**

Cheryll Sheard, OPH, LBDMN

Kay Webster, OPH, LBDMN

*Eman Williams, OPH, SEET**

**via teleconference*

I. Welcome/Introductions: *Dr. Susan Berry*

Dr. Berry called the meeting to order. Those present and participating via teleconference introduced themselves and stated their affiliations.

II. Announcements: *Dr. Susan Berry, General.*

There were none.

III. LBDMN Program Update: *Kay Webster, LBDMN Staff*

Ms. Webster reminded the group that LBDMN Family Resources Coordinator Dionka Pierce was promoted to Children's Special Health Services (CSHS) Program Manager several months back. She then introduced Cheryll Sheard, who came on board in July to fill the position vacated by Dionka. Ms. Webster welcomed Cheryll to the program.

Ms. Webster then reported that the Region 1 Data Collection Specialist (DCS) position is now vacant; Jennifer Walgamotte recently accepted a position at Children's Hospital. The vacant DCS position is currently being advertised online at various locations and on LPHI's website. There will also be an ad in the Sunday *Times-Picayune* (9/13). Ms. Webster stated that Julie Johnson will assist in Region 1 as needed until the position is filled.

Ms. Webster updated the group on efforts to get a database for Birth Defects Monitoring. She and Dr. Berry will meet with representatives from DHH IT on Sept. 17 to try to move the project forward.

Ms. Webster distributed copies of the May/June 2009 issue of the *Louisiana Morbidity Report*. This issue contains an article by Ms. Webster, Dr. Tri Tran, and Dr. Berry presenting results of the analysis of 2005 birth defects data (the first year of data collected by LBDMN).

Ms. Webster then asked LBDMN staff for their individual reports. Nancy Roach, Region 5 DCS, reported that she has gained access to Beauregard Hospital and is now working with all birthing hospitals in Region 5. Keybo Griffin, Region 4 DCS, reported that his collection of data is moving smoothly. Julie Johnson, DCS for Regions 2 and 9, reported that she is working on gaining access to LSU Bogalusa

Medical Center. Christy Patton, Region 7 DCS, reported that in July she attended a Technical Training sponsored by the Birth Defects Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch of the Texas Department of Health, which she found very informative. Ms. Webster informed the group that Mr. Griffin and Ms. Walgamotte were also able to attend this training, which was open to our staff by special invitation of the Texas Birth Defects surveillance program. She stated there are no training opportunities specially designed for birth defects data abstractors available in Louisiana.

IV. Budget Update: *Dr. Susan Berry*

Dr. Berry reported that the Children's Special Health Services (CSHS) program budget (out of which LBDMN is funded) consists of Title V MCH Block Grant Funds as well as supplemental state funds. Dr. Berry stated that CSHS just received its budget for fiscal year 2010, which started July 1, 2009. CSHS was expecting a total budget cut of \$800,000, but that amount was reduced to \$625,713. Dr. Berry explained that due to a change in CSHS policy on treatment of cystic fibrosis patients over 21, around \$800,000 was saved in pharmacy costs during the last fiscal year. However, due to the budget cut these savings are no longer available to be used for expansion of birth defects surveillance. Dr. Berry stated that we had hoped to hire a contractor to serve as epidemiologist for birth defects, but this may have to be delayed along with further expansion of the birth defects program. However, we will continue to put a priority on statewide expansion for LBDMN as it becomes feasible.

Dr. Berry then reported that plans are moving forward with the support of OPH administration and approval of Civil Service to promote Kay Webster to a Program Manager position. Dr. Berry has requested special permission to keep Ms. Webster's current position, which would normally be lost due to the current state hiring freeze. If approved, the position could be used to hire an epidemiologist as a state employee. Dr. Berry is currently waiting on a final response from administration.

Dr. Berry reported that the administration has unveiled a new initiative described as "outcomes-based budgeting" for 2011. The initiative is being implemented to address the state budget deficit, which is projected to be about \$2 billion in 2013. The budget will be divided across 9 priority areas, one of which is the "Health" category. Programs such as CSHS will have to submit "offers" in order to get a piece of the budget, rather than being provided a budget based on the previous year's spending. Dr. Berry stated that the new budgeting process will likely result in some programs being cut, but since CSHS is pretty efficient and innovative she does not anticipate any major threat to the program.

V. Environmental Public Health Tracking Network: *Adrienne Katner, OPH, SEET*

Adrienne Katner of the OPH Section of Environmental Epidemiology and Toxicology (SEET) announced that SEET has received a three-year \$5 million grant from the CDC to establish an Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (EPHTN) for Louisiana. The EPHTN will be a dynamic web-based tool for reporting and tracking environmental hazards and the health problems that may be related to them. It will feature a web portal where researchers, health officials, and members of the public can access data on environmental issues like air and water quality, as well as data on birth defects, cancer, and birth outcomes in Louisiana. Ms. Katner stated that the EPHTN would like to use LBDMN data and may be able provide funding for a database or a part-time epidemiologist. Ms. Katner distributed a handout with more information about the EPHTN. There was general discussion on this topic.

VI. Old Business/Other Business: *Dr. Floyd Buras*

Dr. Buras stated that there has been a spike in births in New Orleans, and asked whether there have been any reports of actual or suspected increases in birth defects. Ms. Webster stated that she was not aware of any, and others present agreed that they had not been made aware of any.

There was general discussion regarding the outcomes/indicators to be submitted in the FY 2011 budget request and the possible ramifications of the new budgeting process.

Dr. Berry reported that the yearly MCH Block Grant review was held in August, and the assessment of CSHS was very positive. She stated that every five years CSHS is required to do a Needs Assessment per grant guidelines, with the next one due in 2010. Planning for the project is underway, and a stakeholders group will be formed to guide the process. There was general discussion on this topic.

VII. Public Comment: *Public*

There was no public comment.

VIII. Closing Remarks: *Dr. Floyd Buras*

Dr. Buras proposed that the next board meeting be held sometime during the first two weeks of December, or perhaps in January. Cheryll Sheard will email board members regarding their availability for the next meeting.

Dr. Buras declared the meeting adjourned.