

**Lyme Disease Advisory Committee Meeting
November 16, 2010
Teleconference, Sacramento California (9:30 to 12:00)**

Committee members in attendance

Barbara Barsocchini, California Lyme Disease Association (CALDA)
Karen Chew, Lyme Disease Support Network
Vicki Kramer, Ph.D., California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
Robert Lane, Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley
Scott Morrow, M.D., M.P.H., California Conference of Local Health Officers
Christian Parlier, Lyme Disease Support Network
James Miller, Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles
Chindi Peavey, Ph.D., Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California
Raphael Stricker, M.D., California Medical Association

Committee members not in attendance

Lisa Messner, CPhT., Lyme Disease Support Network

Other attendees

Anne Kjemtrup, D.V.M., M.P.V.M., Ph.D., CDPH, Committee Coordinator
Claudia Erickson, M.S., CHES, Health Educator, CDPH
Individuals representing the interested public and public health agencies

Mr. Parlier brought the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

I. Review and approval of May 2010 teleconference minutes:

The minutes from the May 2010 Lyme Disease Advisory Committee (LDAC) teleconference were unanimously approved.

II. California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Progress report:

Dr. Kjemtrup reviewed CDPH tick-borne disease activities from March 2010 – present. Included were outreach to the target populations of general public, school children, local agencies and the medical community. Facebook and Twitter social media outlets were used to highlight the spring nymphal tick season. Two newspapers highlighted CDPH material as a result. A public service announcement (PSA) called “Bright White” was re-released and posted on the CDPH website and several agencies picked up the PSA. Public Health Week in April 2010 provided an opportunity for the Vector-Borne Disease Section (VBDS) to highlight tick-borne disease prevention information at the Capitol to legislators, public service administrators, and the general public. CDPH continues to respond to individual inquiries through the CDPH website and collaborating agencies. Activities targeted to school children included participation in the State Scientist Day at the Capitol in April 2010, sponsored by the California Association of Professional Scientists. The Timothy Tickfinder webpage has been updated with a teacher curriculum page. In reaching out to the medical community, Dr. Kjemtrup provided a presentation to medical laboratory technicians on Lyme disease (LD) surveillance, and tick-borne disease prevention information was supplied to the Sonoma County

infectious disease task force. A continuing medical education (CME) webinar sponsored by the Missouri Department of Health and the DEET education program on recognizing and treating tick-borne diseases was promoted through email contact of physician and nurse associations along with California-specific information. Dr. Kjemtrup highlighted the health fair display of Ms. Sylvianie Schwartz in Humboldt County and encouraged others to send in photos if they emphasized CDPH material. Local agencies were contacted by distributing a catalogue describing CDPH tick-borne disease educational materials. Local agencies responded with requests for material for further distribution.

In response to questions from the committee regarding the CDPH activities update, Dr. Kjemtrup noted:

- Much like with press releases, there is not a quantifiable way to monitor response to social media efforts, though responses and comments are noted. The Department's Facebook page and Twitter account have many news outlet followers so it is assumed that coverage is wide. In the upcoming season, the use of "bit.ly" links will allow monitoring of page hits from the embedded link in the message. There are specialists in the Department's Office of Public Affairs well-versed in social media tools.
- Physicians targeted for the email regarding the CME webinar were identified through California medical associations, medical schools, and known contacts.

Dr. Kjemtrup briefly reviewed tick-borne disease surveillance activities of CDPH. She noted that 55 cases of LD that fit surveillance criteria were reported to CDPH in 2009. Over the last ten years, the greatest incidence of LD remains in the northwest coastal areas of California and in some Sierra Nevada counties with western-facing slopes. Surveillance for *Borrelia burgdorferi* in western black-legged ticks, particularly nymphs and from counties where there is no tick infection data, continues. The Vector-Borne Disease Section (VBDS) now tests 2,000 ticks in-house for surveillance purposes only. Dr. Kjemtrup responses to committee questions regarding surveillance included:

- The decreasing trend in reported LD case numbers remains a conundrum. This last year local health departments (LHD) were swamped with H1N1 issues and this may have impacted their ability to follow up and report cases.
- For 2010, probable cases will be able to be captured.
- Reporting a case involves a physician reporting to the LHD that they suspect a case of LD or a positive laboratory test is sent to the LHD. The LHD then follows up with the reporting physician or the one who ordered the test and requests the physician to complete a case history form. The LHD then evaluates the case to see if it fits the surveillance criteria.
- The recent changes to the surveillance definition state that a case with compatible clinical signs and exposure and a positive western blot test only (removing the positive enzyme immunofluorescent antibody test requirement) is considered a confirmed case. Compatible exposure means being in a county in the last 30 days where LD has been reported in two or more individuals or where established infected black-legged tick populations are known to occur.
- Approaches to improve provider awareness of reporting can be a topic for next March's meeting.

III. Committee Member Updates

Ms. Barbara Barsoccini provided an update on CALDA activities. CALDA is hosting a Central Coast conference for public and healthcare professionals. Last year CALDA sponsored an educational booth at the CANP conference at the Disneyland Hotel... This year was the first year they hosted the statewide Lyme Walk; there was great turnout with the purpose to raise funds for LD research. This is the fifth year of providing grants to medical professionals to facilitate their attendance at conferences. CALDA is currently putting together talks for occupational health, specifically for the East Bay Municipal Utility District, on ecology, epidemiology and awareness of LD. More information will be posted on their website.

Dr. Bob Lane reported that his laboratory has a paper in press exploring the vector-capacity of *Dermacentor occidentalis* and *Ornithodoros coriacious* to transmit *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The conclusion is that though these ticks may become infected, they do not transmit the agent. In addition, they identified *Anaplasma bovis* and *A. ovis* in *D. occidentalis* ticks for the first time, suggesting a possible vector for these agents to animals. Dr. Lane also mentioned that he is now co-editor of a new journal published by Elsevier called *Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases*. He invited anyone publishing in this area to consider this journal as a place to submit the work.

Dr. Ray Stricker reported that the result of the special review panel of the Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA) to review the LD diagnosis and treatment guidelines was to unanimously uphold the guidelines.

IV. General public education

Twitter and Facebook: message brainstorm and review. Dr. Kjemtrup reminded the committee that the fall and spring outreach efforts are now focused on using social media outlets to broadly distribute awareness messages. She reviewed the proposed Facebook posting, linked tick awareness article, and series of tweets that will be posted on the CDPH Director's webpage. She clarified that the "bit.ly" link will allow monitoring of the response to tweets and Facebook and that the links will take people directly to the fall tick awareness article for Facebook and the tick-borne disease webpage from tweets. Comments from the committee included:

- If possible, note to look for ticks while in tick habitat and specify looking for ticks for at least three days after being in tick habitat.
- Try to get more tweets out during Thanksgiving break.

YouTube video contest: Tick-bite prevention. Ms. Claudia Erickson, health educator with CDPH, presented a proposed YouTube video contest to be held in early 2011 to encourage the creation of short public service announcements to promote tick bite prevention messages that CDPH and local agencies can use on their websites. Two age groups will be eligible: 17 and under and 18 and above. Prizes will be awarded to

the top submitters. At least one of the following messages is to be incorporated into the video: ways to protect yourself and pets from tick bites; how to do a tick check during and after being in a tick-infested area; how to safely remove an embedded tick. The contest will be promoted in collaboration with the DEET Online organization. The committee agreed with the proposed message content. Ms. Erickson provided the following clarifications and comments to committee comments and suggestions:

- The PSA will be 30 – 60 seconds.
- The word “pets” will be included in the messaging due to close contact of humans and pets.
- Participants will be directed to CDPH information on tick-borne diseases so participants have the same information and we can make the assumption that people will know and understand that ticks are dangerous.
- Local districts can help promote the activity on their website and through their education contacts.
- Limited funds will likely allow only one winner per category though runners up with certificates are certainly possible.
- DEET Online has sponsored similar programs for West Nile virus and is not requiring promotion of products in the video.

V. Children Education

Posting of Timothy Tickfinder curriculum and evaluation on CDPH website: Dr. Kjemtrup reminded the committee that the Timothy Tickfinder curriculum discussed at the last meeting has been put on a separate webpage to promote its use and encourage evaluation by teachers. In addition to making it available at events, the committee discussed methods to promote its distribution. Ideas included:

- Reach out to school nurses and school nurse organizations
- Contact children libraries to let them know of educational opportunities.
- Distribute information to Parent-Teacher Organizations/Associations.
- Remind local agencies of the availability of the material.

VI. Public Comment

Members of the public provided the following comments:

- May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month. This would be a good time to partner with libraries to get out the word on the availability of educational materials. In addition, 55 reported cases of LD each year in California is clearly an under-estimation, particularly given the number of people personally known with LD. It hurts people to under-report because it leads to physicians believing that LD is not common.
- The CDPH LD brochure has helped make it known that LD exists in California. There is an increase in LD support groups in Sonoma County. The speaker recognized that CDPH focuses on primary prevention of disease, and suggested that tertiary prevention (preventing acute LD from progressing to chronic LD) should also be a focus of public health.

- More physician education is the key. People with tertiary LD are suffering medical abandonment. Surveillance for LD should be carefully examined and not just consider incidence of disease but prevalence as well.
- The surveillance criteria for LD are too restrictive. The speaker agreed that library outreach is effective and encouraged the translation of the material into multiple languages besides English and Spanish, such as translating into Chinese. The speaker stated that outreach to outdoor workers is important and that tick-bite prevention messages should also include information on the use of essential oils.

The next meeting of the LDAC will be held in early-mid March. Information will be posted on the LDAC website.

Mr. Parlier adjourned the meeting at 12:00pm

Minutes prepared by Dr. Anne Kjemtrup, Coordinator of LDAC