

NPRSB Public Teleconference Summary
Thursday, December 7, 2017
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. EST
Teleconference: 1-888-417-0384 Passcode: 46529

NPRSB Members Present

Chair, Steve Krug, MD
John Bradley, MD
Christina Egan, Ph.D.
Prabha Fernandes, Ph.D.
Gray Heppner, Ph.D.
Noreen Hynes, MD, Ph.D.
Eva Lee, Ph.D.
Kenneth Miller, MD
Catherine Slemp, MD, MPH
Tammy Spain, Ph.D.

ASPR Staff

CDR Evelyn Seel, MPH
Maxine Kellman, DVM, PhD, PMP
Sarah Verbofsky, MPA

Call to order, Roll call, and Conflict of Interest Rules

CDR Evelyn Seel

CDR Seel called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. and conducted a roll call of all current and ex-officio NPRSB members. She then provided an overview of FACA, including the conflict of interest clause by which the Board abides. She then turned the meeting over to Dr. Steve Krug, Chair of the NPRSB.

Welcome and Agenda Overview

Dr. Steve Krug, Chair of NPRSB

Dr. Krug welcomed all Board members and members of the public to the call and explained the purpose of the call is to review and vote on the recommendations outlined included the Future of the NPRSB Working Group (FNWG)'s letter to the ASPR, Dr. Kadlec. He reviewed the goal of the FNWG, which is to examine the state of the NPRSB and identify opportunities and processes that might allow the Board to be more effective in its mission to support the ASPR on issues related to preparedness and response.

Presentation

Dr. Steve Krug, Chair of NPRSB

The formal letter to Dr. Kadlec about the future of the NPRSB contains three main recommendations, which mainly center on process. The first recommendation is to establish standing working groups within the NPRSB. The FNWG believes current and ex-officio members would be more empowered to be more proactive in advising the ASPR and DHHS Secretary if working groups were established to

continuously gather and analyze information. The FNWG has outlined three potential work groups based on the lifecycle of a public health emergency and response:

1. Public health emergency risk detection and assessment
2. Operational readiness and response capacity and capabilities
3. Risk reduction, recovery and resiliency

Across these three general work areas, there are crosscutting issues, such as science readiness, novel technologies, and cybersecurity. Additionally, the ability to leverage social media to communicate the magnitude of risks of public health emergencies to the public cuts across all three aforementioned potential work groups.

The second recommendation by the working group is to request that board members' security clearances be reinstated and utilized, so that Board members can advise the ASPR with a more complete understanding of issues that arise.

The third, and last, recommendation by the working group is to increase the number of in-person Board meetings. Although the NPRSB is able to communicate remotely through teleconference, this digital communication cannot replicate the synergy that results from in-person interaction between members. Being cognizant of budgetary constraints, the Board requests at least two in-person meetings per year.

Steve closed by thanking past and current FNWG members. He also thanked past and current ASPR staff, including CAPT Charlotte Spires, DVM, MPH, DACVPM, former Executive Director and Designated Federal Official (DFO), CDR Jyl Woolfolk, and Mr. Justin Willard before opening the floor for discussion.

Discussion

NPRSB Members

There was largely agreement among NPRSB members around the three recommendations, especially with regard to the formation of standing working groups and increased in-person meetings.

Gray Heppner pointed out that having access to classified information and the idea of increased in-person meetings are interrelated, as it is difficult to otherwise disseminate classified information.

Gray also asked Steve to review how this formal letter would align with the NPRSB's objectives in the charter. Steve explained that the recommendations amount to a change in process rather than content of the Board's objectives. The three recommendations would transform the Board from a passive entity (i.e., responding to ASPR requests as they come) to an active one (i.e., using standing work groups to continuously monitor crucial issues) which can more effectively work toward the goal of a nation better prepared to respond and recover from public health emergencies.

CDR Seel informed the Board that the NPRSB charter will be renewed next July and that issues pertaining to the document can be addressed closer to then, potentially through a temporary and short-term working group.

There was also a suggestion that the Power Point slides used during this public meeting be included in the appendix presented to Dr. Kadlec.

Vote

CDR Evelyn Seel

CDR Evelyn Seel ran through a roll call vote of the recommendations outlined in the formal letter. The recommendations were approved unanimously.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Steve Krug, Chair of NPRSB

Dr. Krug expressed gratitude for the privilege to serve and to work with all of the NPRSB members. He thanked all on the call for their participation in the meeting, and especially the FNWG for their thoughtful input into the letter. He expressed hope that the recommendations will put the NPRSB in a position to be more effective and work toward a more prepared nation. He closed by thanking the ASPR staff, specifically CDR Evelyn Seel, who is moving on, for her dedication to the NPRSB and NACCD.

Adjournment

CDR Evelyn Seel

CDR Evelyn Seel adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m. EST.