

**PUBLIC MEETING TRANSCRIPT  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2013  
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET**

**THOMAS P. O'NEILL, JR. FEDERAL BUILDING  
200 C STREET, SW, WASHINGTON DC 20024  
C1A16 / B122A – ASPEN CONFERENCE ROOM**

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**NBSB Voting Members Present**

John Parker, Chair  
John Bradley  
Jane Delgado  
David Ecker  
Emilio Emini  
Manohar Furtado  
Kevin Jarrell  
Sarah Park  
Nelson Chao  
Betty Pfefferbaum

**NBSB Ex Officio Members Present**

Kay Briggs (DOL Alternate)  
Peter Jutro (EPA)  
Sam Groseclose (CDC Alternate)  
Bonnie Richter (DOE Alternate)  
Mark Shepanek (NASA Alternate)  
Robert Sorenson (DOS Alternate)  
Lisa Kaplowitz (ASPR Alternate)  
George Korch (ASPR)

**(Charlotte Spires):** Good Afternoon, I am calling this meeting to order.

Welcome everyone to our NBSB public meeting. I'd like to welcome our NBSB members, Ex Officios, Federal Officials, and Members of the Public.

I am CAPT Charlotte Spires, the Executive Director of the National Biodefense Science Board. I also serve as the Designated Federal Official for this Federal Advisory Committee.

The purpose of this public meeting is for the board to discuss and vote on two tasks, one on biosurveillance, and the other on the National Health Security Strategy implementation models.

Before we move into the introductions, I would like to read the FACA Overview and Conflict of Interest Rules:

The National Biodefense Science Board is an advisory board that is governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The FACA is a statute that controls the circumstances by which agencies or officers of the federal government can establish or control committees or groups to obtain advice or recommendations where one or more members of the group are not federal employees.

The majority of the work of the NBSB, including information gathering, drafting of reports and the development of recommendations, is being performed not only by the full Board but by the Working Groups or the Subcommittee who in turn report directly to the Board.

Regarding the conflict of interest rules, the “Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch” document has been received by all Board members, who, as Special Government Employees, are subject to conflict of interest laws and regulations therein. Board members provide information about their personal, professional, and financial interests. This information is used to assess real, potential, or apparent conflicts of interest that would compromise members’ ability to be objective in giving advice during Board meetings. Board members must be attentive during meetings to the possibility that an issue may arise that could affect or appear to affect their interests in a specific way. Should this happen, it will be asked that the affected member recuse himself or herself from the discussion by refraining from making comments and leaving the meeting.

Please note that this meeting is conducted via teleconference. Please visit our website at [www.phe.gov/nbsb](http://www.phe.gov/nbsb) for instructions on how to call and log in to access this meeting.

The public has been notified to send in any comment using the NBSB mailbox at [NBSB@hhs.gov](mailto:NBSB@hhs.gov) – public comment will only be received via email; please refer to the agenda and the NBSB website at [www.phe.gov/nbsb](http://www.phe.gov/nbsb) for the details of today’s meeting. Written comments can be sent in after the public meeting by e-mailing the NBSB mail box at [NBSB@hhs.gov](mailto:NBSB@hhs.gov) with "NBSB Public Comment" in the subject line.

To date we have no public comments sent to us via email. As a reminder, the meeting summary and/or transcript will be made available on our website.

Thank you, and now I would like to turn it over to Dr. John Parker, our NBSB Chair.

**(John Parker):** Welcome everybody to the October National Biodefense Science Board Open Public Meeting.

The agenda has been published and with the items that we’re going to discuss also published so that it was a preview for the Board members, the Ex Officios and the public.

We had a busy time with the interruption because everybody understands what happened during the government shutdown and that affected the membership and the Ex Officios of the National Biodefense Science Board. So, we also curtailed operations during that period of time.

What I will tell you is that as soon as that curtain was lifted all of the issues that were before the Board that were to come, before this public meeting were addressed, where drafts were finalized and we’re ready to proceed with the agenda as published.

And so, today we’re going to address the situational awareness task that was given to us. And when that comes up Dr. Park and Dr. Furtado will introduce that and explain what the task was and what their recommendations are and how they came to that.

And then following that we will have a vote by the Board since a quorum is present. We will have a vote by the Board .as to whether we approve the situational report and upon approval a transmission letter will be sent to the Secretary.

Following that I will present to you a task that was given to us on a fairly short notice, on a 60 day turnaround, concerning the National Health Security Strategy and its Implementation Plan and we are going to answer that with a letter. The task will be explained and the letter will be explained by John Parker and we will recheck our emails to see if there are any public comments. But upon that presentation being finalized, a vote will be taken by the Board to approve the letter.

If it's approved, a transmission note will be attached to it and it will be forwarded to the Secretary.

We'll wrap up and we'll have conclusions. The time set aside for this meeting is one hour. I think that if we mind our Ps and Qs, we will be able to do that easily and perhaps give back a little time to our listening public, to our Board and to our Ex Officios.

And so I would just like to check, Sarah can you hear me?

**(Sarah Park):** Yes, I can hear you.

**(John Parker):** Okay, good. And you can work with Ayah on your slides. And so I'm going to turn the meeting over to you and to Dr. Furtado. Thank you very much Dr. Park and you have the floor.

**(Sarah Park):** Thanks so I won't belabor things too much, I have a brief set of slides just to sort of summarize and remind everyone what our report encompasses.

There weren't too many changes between when we last met about a month ago, I guess a little over a month ago and now.

So Ayah, can you go to the next slide?

So just as a reminder, our task from the ASPR was to assess the current biosurveillance activities, identify inefficiencies, and make recommendations in coordination with the applicable existing CDC advisory committees.

And I won't go over the PAHPRA points again. But you can see that there.

Next slide, Ayah.

So a reminder again the NBSB central recommendation that we're putting forward is to help achieve a national biosurveillance system for human health with international connectivity and ensure comprehensive real-time all hazards biosurveillance capabilities.

We re-emphasize a need for the HHS secretary to convene an HHS-lead centralized public health and healthcare situational awareness oversight authority to act as a central focal point to ensure that the compatibility, consistency, continuity, coordination, and interrogation of all disparate systems, and information requirements and basically is referred to as CESG or the Central Executive Strategic Group.

So the central task of the CESG is the development of a strategy to coordinate the effective integration of activities across the federal agencies and partners currently engaged in public health and healthcare situational awareness including human health biosurveillance.

Next

And we also recommend the establishment of a SIG or the Strategic Integration Group composed of management representatives including lead biosurveillance subject matter experts from relevant US government agencies.

The task of the SIG is specifically to assure the implementation of the CESG strategy with the goal of integrating and coordinating biosurveillance activities and analyses.

And an initial focus will necessarily be on the evaluation of existing biosurveillance redundancies and gaps.

Next slide.

And so this pretty much, I mean this really in a nutshell is what our report or our recommendations encompass.

We made sure to note that the intent of the SIG or even the CESG is not to create yet another permanent agency organization. We definitely do not want to add more structure to the government necessarily, but rather to fill a perceived need for coordination among all key players involved in public health and healthcare situational awareness activities including biosurveillance.

And through the periodic evaluation of both groups, the Secretary of HHS at his or her discretion can and will determine whether or not that need has been fulfilled by standing down one or both groups.

So that's pretty much my presentation. I think Jomana, Manohar and I would like to express our sincere thanks to all the members of the working group for their continued engagement, patience especially through some of the ups and downs of developing this report. And everyone should be included in the roster of the draft report.

And that's pretty much it. If anyone has any questions or any comments we can discuss them now.

**(John Parker):** Are there any members of the Board that have any questions for Sarah or Manohar at this time? Are there any Ex Officios that have any comments or questions for Sarah or Manohar at this time?

Hearing no questions or reason for discussion I will open the report to the Board to be voted on for acceptance, the report, plus its recommendations.

And I would like to go back to Captain Spires and ask Captain Spires to poll the board for yes or no approval.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Okay. All right, John Parker?

**(John Parker):** I approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Okay. John Bradley?

**(John Bradley):** I approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Nelson Chao?

**(Nelson Chao):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Jane Delgado?

**(Jane Delgado):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** David Ecker?

**(David Ecker):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Emilio Emini?

**(Emilio Emini):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Kevin Jarrell?

**(Kevin Jarrell):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Manohar Furtado

**(Manohar Furtado):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Betty Pfefferbaum?

**(Betty Pfefferbaum):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Sarah Park?

**(Sarah Park):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Are there any other Board members that have come on since I did the roll call?

All right then it's unanimous.

**(John Parker):** Thank you Captain Spires. And since we have the quorum present the report is approved for transmission to the Secretary.

And then I just want to make another check on any emails come in from public comment at all?

**(Charlotte Spires):** I have confirmation from Jomana that we have not received any emails from the public.

**(John Parker):** Thank you very much. So, I want to thank Dr. Park and Dr. Furtado for their fine work.

And I want to thank the staff of the NBSB that assisted them. And- I want to send a special thank you to the members of the working group, both Board members that were members of the working group and also Ex Officios on this.

This is a very good piece of work. I know that the group as they worked on this they wanted to stay at proper altitude so that it didn't look like they were trying to run the system or anything else and answer the task as to what best recommendations could be used to assist the Secretary to look at situational awareness over the next period of time. I think they did a wonderful job.

Thank you very much. I think we'll hear about this in the future. And I think this report is very important to the public that Dr. Park and Dr. Furtado looked at this from the perspective of the

American public-what they need to be safe, healthy, well-informed, and be prepared and put that all into a mechanism for the Secretary to use to make sure that her duties in that particular area were fulfilled. So thank you again, very, very much.

We got a task from the Secretary concerning the National Health Security Strategy. And we got the task on September 3, 2013.

And in that task it was very clear that the Secretary would like the National Biodefense Science Board to advise the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services by conducting a review of implementation models during the development of the Implementation Plan of this National Health Security Strategy.

Specifically, I would like the Board to issue a letter to the Secretary offering guidance on the strategic visibility of certain implementation models in developing this national strategy.

The time for completion of this task will be October 31, 2013.

I'm happy to say that we have completed the task. The task was received and accepted by the Board. A work group was formed.

And there was a discussion paper shared with the Board and with the working group and also a very nice presentation by Dr. Wolfe concerning this National Health Security Strategy.

We accepted the task.

It's important for the members of the Board, the Ex Officios and the public that are listening that this National Health Security Strategy of the United States of America was first published in December of 2009.

The intent of the Strategy is to look at many, many elements and bring them together to not just codify but to make the strengths, the health strengths that strengthen the United States in a healthy, strong, broad and well-connected manner between the public and private partnerships and the government.

Within the strategy, there are ten primary objectives to foster informed empowered individuals in communities, develop and maintain the workforce needed for national health security, ensure situational awareness, foster integrated scalable healthcare delivery systems, ensure timely and effective communications, promote an effective countermeasures enterprise, ensure prevention or mitigation of environmental and other emerging threats to health, incorporate post incident health recovery into planning and response, work with cross-border and global partners to enhance national, continental, and global health security, ensure that all systems that support national health security are based on the best available science, evaluation and quality improvement methods.

I encourage everyone to read this strategy. It will be republished, rewritten and brought up to date and republished for 2014.

And this document is well written, well put together, well thought out. And the Implementation Plan for the document is complicated because it has to cover these ten objectives in a complete manner so that all the sectors that have impact on any one of these objectives are involved.

To do that, the models that are needed to do that are varied. And the Department of Health and Human Services has five implementation models that were offered to us for review.

There's a traditional government centric model, an external execution model, a consensus building model, grassroots experimental model, and a mixed model, which encompasses the elements of each of the other four.

Now each of these objectives may take one or more of those models to make the implementation complete. The models are good. The objectives are good.

In conclusion, after looking at the National Health Security Strategy document, the Implementation Plan for that 2009 Strategy document, the models that the government has, the National Biodefense Science Board Working Group offers to the Board these specific recommendations.

Use the implementation model that most effectively engages the right people and the right organizations at the right time to gain fulfillment of specific and National Health Security Strategy objectives.

The professional leadership throughout the many agencies of HHS should be able to decide which model or models are most appropriate for each objective.

Recommendation two, the next version of the National Health Security Strategy Implementation Plan should identify tangible outcomes as well as performance measures for each stated objective to assess achievement.

If successful implementation and/or achievement of a stated objective is believed to rely upon the collaboration or endorsement of upper levels of government, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations or the public these stakeholders should be engaged in the development of objective specific implementation strategies and measures of performance.

Development, the third recommendation-- develop a full marketing plan for the National Health Security Strategy.

An informed American public will endorse the National Health Security Strategy initiatives and contribute towards the goals of building community resilience and strengthening health and emergency response systems provided that the public is aware of and understands the Strategy.

In informing the public and answering its questions and concerns, Health and Human Services should collaborate with entities perceived as trusted sources of information.

In particular, healthcare professionals within the United States and its territories need to be involved and will lead with enthusiasm if they are active participants in the Plan's implementation.

Engaging the broader community of key stakeholders should prove to be one of the go to strategies towards achieving the stated objectives.

Finally, the fourth recommendation, the National Health Security Strategy and its Implementation Plan should strive for international visibility and engagement as national health security in the end will depend heavily on a global security of equality as we move forward.

I'll conclude by saying that I personally was terribly impressed with this quiet document that seemed to come to our vision because of a task.

It has broad bearing on us for community resilience, for community health resilience. And it's been a pleasure to work with the Working Group on this and produce this letter to go to the Secretary with

all encouragement for the long life of this particular document and evermore detailed and performance monitored implementation plans.

I want to ask - I know that Emilio Emini is on the phone. I want to give Emilio an opportunity for any comment on this.

**(Emilio Emini):** John this is Emilio. Thank you very much. And actually, you said it all very well and very clearly.

We engaged in this task. We were all obviously, as you noted, impressed by the quality of the strategic document, honored and humbled to be asked to look at the potential methods for getting alignment on the document and certainly a new version of the document that's coming out which is the purpose of the letter that you read John and the recommendations that we're making.

So I really have nothing more to add other than what you said John. You said it all very clearly and concisely.

**(John Parker):** Thank you Emilio. Folks Steve Krug also worked on this. I just want to mention his name and thank him very much for his work.

Are there any questions from the members of the Board or Ex Officios about this report?

One last check any emails for public comment?

**(Charlotte Spires):** No, none received.

**(John Parker):** Thank you. Hearing no questions and no opportunities for increased discussion I would ask Captain Spires, as the Executive Director, to poll the members of the Board for the vote of approval or disapproval.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Absolutely, be happy to. John Parker?

**(John Parker):** I approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** John Bradley?

**(John Bradley):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Nelson Chao?

**(Nelson Chao):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Jane Delgado?

**(Jane Delgado):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** David Ecker?

**(David Ecker):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Emilio Emini?

**(Emilio Emini):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Kevin Jarrell?

**(Kevin Jarrell):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Manohar Furtado.

**(Manohar Furtado):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Betty Pfefferbaum?

**(Betty Pfefferbaum):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** And Sarah Park?

**(Sarah Park):** Approve.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Thank you very much.

Are there any other Board members that have gotten on the line in the last few minutes?

Okay, again Dr. Parker we have a quorum and we have a unanimous approval.

**(John Parker):** Captain Spires thank you very much. Members of the Board, thank you for approving this. And our transmittal - it is a letter to the Secretary so it will be transmitted as a letter. We won't need a cover sheet on it I don't think. Thank you very, very much.

Before I wrap up, I want to ask if there are any comments from members of the Board for the good of the meeting today or any comments from the Executive Director and her staff that pertain to the meeting today or the future?

**(Charlotte Spires):** So I just want to say, as Executive Director, how proud I am of the Board and the extreme quality of these work products again, under very sometimes trying circumstances.

And I just applaud the Board on what it's done. And I look forward to the Secretary receiving these very important recommendations. Thank you.

**(John Parker):** Thank you Captain Spires. And I thank you for the entire Board. As we wrap up I don't know how many members of the public are on. But if there's even one, I want that one person to know that the Board is functioning extremely well.

The members of the Board are completely dedicated to performing the tasks that we accept and doing the best they can with those tasks by partnering with the government but that partnership doesn't mean that we agree with government every time.

And in that same breath, I will tell you that the leadership that we've had the opportunity to work with -- HHS, DOD, DHS, Environmental Protection Agency, NASA, all - the FDA, CDC -- I just want to know that if there's just one public person on board I want you to know that there's an element of dedication that you cannot measure from the outside.

And the whole idea of having this nation prepared and being able to respond is not a minor detail that these people only think about between 8 o'clock in the morning and 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

So I just want to say to you that you're well looked after. And some of the things that we wrestle with are terribly, terribly complicated. And they're even made more complicated because they cost money.

These measures of preparedness and measures of response are I'll say it again, terribly special and terribly costly.

And these people measure these out as best they can, so that this nation is served well and well prepared for just about any type of event that you can imagine.

So in wrap up, we still have lots of things going on. And the timelines for those are extended out into the spring of next year. And as those become ready for public consumption, we will put them out onto the web sites and announce our meetings about those tasks.

Coming up in the fall and the late fall and January there will be announcements of new board members. And those will be public announcements and made publicly through the usual media and formats that the public is used to.

And so we're looking forward to embracing new membership to the Board. And very sadly if people have to leave the Board that's also a very sad occasion because once you're wrapped up in this business, you're probably stuck with it for the rest of your life.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Yes.

**(John Parker):** And so with no other comments, I'd like to give back time. And I'd like to return this meeting to Captain Spires for proper adjournment.

**(Charlotte Spires):** Okay thank you Dr. Parker. Any final comments for the good of the order?

Okay, hearing none this meeting is adjourned. Thank you very much.