

MCTF Policy Structure Subcommittee Meeting Minutes 11 09 21

Minutes for the Mosquito Control for the Twenty-First Century (MCTF) Task Force Meeting

Subcommittee Meeting: Policy Structure

November 9, 2021, 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

Meeting Topics:

- Meeting Open, Welcome and Roll Call (chair)
- Housekeeping Notes (EEA representatives)
- Meeting Purpose, Agenda (chair and facilitator)
- Discuss Additional Sources or Information to Fill Data Gaps
- Discuss Goals of Mosquito Control for the Commonwealth
- Begin Discussion on Outlining Recommendations
- Discuss and Finalize Subcommittee Member Action Items Prior to Next Meeting
- Wrap Up (Facilitator)
- Closing Remarks and Vote to Adjourn (chair)

Stephen Rich called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm. The subcommittee members in attendance included Russell Hopping, Brad Mitchell, Richard Pollack, Heidi Ricci, and Heidi Porter. Alisha Bouchard and Jessica Burgess addressed housekeeping items. Diana commented on the full task force meeting related to the DPH presentation. Heidi noted that she submitted a list of questions related to environmental health impacts of pesticides and was also trying to make more connections with experts and felt that this was the biggest gap in the information at this point. Jessica Burgess noted due to scheduling Dr. Brown was the only one that was able to attend the full task force meeting, but more DPH resources and individuals who serve roles in the areas that were referenced would be available in future meetings to fill the goal of addressing data gaps.

Stephen Rich discussed private labs and thought some of the things that were noted about third party labs in the presentation could be revisited. Alisha Bouchard noted that there will be DPH staff at the next full task force meeting where additional questions can be asked. Diana Pietri mentioned overlap arising in other subcommittees that may be relevant to the Policy Structure group. Stephen Rich commented that having meeting minutes of these meetings and additional subcommittee meetings would be helpful. Jessica Burgess commented that once meeting minutes are approved, they can be shared with the subcommittee groups and meeting minutes would be posted to the full task force site.

Diana Pietri moved the conversation to the subcommittee schedule and timing of meeting objectives from November through February (2022). The group discussed extending the time frame for the task force work. Alisha responded that she would check with EEA to see if there was any update on that topic. Members of the subcommittee group also discussed the effects of chemicals on human health and the environment as a necessary component to consider answering directives related to policy.

Brad Mitchell responded that he was not sure that data gaps on human health were pertinent to the charge of the subcommittee. Heidi Ricci noted that the subcommittee did not need to understand all the aspects of the data gaps in detail but when addressing diseases that impact a dozen cases per year and talking about other conditions that affect hundreds of thousands of people across the Commonwealth on an annual basis, more context was needed. Members of the subcommittee discussed the need to be careful when making subjective judgments on

what was important to other people. It was noted that there are gaps in everything and at some point, the subcommittee would need to make recommendations and offer guidance.

Diana Pietri conducted a vote of simple majority to determine if the subcommittee group thought this was a critical gap that needed to be addressed. Diana noted to the group to raise their virtual hands. Two people (Heidi Ricci and Russell Hopping) thought it was a critical data gap. Four people do not think it was a critical data gap (Brad Mitchell, Richard Pollack, Heidi Porter, Stephen Rich). Heidi Ricci commented about voting down information and wanted it noted there were discussions about consensus recommendations and then minority opinions. Brad Mitchell highlighted that this topic should be in a different committee. Diana Pietri commented that she would make sure the facilitator of the pesticide selection subcommittee knew that this came up. Brad noted he was on the Pesticide Selection subcommittee and can bring it back as well.

Diana Pietri provided a recap of the critical data gaps that were identified:

- Best policy structure from neighboring State. Example, was there a better way to structure MA based on the way other States are structuring things
- Public participation, transparency, policy, and procedural stakeholder input
- Variation between MCDs: how, why, and inconsistencies across different MCDs, including funding structure

Russell Hopping noted that it could be useful to outline what science-based mosquito control would look like that's different than what's happening now. Richard Pollack clarified that the MCD's are making decision based on scientific analysis, but the MCDs may not have a complete data set as we like. Heidi commented that some MCD's operate differently than others and thinks some districts apply the science in different ways. Brad Mitchell commented that from his perspective science was used. Brad discussed a few of his concerns and noted that there needed to be scientific consensus in how mosquito control is performed.

Richard Pollack followed on Brad Mitchells comments that there was data that confirmed the location and timing of complaints and using eyes and ears of residents was valuable. Russell noted that it would be helpful to determine what changes need to be made to make it more consistent and scientifically based. Heidi commented that it was a struggle to link roadside spraying with human health outcomes because there was not data on communities that don't belong to districts. Diana asked if the subcommittee wanted to keep discussing this at future meetings to inform recommendations. Heidi Ricci and Russell Hopping said they wanted to keep discussing. Brad Mitchell thought it was important, but no need for debate. Brad added that there needed to be centralized decision making as there were too many groups making decisions.

Diana Pietri asked the group for final thoughts. Heidi Ricci noted that she hoped the group looked at Boulder CO, the CDC/EPA framework, and what other states are doing. Heidi Porter noted that she anticipated that bringing a science-based component would be part of any recommendation the committee made. The group discussed looking at other states mosquito programs to review different elements that could help inform decisions. In addition, it was discussed that the group should review practices of non-neighboring states to identify other options for mosquito control.

Stephen Rich followed up on expectations and noted a lot of these things were about trade-off and that consensus meant compromise. Members of the subcommittee discussed local landowner options and broached some questions related to what taxpayers of the state desired in a mosquito control program. Heidi Ricci discussed opt out related to people wanting surveillance, wetlands management, education, and outreach, but not spraying or local roles in deciding about spraying. Heidi noted a structure for municipalities to get what they want and not what they don't want, a menu-based option. Brad Mitchell commented on the need to distinguish between nuisance and vector control. Alisha Bouchard mentioned that Richard Pollack shared a document from the AMCA about mosquito control and parts of it may be helpful to the group.

Diana Pietri asked if there were any additional data gaps that needed to be addressed. Heidi Ricci noted a check in with someone at EEA to engage with EJ communities. Alisha Bouchard addressed this as something being working on. This was determined to be an area of need but not a critical data gap.

The last critical data gap was the variation between MCDs and the how and why. Heidi Porter responded for the communities that are in an MCD how and why are they in an MCD and how would the structure of an MCD change? Jessica Burgess commented that the recommendation would need to start with legislative change. Broad sweeping change would need to amend enabling legislation, or repeal and do some sort of change to MGL 252 with a more generalized MCD structure. Each MCD through MGL 252 or their own legislation sits within the SRB. Jessica Burgess noted that we can help identify the resources of what that would look like.

Rich Pollack commented that there are two kinds of change on the horizon. First, change in fiscal structure which would require legislative change. Some towns may want only some services. Second, change in practices may not require a legislative change. Generally, the director of the MCD determined what was best for a district. Commissions should be able to make that determination. All things worthy of discussion, maybe services can be provided based on what a community wants. More larvicide, more surveillance, but for the same dollar amount. Subcommittee members discussed recommendations for legislative changes and what could be implemented by the SRB and MDAR. Jessica Burgess clarified that there could be flexibility in services, but there was not flexibility in cost structures without legislative change.

Heidi Ricci noted that it was within the charge of the subcommittee to tackle legislative change and ask if there could be ways for municipalities to participate in DPH surveillance but nothing else. She identified that there are lots of issues with local control and how we're measuring what we're doing and how we're affording it. She also identified that the group should be looking at ways to break down silos across governments. Richard Pollack noted Heidi Ricci's idea of breaking down silos and linking conservation commissions with MCDs. Richard noted that he had tried in the MCD he serves in as Commissioner and not a single conservation commission wanted to engage. If we could encourage this collaboration it would be great, but it has historically been difficult. Richard referred back to the discussion on a menu approach. Richard asked what might happen if there was a spike in the abundance of nuisance mosquitos or if there was a peak in arboviral risk, for towns that want only surveillance. If funds, personnel, and equipment are not available, the services will not be available.

Diana noted that Brad Mitchell had proposed that MCDs or MDAR provide a rationale on how they made their decisions (for example, on use of adulticide). Brad noted that he thought it would be a benefit to having this documented. Diana called for a show of hands to establish a set of questions to distribute to the MCD's for answers. No one stated that they were opposed. Brad Mitchell agreed to draft questions, one on adulticiding and one on salt marsh control. Jessica Burgess flagged for OML purposes that the document cannot be shared until the next subcommittee meeting. Richard Pollock directed those interested to read the MCD annual reports and encouraged all the subcommittee members to come up with questions as to the "why" of MCD practices.

Diana Pietri noted that the ERG report had a chapter on IPM and encouraged the group to review the content. Diana mentioned that the next meeting would be on 11/18 and that meeting would include a discussion from Julia Blatt related to some of the practices from other states. Diana agreed to follow up with Heidi Ricci regarding the compilation of Colorado information to present at the next meeting and Diana would also follow up with Brad Mitchell regarding looking into Florida. Seeing no other questions or comments Stephen Rich entertained a motion to adjourn from Richard Pollack, the motion was seconded by Brad Mitchell. All in favor said aye. The meeting was adjourned at 2:02 p.m.