

Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council
Google Meet Meeting
Thursday, October 9, 2025
Minutes

Name	Representation	Attendance
Jill Levy	Camp Owner/Manager-For Profit	Absent
Cassandra Casey	Camp Owner/Manager	Present
Dr. Jasmin Grant	Maryland Department of Health	Present
Anne Irwin	Camp Owner/ACA Accredited.	Absent
Ramona Riley-Bozier	Public	Absent
Lauren Biddinger	Local Health Department	Present
Vacant	Camp Leader	Vacant
Ed Arellano	Local Health Department	Absent
Dr. Nobin Ngozi Ogbonna	Camp Owner/Manager - Nonprofit	Present
Amy Schisler	National Camping Organization	Present
Parker Bratton	National Camping Organization	Absent

MDH Staff Present

Brian Flynn

Tylvia Koromah

Cassandra Casey, chair of Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council requested a motion to start meeting. Cassandra Casey and Jasmin Whitfield approved of the start meeting. Youth Camp website information was available in the chat for participants.

Council attendance: **Cassandra Casey** is the council's -chair and a camp manager in a community college-based day camp in Carroll County. **Jasmin Grant** is a school health program manager at the Maryland Department Health, Maternal Child Health Bureau. **Amy Schisler** is a director of summer roundup Girl Scout Camp on the midshore in Denton in Caroline County, representing a national camping organization. **Laren Biddinger** the environmental health director for the Anne Arrundell Health Department. **Dr. Nobin Ngozi Ogbonna** represents camp owner/mgr-non profit.

Aidyn Izquierdo camp director at Camp Greentop will replace Lillia Sheline. She will apply for council seat with the GOA.

Vice Chair Selection Cassandra Casey sought a volunteer from the council for the vice chair position for the 2025-2026 camp year, explaining it primarily involves supporting the chair. Allison Abbondante confirmed that bylaws require a vice chair and stressed the role's simplicity. Amy Schisler, despite being busy, expressed openness to discussing the vice chair role with Cassandra Casey outside the meeting, with a potential vote at the next meeting.

Update on open council positions/attendance: Brian Flynn deferred to Tylvia Koromah regarding open council positions. Tylvia reported only one open position, previously held by Leela Sheeline, which Aidyn Izquierdo plans to apply for. Cassandra expressed excitement about this, noting that having only one open position was a rare and positive occurrence for the council.

Annual Report: Brian presented the annual report data, noting that 78% of reports had been submitted, which was considered decent despite ongoing submissions. Key statistics included nearly 2.5 million camper days, 289 reportable injuries, 51 reportable illnesses, and eight medication errors. There were also seven reported EpiPen deployments.

Continuing discussion of Medication Administration: Cassandra Casey inquired about the status of a new recertification program for medication administration training, noting the current six-hour child care course was longer than needed. Brian Flynn updated that he and Dr. Cliff Mitchell had met with an applicant for an online course, which appeared promising, and they hoped to have it ready for the 2026 season. They also welcomed the council's continued agenda inclusion to maintain priority

Allergy Action Plan Form Update: Greg Joseph provided an update on the allergy action plan form, an optional but crucial addition to existing medication forms, designed to provide more comprehensive information for anaphylactic reactions. Brian Flynn confirmed that he and Cliff Mitchell were actively working on this form, aiming to complete it along with the medication recertification training in the current meeting session, ideally before the end of the calendar year for practical use by camps. Amy Schisler supported a swift release, mentioning that parents were already preparing physicals and needed updated forms online soon.

FBI Background Check Updates: Cassandra provided a summary of the FBI fingerprinting issue, where the FBI had previously restricted full background check information to non-government agencies like camps, despite state law requiring it. Brian confirmed that the state Department of Health was working to establish a system where the FBI would send fingerprint results directly to the state office, which would then notify camps with a "pass/fail" status. This new process, anticipated for next season, would involve additional state staff and a proposed \$10 fee per person to process results.

Brian clarified that the new FBI fingerprinting system would not require camps to re-do existing FBI fingerprints if records were on file and employees continued service. Sara Yoe inquired about year-round centers and "live scan" results. Brian confirmed that new hires could still be fingerprinted throughout the year, and live scan updates for crimes would be sent to the state, then forwarded to camps. The change would only affect FBI results, with state criminal and child protective services background checks still going directly to camp directors.

New Business

Maryland State Legislation: Mary Lehman, a state delegate, introduced a discussion on Maryland camp safety legislation, prompted by the catastrophic flooding at Camp Mystic in Texas. She expressed concerns about current Maryland law regarding emergency preparedness, highlighting perceived gaps in staff training frequency, camper inclusion in drills, emergency plan updates, and the reliance on single-technology warning systems in remote areas. Brian Flynn explained that the department provides detailed guidance and conducts training and drills beyond the regulations' text, often requiring drills with campers at the start of each session.

- **Monitoring Weather and Communication for Camps** Michael McNeely -MDH- emphasized the importance of camps monitoring weather beyond their immediate state, as riverways are affected by rain events in other states like Pennsylvania. He also highlighted the necessity for camps to include communication plans in their emergency procedures, especially in areas with no cell service, suggesting the use of radios or other communication forms, which are reviewed during inspections.

- **Coordination Between Camps and Local Jurisdictions** Allison shared that a mandatory ACA standard requires camps to contact local emergency officials annually before sessions begin to provide session dates, emergency gate codes, helicopter landing zones, and property maps. Mary supported this, noting a gap in coordination after the Texas tragedy where Anne Arundel County emergency services did not know where summer camps were located within their county, highlighting a need for better awareness and interaction (01:01:52).

- **Emergency Plan Updates and Offsite Locations** Mary raised concerns about the frequency of emergency plan updates, especially regarding offsite safe spaces like churches, given that businesses and relationships can change. Brian confirmed that the MDH conducts extensive reviews for new programs and inspects most camps annually or at a reduced rate for good standing camps, including remote record inspections to check for changes. They also ensure staff have access to these updated plans.

- **Challenges in Statewide Coordination and Inspections** Brian acknowledged that Anne Arundel County EMS had reached out to their department for camp contact information, which they provided. He noted that while camps are required to submit information from various agencies like fire marshals and planning and zoning, there's a disconnect due to varying county and town procedures, leading to issues like incorrect contacts or inspection types. He highlighted that some jurisdictions inspect every four to five years, rather than annually as required for facilities like camps, and stated that MDH aims to simplify this process and improve communication among agencies.

- **Maryland's Camp Regulations and ACA Accreditation** Greg Joseph, with 30 years of experience running camps, explained that Maryland has some of the most developed and regulated camp regulations in the country, with many of the current reforms in Texas being practices Maryland has implemented for decades. He also highlighted that Maryland is primarily a day camp state, with residential camps making up a smaller portion, and many large residential camps are ACA accredited, which involves adhering

to over 200 deeper standards than state regulations. ACA camps are visited every five years, providing extensive review and opportunities for changes.

- **Call for Codification of Emergency Procedures** Mary stressed the importance of codifying emergency preparedness and readiness plans into law, rather than relying solely on the discretion and priorities of individuals, as leadership and ownership can change. She emphasized that while current MDH practices and ACA standards are commendable, their continuity is dependent on the individuals in charge, and legislative action could ensure long-term adherence.

- **Funding for Summer Inspectors** Greg appealed to Mary to consider the budget for summer inspectors when discussing potential legislation, as adequate funding is crucial for MDH to ensure emergency plans and other regulations are properly implemented by having "boots on the ground". Brian added that most of this work is done by temporary emergency employees hired each season, and MDH has concerns regarding the hiring freezes for the next year.

- **Relationship Between MDH and Camps** Michael McNeely, MDH described the unusual and fantastic relationship between their office and regulated camps, noting an open willingness to work together, with camps frequently contacting them for assistance even when unsure about compliance. He stated that this collaborative approach has greatly contributed to safety in Maryland.

- **Number of Licensed Camps and Contact Information** Brian stated that there were over 1017 licensed camps this year from 1,300 applications, including both new and renewing programs. Linsey corrected, there were 1300 applications and 1017 licensed camps. Mary shared her contact information, encouraging further discussion and sharing of ideas regarding camp regulations.

- **Department of Labor Heat Regulations** Allison inquired about a Department of Labor heat regulation (COMAR 9.12.32) that appears to be geared towards construction workers but might apply to camps. Subha Chandar -MDH- confirmed that new heat standards are applicable and they are determining implementation for camps, with state staff also developing guidelines for their field work due to a recent heat-related fatality. Susan Potts noted that recreation and parks agencies are already implementing these standards, including monitoring staff, providing water misting stations, and designated breaks. Cassandra responded that this topic, including training requirements, will be added to the agenda for the next meeting on December 4th.

Suggest next steps:

- Brian will try to get the allergy action plan forms updated and available for use before the end of the calendar year and will look into sending a blast email to clarify that the updated allergy action plan form is optional.
- Aidyn Izquierdo will reach out to Tylvia regarding applying for the open council position.
- Amy and Cassandra will discuss the possibility of Amy being vice chair outside of the meeting. Cassandra will send an email to Amy Schisler.
- Cassandra will add the discussion about the Department of Labor regulation Comar 9.12.32 on heat and employees to the agenda for the next meeting.
- Brian Flynn -MDH- will look into the Department of Labor regulation Comar 9.12.32 regarding heat and employees and circle back with Allison Abbondante about it.
- Public: Question regarding application approval. Allison responded that Brian would contact you. She requested a motion to adjourn today's meeting.

Cassandra requested a motion to end the meeting from the council. Amy gave a motion to adjourn, and Lauren gave a second motion.

The meeting ended at 11:33.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tylvia E. Koromah, Secretary of CRCEHS
Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council

And

Cassandra Casey, Chair
Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council

Amy Schisler, Vice-Chair
Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council

Approved: December 4, 2025
by: Amy Schisler and Jill Levy