

# Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council

Virtual Zoom Meeting  
Thursday, December 3, 2020

## YCSAC Member Attendance

Name	Representation	Attendance
Allison Abbondante	Camp Owner/Manager-For Profit	Present
Dolores A. Hooban	Public	Absent
Gabriel Houghton	Local Health Department	Present
Janet Rose	Camp Leader	Present
Dr. Jed Miller	MDH	Present
Meena Suri	Camp Owner/ACA Accred.	Present
Melita R. Bell	Camp Owner/Manager - Nonprofit	Present
Kelly Campbell	National Camping Organization	Present
Maggie S. Harris	Camp Owner/Manager	Present
Neil S. Berlin	National Camping Organization	Present
Virgil Boysaw, Jr.	Local Health Department	Present

### MDH Staff Present

Linda Rudie  
Tylvia Koromah

### Introductions

All are present but Dolores. Neil called meeting to order 10:00 am.

### Approval of October 1, 2020 Minutes

Minutes from the YCSAC meeting on October 1, 2020 were reviewed. Neil made a quick update per Dr. Miller's request.

*Motion to approve the minutes from 10/01/2020 as written by Virgil Boysaw, Jr.*

*Motion seconded Allison Abbondante.*

*Motion passed unanimously.*

### Update on Open Council Positions/Attendance

Linda reported that there are four positions that will end on June 30. Meena Suri, Camp Owner Management and Janet Rose, Camp Leader are eligible to reapply. Both stated they have reapplied for their Council position. Neil Berlin took over the term of another person. He has reapplied for another appointment. Gabriel Houghton from Local Health Department has served two years and not eligible for reappointment. Linda contacted applicant Andrea Hanley from Carroll County Local Health Department. Her application is in process. Please contact Linda if you know of anyone who is in the Local Health department either in environmental health or community nursing areas who may be interested in a Council position. The Governor's appointment office would like to have choices.

### **Review pandemic order letter sent from YCSAC**

The Council sent a letter to the MDH requesting an update to orders for youth camps. The letter went to Secretary Neall, who retired Dec 1, 2020. In summary, the letter requested for the modification of current order for camps and to keep camps updated to align with Covid-19. The most recent order was June 12, 2020. The request was to provide the Council opportunity to provide input for future State YC orders. Neil reported that the two camps who were going to operate this winter, will not open.

MDH responded to the Council's letter. In summary the letter stated that MDH understands our concerns and appreciates our attention to this issue. MDH recognizes the Council's concerns with the current June 12th order pertaining to Youth Council. At this critical time, and for the next few weeks and months, the State's resources must be directed towards limiting the spread of COVID-19. As resources are made available, and conditions are more favorable, the State will continue to plan for the reopening of Maryland businesses, including youth camps. The current MDH order does not preclude youth camps from planning for 2021, including the participation from out of state campers. The letter from MDH was signed by Jinlene Chan, MD, MPH, FAAP Act. Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services.

Vigil commented that he appreciated sending the letter out from the Council. No additional comments.

### **Residential Camp Workgroup Update**

The residential work group (not created by the Council) is reviewing the State order to help residential camps open in 2021. Neil and Greg have been leading the workgroups with Linda's assistance. The workgroups are composed of day and residential camps.

Greg provided the workgroup update. The group has been meeting since September working through 80% line by line to provide suggestions on what a new order would look like given the new knowledge that is available now. Suggestions are given to Linda's group. There are four themes:

1. Out of state campers – what are the conditions and limitations
2. Grant MDH program staff the ability to make exceptions when a camp shows it meets the intent of the order.
3. Write the language of a new order to reference such things as youth sports and restaurants and the group sites the order does not have to be updated every time there is change in a recommendation.
4. Creating households where the residential camp setting is treated like home household, for the use of mask requirements, eating, etc.

The goal of the work group is to complete suggested language by the end of the year. The hope is if the numbers improve by early in the year, the language for the orders would be available.

Neil added that 29 camps which includes nonprofit, for profit and special needs providing a diverse group on the workgroup call. Neil thanked everyone for making this work group.

Linda added that the work group was not assigned by the Council. Neil initiated this voluntary group. As regards to the letter from MDH the department, they understand the need to update the order. She does not know when the update will be available. Camps are already planning for next summer. The CDC just revised quarantine requirements. The work that the informal work group did can be helpful with three types of information: guidance, orders and frequently asked questions. Information provided by the work group will be available in all three places.

Gabriel asked about testing before attending camp. Neil responded that the current order does not address testing. It is in the suggestions from the work group.

A meeting attendee asked regarding out of state campers, will there be a separate order for people in the DMV and PA area. Neil responded that the letter from MHD states that we are not prevented from recruiting campers out of state, at the current time. Linda commented that the current order addresses strictly people who reside in MD. When the order gets updated we are hoping that information will address, for at least adjacent areas and/or information about positivity where the camper is coming from, method of travel and testing.

Greg added that in the draft letter from the work group it is requested that at a minimum MDH should provide restrictions to align with its recent order 11/10/20, specifically encourage out of state campers to be tested 72 hours prior to arrival. Visitors waiting for test response should stay at home. The order stated that the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of VA, PA, and DE are except from this order.

#### **Review Draft Annual Report Letter**

The draft letter was sent to the Council. The letter is similar to past letters. In summary it states the purpose of the Council, camps that operated in 2020 and request that the State continue to fund the Council. 2020 is expected to be much lower than years past due to Covid. MDH will provide the comparison of data for camp years 2019 and 2020.

Greg asked Council should staff camps be designated as critical workers in relative to the issuance of who gets the vaccine. All agree that it is vital. Virgil added from the mental staff aspects this is important. Neil will edit the critical worker comment in the annual report letter, MDH will provide the final camper days data and the draft annual report letter will be sent to Council members for comments. We will vote to approve final letter at our February Council meeting.

Dr. Miller asked in terms of item 4 (in the annual report letter) regarding improving compliance on unlicensed camps, has the Council discussed how the expertise might look and to break it down more in the letter. What is the extent of knowledge of unlicensed camps? Linda responded that to educate, CHHCS had a couple of ads in the Baltimore magazine to let camp operators know that there are minimum State requirements for summer camps and to connect with our office. Our webpage has links for new camps to start the online registrations and our staff are

assigned to work with new camps. Prior to last year, we scheduled three to four camp directors in person trainings on how to get criminal background checks, write safety plan and procedures and documents for camps and facilities. This year we held two in person trainings and the remaining were virtual meetings because of Covid-19. We suggest that the new operators take the training. But the training is offered to new camp operators and to existing camp operators. Trainings will look a little different for next year as opposed to previous years. We have made progress in the search options for camps, which will educate the public.

Dr. Miller inquired about the number of people who attend the new director's trainings, are they new directors or the same directors. Linda responded that usually they are new directors but there is definitely a mix of new camp operators from an existing program or camp operators may take the training more than once just to make sure they are up-to-date on requirements.

Greg commented that this issue has been around since he has been on the Council since 2005- for 2006. There are a lot of details to operate a camp. Linda's group has done a good job with trainings, hot topics and being personally available to new directors. There are camps who work to meet requirements and then there are camps who try to work around the requirements. The fee structure is given to reward camps who are in good standings. If not in good standing, camps get more visits from the inspectors.

A meeting attendee asked if the Council considered a graphic to use for camps to distinguish licensed from unlicensed camps, something that parents can see. Linda responded that has come up several times. We have not come up with a way to achieve that. Perhaps going forward with the camp online search for certified camps, camps can promote that and have parents go to the search for the camps.

#### **Licensed Camp List for Public Access**

Linda reported that we do have the youth camp search linked to the current database. Search is available by youth camp name, license number, county and specialized activity. The last step is to add the link to MDH website for use. A nice feature is that the camp has the ability to update contact information, which includes camp phone number, contact email, social media and description. Neil asked when will the link be available, will camps be notified and can we have a demo. Linda commented that the link will be available within the next few weeks, camp operators will be notified of this addition and we can schedule a demo at next meeting.

Greg commented that the Council has been working on this for over a decade to get data and structure in place. For camps that did not operate in 2020, how does that reflect in the database since they were not license in the most recent year. Linda stated that the camp status is inactive. Camps will have to contact CHHCS to change status from inactive to renewing. All this is part of getting ready to renew for 2021. Greg asked, is this a click of a button or an email? Linda responded that the camps will have to contact CHHCS to make status change. The renewal is the click of a button. Neil added that we will need accurate final 2020 data of camps for the annual report. Linda added that she contacted 50 camps who did not send AR and she is waiting for responses as to whether they operated or not.

Kelly asked is there a way to update from summer phone numbers to off season numbers. Linda responded that the camps always have access to that information. They would log into their camp portal and go to the camp additional information section. The community user can update camp webpage, camp phone number, camp contact email, social media and description. This section is available now for use.

Greg asked how difficult will it be to have two phone numbers, one number for summer and one number for off season. Linda responded how many really need to two numbers. Greg commented this not critical, just nice to have and how many folks need. Linda will make a note of that request.

### **Update on Mental Health inclusion in Health Plan**

Neil reported there was recommendation for a new regulation to include mental health as part of the health plan. There was a meeting in October. Maggie and Jed were at the meeting. Maggie reported that she did not feel any progress was made. The State was very reluctant to do a regulation because of the process and they did not have any data to make a strong case. The original subcommittee for this topic was not at the meeting. Jed commented that MDH inquired if there was another route and perhaps more effective way to consider. MDH prompted them to think of other ways to address this issue. No progress was made on the regulation. If the previous subcommittee members have any information or strategies to share, that may be helpful for the next meeting.

Michal McNeely (CHHCS) attended the meeting and had more questions than answers. He had a discussion with Linda and he started doing some research into help plans and health review. The language that is used is an assessment of camper behavior concerns. We do not want to diagnose a camper as a behavior. We want to understand when there is a behavior of concern and how to handle the behavior of concern. The Council had agreed to add to the existing health plan and to work with health officials. One of the issues is that what one may perceived as a behavior of concern maybe normal behavior. This should be discussed with the individual and parent. A health care professional must be involved. Better direction is needed from the Council with this new regulation. The mental health will be included in the health program COMAR 10.16.07. Someone with health care professional background should assist in the writing so that we are not doing the diagnosis, but care under a behavior concern.

Allison responded that she and Rami Schwartzter, who is no longer on the Council, were on the mental health committee. There was not much data. So the Council chose the route to include a mental health plan in the regulations. She asked Linda if there is a way to get more data. Linda responded that the incident reports are for injuries and certain illnesses. Mental health behavior of concern or anxiety for a camper is not in our information.

A box was to be added to the incident report without a regulation change and that can provide us with the data. Neil asked about the check box approval. Allison responded that move on the

report was placed on hold when Covid became the primary issue. Maggie commented that she thought we had a draft for the incident report with the box.

Lori Smith from Prince George County and Montgomery counties commented that this was brought to the attention to the Council. At a Council meeting in 2019, it was discussed that we did not have the time to add the box for 2020. We know we will have some cases because of Covid and the children being inside all the time. We also mentioned mental health first aid, similar to CPR first aid, where if you suspect something you can address it or call an agency. Can we add the box, if not can we instruct the people or train people to check the box so that we can get the data. Neil requested that the subcommittee meet, discuss this topic, review the meeting minutes and give an update at the February meeting. Linda commented that as far as collecting mental health information, it has to be understood exactly what the Council is looking for and the purpose of data collected. Lori commented that Prince Georges and Montgomery counties has seen a rise in the mental health issues. Will the Council allow a representative who is not a Council member attend the meeting? Linda commented that she wants to keep it as a work group, but have no problem with the request as long as the subcommittee -Jed, Maggie, and Virgil agree. Allison commented she had no problem, the data which they bring is welcome. All subcommittee members agreed to the meeting and to the outside representative. Allison will organize the meeting. Linda will add Allison to the 12/9 meeting. She and Lori will talk about the representative to attend the meeting.

A meeting attendee commented on what is the reluctance to collect the data. This mental health will become more of issue moving further on. The information collected will really be important even if we are not sure of the outcome.

Neil commented we did discuss this a lot in the past meeting. We will hear a recommendation from the subcommittee in February. Greg added given that it may be difficult to get a regulation change, is there a best practice or MESH training mention in the health program for the new director's training. Mike agreed to add a MESH training program as part of best practice, if we can get a check mark on the form. Neil commented that the subcommittee look at check boxes, best practices, regulations and all aspects of this for summer 2020.

### **New Business**

No new business.

### **Adjournment**

Kelly requested for motion to adjourn meeting at 11:23 a.m. *Motion given by Allison and motion seconded by Janet Rose passed unanimously.*

Respectfully Submitted By,

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

Approved on 01/29/2021 By: Maggie Harris and Virgil Boysaw, Jr.

And

Neil S. Berlin, Co-Chair  
Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council

Kelly Campbell, Co-Chair  
Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council