

Boston University Medical Campus

Community Liaison Committee (CLC)

National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories (NEIDL)

MEETING NOTES

Monday October 15, 2018

6:30 pm. * 650 Albany St.

ATTENDING

James Eliscar, CLC; David Opp, CLC; Joe Lillis, CLC; Richard Fox, CLC; Robert Timmerman, CLC; Valeda Britton, Executive Director, Community Relations/MED, BU; Chimel Idiokitas, Director, Community Outreach/MED, BU; Jake Sullivan, VP Government & Community Affairs/ BU CRC; Dr. Ronald Corley, BU Department of Microbiology, Director, NEIDL

Meeting opened at 6:40 pm by Ms. Britton.

Government & Community Affairs Update:

Ms. Britton opened the meeting with a Community Affairs update. Community Relations continues to be an active member of the community. We attend neighborhood association and safety task force meetings. We sit on development, business and working group committees. As a result of Boston University's contribution of resources to South End Soccer, we will be one of the honorees at their 10 Year Celebration on October 27th at SOWA. This wonderful organization provides soccer programming to children in the South End, Roxbury, Chinatown and adjacent neighborhoods at no cost. South End Soccer not only gives children of all skill levels access to a healthy, fun sport, but builds community leaders.

There have been approximately 54 tours of the NEIDL this calendar year. Given that the NEIDL is now actively doing research at all biosafety levels, Community Relations will be working with the CLC to rethink educational activities and tours utilizing the simulation lab and our experienced team of researchers and other professionals.

Ms. Britton reported that the NEIDL hosted a number of summer tours that were fun and well received for local high school students and undergraduates. The Greater Boston Area Research Opportunities for Young Women (*GROW*) program visited the

NEIDL for the second year. This group of rising senior high school young women had a lively and informative Q&A session with female NEIDL researchers before the tour. Students from The Boston Area Health Education Center (BAHEC) came for a tour. Students were able to try on demo BSL-4 personal protective equipment (PPE), and take part in dexterity activities, including pipetting, while wearing multiple layers of gloves. Forty-four (44) students enrolled in the BU Research in Science & Engineering (RISE) program also visited the NEIDL for a tour. Last, but not least, BU's Summer Training as Research Scholars (STaRS) brought undergraduates as part of their ten-week research experience to tour the NEIDL and have an engaging conversation with Dr. Corley.

Mr. Sullivan gave an update on Government Affairs. He mentioned that quite a few longtime politicians had been ousted by newcomers. The change in the City Council and at the State House has been unprecedented. The progressive messages of the newcomers seemed to resonate with more voters. CLC member, Jon Santiago, won his primary in a bid to be elected to the MA House of Representatives for the Ninth Suffolk District. He tendered his resignation to leave the CLC shortly thereafter. City Councilor Ayanna Pressley won her primary and could become the first MA woman of color to be elected to Congress. Ms. Althea Garrison will replace her on the City Council in January. Boston University looks forward to providing relevant public health information and working collaborately with these candidates. It was noted that BU Government & Community Affairs members have reached out to City Councilor Kim Janey and will meet with her in November to discuss BU research and community outreach initiatives and opportunities.

NEIDL Update from Dr. Corley:

- Global Update News:
 - Avian Influenza could be the next big pandemic. The H7N9 influenza virus first appeared in humans in China. It is caused by exposure to infected poultry and results in severe respiratory illness. There are annual outbreaks in China each year. This has led to the culling of millions of poultry. There have been no reports of the virus in the United States. However, because this virus has the ability to mutate and birds and people are global travelers, researchers are concerned that the virus may be moving westward from China. Thus, they are closely watching birds that are flying over Europe.
 - Ebola – There has been a 2nd outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) this summer with 5 or 6 infections a week. Because of the instability in the area, including health workers being injured or killed, this has made it difficult to expediently follow contacts, use the Ebola vaccine in the most effective way or use therapeutically. As this outbreak is happening right on

the border of DRC and Uganda, Dr. Nahid Bhadelia, Director of Infection Control, at the NEIDL has been a consultant for the Fort Portal clinical care department and has been in frequent contact with Ugandan health officials.

- Acute Flaccid Myelitis (AFM)– Is a polio like disease that appears suddenly and causes paralysis and leg and arm weakness, especially in children. It is on the rise and has been reported in approximately 16 states. It is thought that certain enteroviruses may cause AFM, including enterovirus D68. There is currently no treatment.

○ Receipt of Agents:

This Summer the NEIDL received its first shipment of BSL-4 agents by ground transportation. Deliveries of the agents are highly regulated. Agents are packaged according to Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations with additional measures, as promised to the community. Previously, the NEIDL committed to using ground transportation, because it was believed that the agents would be shipped from Atlanta (CDC) or Maryland (NIH).

Ground transportation of agents to the NEIDL from the CDC or USAMRIID was not possible. Instead, the agents arrived from the Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Montana. As different pathogens will be needed for active research and given that pathogens will originate and be delivered from different places, Boston University has asked the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) to consider changes to the BSL-4 transportation plan. It is proposed that each pathogen shipment would be evaluated with its own dedicated risk assessment to determine the appropriate mode of transport. While the BPHC is assessing this request, NEIDL will follow its existing commitment to transport pathogens by ground transport, in compliance with DOT rules and delivered in a safe manner.

Protocols have been sent to the CDC, BU IBC and BPHC as a result of the NEIDL's request for the delivery of additional common types of BSL-4 pathogens. These will not arrive immediately. Once the pathogens arrive, time is needed to verify the virus, inactivate it and sequence it. The NEIDL plans to store these viruses because if there is an outbreak anywhere in the world, the NEIDL will be ready to research those pathogens causing the outbreak. New faculty also want to research additional viruses other than filoviruses at BSL-4.

○ CDC Visit:

The CDC is coming to visit the NEIDL for five (5) days in November to inspect the BSL-4 lab space. There will be a minimum of 6 investigators.

○ New Investigators/External Investigators:

As reported previously, the NEIDL has recruited two (2) principal investigators and BU faculty members, Dr. Robert Davey and Dr. Anthony Griffiths. Both come from the Texas Biomedical Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas and are experts at studying viruses at BSL-4. These two investigators also have experience with “regulated studies” for testing therapeutics and vaccines which use quality control and quality assurance systems to monitor studies. To get FDA licensure, you have to conduct studies using these methods.

○ Requested change to BPHC permit:

- In 1994, guidelines for regulation of Recombinant DNA (rDNA) were put in place for the City of Boston. rDNA use involving BSL-4 research was prohibited. Over the last 40 plus years, rDNA has been safely used in most research labs and at all biosafety levels. In fact, the entire Biotech industry is built on rDNA work.
- rDNA technology is important to develop vaccines against BSL-4 pathogens and should only be done in BSL-4 laboratories such as the NEIDL. rDNA is a fundamental tool for studying pathogens, including BSL-4 viruses. For example, rDNA is used to produce vaccines, and these would not be tested in the BSL-4 laboratories given the current prohibition. Given this situation, the NEIDL has formally asked the BPHC to reconsider the prohibition and to allow rDNA technology to be used at the NEIDL. It is believed that no other BSL-4 laboratories in the world prohibit rDNA technology. This prohibition puts our researchers at a major competitive disadvantage.

Meeting Adjourned