

Boston University Medical Campus

Community Liaison Committee (CLC)

National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories (NEIDL)

MEETING NOTES

Monday December 17, 2018

6:30 pm. *Conference Call.

ATTENDING

Robert Francis, CLC; James Eliscar, CLC; J. Kevin Fisher, CLC; Jim Keeney, CLC; Youngjin Jung, CLC; David Opp, CLC; Joe Lillis, CLC; Jean Lee, 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 6:35 pm

NEIDL Update from Dr. Corley:

CDC and BPHC Visits:

The CDC came to visit the NEIDL in November to inspect the BSL-4 lab space. We are waiting for their written report of findings. We expect to receive it shortly. The NEIDL will hold off requesting two amendments until the report is issued. The amendments involve permitting additional BSL-4 space and animal studies.

The BPHC did an inspection today of the BSL-4 space. They met with the NEIDL BSL-3 and NEIDL BSL-4 Biosafety Officers. We should receive a written report of the findings in the next few days.

Transportation:

Because BU would like to do additional research with different BSL-4 pathogens, it has asked the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) to consider changes to the BSL-4 transportation plan. It is proposed that each pathogen shipment 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.

Dr. Corley was asked how are samples transported to the NEIDL. He responded that in response to community concerns, we enhanced our transportation plan with additional layers of security. All samples are driven to the NEIDL. At all times, deliveries are closely controlled and monitored. The package containing the agent is equipped with a GPS tracking device. The package is the only package in the vehicle. The vehicle has two drivers in attendance and has a GPS tracking device. BU has set up its own web-based center to track the package and vehicle in real time.

Requested change to BPHC permit for rDNA BSL-4 Research:

The NEIDL has formally asked the BPHC to reconsider the prohibition on rDNA research at BSL-4 and to allow such rDNA technology to be used at the NEIDL. This regulation is unique to Boston. Over numerous years, rDNA research has been safely used in research labs throughout the world, including Rocky Mountain Laboratories and Galveston National Laboratories. It is important to the NEIDL to develop and test vaccines against BSL-4 pathogens. This research should only be done in BSL-4 laboratories such as the NEIDL. Dr. Corley noted that if the amendment is passed, the use of rDNA will still be subject to local, Federal and BPHC oversight. In addition, the BPHC will continue to evaluate all BSL-4 protocols that the NEIDL submits to the BU Institutional Biosafety Committee.

The BPHC will hold a public meeting on this request on January 7, 5pm- 7pm. The public comment period will remain open until January 10, 2019. Letters of support to amend the rDNA regulation have been sent to the BPHC from researchers, industry members as well as community stakeholders.

New 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 have extensive experience researching viruses such as ebola, lassa fever and Marburg at BSL-4. Also, two (2) new investigators will start research at BSL -2 and BSL-3 at the NEIDL. Both Drs. Saeed and Douam work with flaviviruses associated with mosquitos.

Global News Update:

The current ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the second largest in history. A greater number of children are being impacted than normal. The World Health Organization (WHO) is working towards getting more of the experimental ebola vaccine into the affected areas. However, concerns have arisen about having a sufficient supply to vaccinate those most in need. This vaccine has been 100% effective in animal studies, but its efficacy in humans remains to be determined. Yet, it is active against only one strain of ebola. In addition, given the war zone and the mobility of the population, it is difficult to undertake accurate contact surveillance measures.

Government & Community Affairs Update:

Ms. Britton announced that Government and Community Affairs continue to attend community meetings and will continue to monitor the progress of both proposed marijuana dispensaries (633 Tremont and 591 Albany) in the South End . GCA participated with the BU School of Public Health in holiday events at the annual holiday party at the Barkley Housing Development and took part in Holiday Reading with BU student athletes at local elementary schools. These activities were enjoyed by all participants. BU will host a Martin Luther King celebration in partnership with the City of Boston. This event will occur on January 21, 2019 on the Charles River Campus. Invites will be sent out at the beginning of January.

Mr. Francis (CLC Chair) asked that the NEIDL consider giving an update/presentation at the Safety Meeting at the Baker House and to the Dimock Community Health Center Committee. CLC members have also requested more engagement with the community surrounding STEM activities. One member suggested an article in the Boston Globe to discuss the commencement of activities at the NEIDL. Of particular interest to some members of the group is the use of the BU Mobile Lab. Mr. Sullivan informed the CLC that Community Relations had met with potential partners at Wheelock School of Education to discuss programming opportunities and access to Boston Public Schools to promote ID2. The CLC offered to brainstorm any grant funding opportunities to get the Mobile Lab operational.

Meeting Adjourned