

**Boston University Medical Campus**

**National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories (NEIDL)**

**Community Liaison Committee**

**Wednesday, September 21, 2022**

**4pm Zoom**

**Meeting Notes**

**Attending:**

Jean Lee, CLC; J. Kevin Fisher, CLC; Joe Lillis ,CLC; Norm Stenbridge, CLC; James Keeney, CLC; Joseph Maldonis, NEIDL; Lora Forman, NEIDL; Ben Slutsky, NEIDL; Dr. Mazur, NEIDL; Valeda Britton, Executive Director, Community Relations/MED, BU; Elizabeth Leary, Executive Director, Government & Community Affairs; Ms. Sierra Downs, Training & Emergency Planning Program Manager , EHS, NEIDL.

Welcome & Introduction—Ms. Britton

Ms. Britton opened the meeting and introduced Ms. Downs

PRESENTATION: Emergency Planning and Incident Response at the NEIDL: Ms. Sierra Downs

Ms. Downs mentioned that she had been at the NEIDL for about 2 years working at BSL-4 before becoming the Training & Emergency Planning Program Manager. She started her presentation by giving a global example of emerging and reemerging infectious diseases. From 2000 to now, infectious diseases have been increasing significantly which makes the need for institutions like the NEIDL more important and relevant. The NEIDL is owned and operated by Boston University. One of its missions is to develop diagnostics, vaccines and treatments for emerging and reemerging infectious diseases. The facility has the capability to do BSL-2, BSL-3 and BSL-4 research and even contains a BSL-4 simulator which is used to

train personnel to work at all levels of containment, especially 3 and 4. She then showed researchers working at BSL-2, 3 and 4 levels and asked us to note that personal protective equipment (PPE) changes at each biosafety level in the laboratories, but research is still done in a biosafety cabinet.

She acknowledged that incidents happen in labs throughout the world and that is why preparedness and transparency is so important. Each January, people from NEIDL EHS, Leadership, IT, Facilities, Public Safety and Emergency Management meet to do a Hazard Vulnerability and Risk Assessment. They evaluate an extensive list of potential hazards such as, technological, human caused and naturally occurring.

From this list, they plan three NEIDL drills and exercises which incorporate Federal, and City requirements for the NEIDL. This Drill/Exercise Team of experts devises one drill testing security. Another drill tests the facility, while the third drill involves a joint response to a research incident with Boston Medical Center. All three drills involve internal and external first responders. The NEIDL CLC is invited as observers and play a valuable role giving community feedback. At the end of the day, each participant adds their efforts to prevent hazards from slipping through the layers of defense. The next NEIDL drill will occur in December. Ms. Downs also said that Boston University is a member of the Boston Biosafety Working Group. This group meets quarterly and consists of external first responders, the Boston Public Health Commission and other containment labs throughout the city. The goal is to explore training opportunities and to educate each other on best practices.

NEIDL Operations Manager, Joseph Maldonis, pointed out that we give tours to first responders at least 3 times a year to familiarize them with the layout of the building. On the question of transporting pathogens to the NEIDL, the NEIDL website in the Safety & Security Section contains accurate information on safeguards that are in place to minimize risks and protect researchers. Thus, protecting the community as well.

Ms. Britton discussed community engagement activities that have occurred since June 2022. Interviews have occurred for the GCA's Outreach & Program Director position. The NEIDL researchers gave career advice and a tour of the Simulation Lab and the BSL-4 Suit Room to the following student groups: [BU Greater Boston Research Opportunities for Young Women \(GROW\)](#), [The School of Public Health's Pophealth Exchange](#) and [Summer Training as Research Scholars Program \(STaRS\)](#). Tours were well received.

Ms. Britton thanked CLC members that completed the NEIDL Survey. Responses showed that attendees were comfortable with the 4pm-5pm meeting time. Zoom meetings continue to be acceptable. CLC members would like to hear about current research at the NEIDL as an agenda item at each meeting. They would also like to hear more about community education programs at BU and arts & culture events and programs offered by BU.

On the community front, Ms. Britton reported that BU is a member of the Newmarket Business Association Business Improvement District (BID). We also volunteered at the South End Soccer Swings for Unity at Franklin Park on September 16, 2022. A good time was had by golfers and nongolfers at this annual fundraiser for Boston children to play soccer for free. She has been in touch with the Match School as she would like to continue the Speaker Series for 10<sup>th</sup> graders there.

The CLC was asked to hold November 16, 2022 at 6pm for the BU/NEIDL Annual Public meeting. As this is the tentative date, more information will be forthcoming.

The public is invited to attend NEIDL CLC meetings. If you would like to attend or need more information, please contact Valeda Britton, JD, Executive Director Community Relations BU Medical Campus, [vjbritto@bu.edu](mailto:vjbritto@bu.edu) or 617 358-9180.