

# 6/22/16 Statewide LHD Call Summary

Hosted by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, Center for Local Health

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**Participants: County LHD's – 39**

**Bureau Staff – 13**

## **LHD Communications Update – Amy Atkins, MPA, Director, Center for Local Health**

- On Thursday, June 15, 2016 and at the request of the West Virginia Association of Local Health Departments (WVALHD), the Center for Local Health (CLH) hosted a meeting to discuss the budget process and potential impacts for local health departments as a result of the delayed passage of the budget by the West Virginia State Legislature. Those present included the Association's lobbyist, Tom Susman, the president, Chad Bundy and leadership from Kanawha-Charleston and Cabell-Huntington Health Departments as well as Bureau leadership. The information provided during the meeting included:
  - An understanding among participants that the budget delay has an unknown impact on local health departments first quarter invoice payments.
  - An understanding among participants the only invoices that the Bureau can realistically attempt to expedite are invoices for emergency funds which should come from agencies with less than 3 months operating cash, cannot meet payroll and/or provide basic public health services.
  - Support for a statewide call so that all local administrators and health officers can understand the budget process and possible implications of the delayed budget.
- The Center for Local Health attended the May meeting of the WVALHD. The topics discussed included the delayed passage of the state budget and the importance of contingency plans should payments be delayed and the state Zika Action Plan.
- CLH is sending important information out to local health departments at least monthly through the [dhhrbphclh@wv.gov](mailto:dhhrbphclh@wv.gov) mailbox. You may find updates related to the program plan, funding opportunities and issues around the budget process. Information is also collected from the Bureau offices and programs of time sensitive ways in which local health input can be incorporated into surveys and plans.
- Q & A – None received.

## **FY 2017 State Budget Process – Chuck Thayer, Deputy Commissioner**

- The budget bill has been signed by the Governor. However, at this time the Department and the Bureau do not have a budget.
- Once the budget bill is signed it is passed on to the treasury to load the state budget into the OASIS system. There are many steps in the process and during normal processes will take from approximately April to July from signing to the agencies.
- DHHR is expecting substantial delays in getting documents processed that includes sub-recipient agreements, procurements and invoice payments. The State Aid is not through a sub-recipient process and does not go through the OASIS system in the same way but the invoices are paid as all other invoices are paid.
- The finalization of the budget being loaded into OASIS and acceptable for use even with the pre-work at the bureau level and department level depends greatly on state revenues and funds being available in the accounts to be used.
- At the same time, agencies will be conducting close outs for FY 2016.
- Q & A
  - Question – If there is a delay at the state level, do you anticipate problems with your payroll, your programs, not so much the money that comes to local agencies but state government in general?

Could this mean that the state has to furlough or reduce the workforce which will also impact local agencies? Answer: The single impact at the state level depends on the amount of money available to draw down and whether that will be the level needed to sustain staffing. How that will impact the local agencies remains to be seen in terms of where the reductions will be taken within the Bureau.

- Question – Will this impact all agencies and not just local health? Answer – Yes, all will be impacted by the budget cuts.
- Question – How can agencies support each other? Answer – Agencies are encouraged to work within the threat preparedness regions through cross jurisdictional sharing arrangements to support and sustain delivery of services.

### **FY 2017 Program Plan – Amy Atkins, Director, Center for Local Health**

- The first quarter documentation for the FY 2017 Program Plan was due on June 15<sup>th</sup>. As of today, 37 of the 49 local health departments have submitted all required documentation.
- There are 12 agencies that have not submitted all the required documentation and should be working promptly to get their information in as quickly as possible to position their invoice in queue for payment. Agencies that have submitted all documentation will be routed through the approval process for release of first quarter funding, pending notification of a budget by DHHR.
- In the required documentation there are 3 components:
  1. Submission of the Program Plan documentation for the projections for the year
  2. The year-end report
  3. Reporting throughout the year
- We are prioritizing the Program Plan submission and the invoices for the first quarter and the emergency fund invoices for FY2016 to get money flowing and will then focus on the end of year reports. Notifications will go out to all LHDs when the end of year reports are available in the SharePoint site for submission.
- Q & A
  - Question – How does an agency know if they have submitted all the required documentation? Answer: Each agency should review the guidance document and validate that each document has been uploaded to the SharePoint site. Agencies may also contact Linda Lipscomb at [linda.f.lipscomb@wv.gov](mailto:linda.f.lipscomb@wv.gov) or at 304-356-4240.
  - Question – Could a submission button be included on the SharePoint site. Answer: Yes, that modification will be made for next year.
  - Question – Will there be regular updates to local health departments in terms of distribution of funding? Answer: Yes, as the Center for Local Health receives information it will be shared with all local health departments through statewide emails and statewide calls. The Center will also schedule a special statewide call to address any time sensitive information which may become available.

### **Emergency Fund Application – Amy Atkins, Director, Center for Local Health**

- CLH is currently processing FY 2016 invoices to distribute remaining emergency funds to all local health departments.
- July 1<sup>st</sup>, local health departments will have access to the FY 2017 Emergency Fund. These funds are available to support local boards of health experiencing a financial emergency and to support the provision of basic public health services.
- The objectives of the Emergency Fund program are as follows:
  1. Sustain local public health service delivery by a local board of health.
  2. Identify and address, when applicable, the root cause of the financial emergency.
  3. Transition the agency to a sustainable financial model.

- Given the uncertainty of the state fiscal situation, we want to ensure that we are positioning resources as quickly and effectively as possible for local boards of health that may experience emergencies as a result of the state budget process or any other financial emergency.
- CLH is in the process of updating guidance for these funds to get them out as soon as possible with a target date of Monday, June 27<sup>th</sup> so that local boards of health can submit applications as soon as possible for review and consideration.
- Q & A
  - Question – When will the emergency funds be available? Answer: Local boards of health may apply for emergency funds July 1 through May 15 as funds are available.
  - Question – Could these funds be paid quickly even with the state budget issues? Answer: This is the only source of funding in which there is a justification to expedite payment as they are intended to support unanticipated financial emergencies.
  - Question – Did any agency apply for funding last year? Yes, two agencies applied and neither agency was funded as they did not meet the criteria for funding.
  - Question – Wouldn't the theory that all counties will be having a financial crisis due to delays in state payments be enough to justify distributing the funding equally? Answer: Some agencies have cash reserves and contingency plans in place and are currently not nor will they experience a financial emergency should payments be delayed. The process for obtaining emergency funds is to apply and this will assure all local health departments have access to the fund for its intended purpose.
  - Question – If a local health department receives emergency funding, will they be required to pay it back? Answer: No. The Center for Local Health will review the application and make a determination to fund the application.
  - Question – Will the Bureau try to help the county to see why they were experiencing a financial emergency? Answer: Yes, the emergency fund is a mechanism for the Commissioner to assist local boards of health experiencing financial emergencies.

**Cross-jurisdictional Sharing Project Update – Amy Atkins, Director, Center for Local Health**

- A statewide email was sent out on Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup> to identify local health departments interested in participating in a statewide study.
- In the last year, we have received multiple requests from local health departments for technical assistance around cross-jurisdictional sharing of services, up to and including consolidation.
- The Cross-jurisdictional Sharing Project would serve as the basis for the development of tools to support resource sharing as a method of improving operational costs and assuring alternate delivery models are in place for the statewide delivery of basic public health services. The Center is specifically interested in working with up to 4 pairs of contiguous counties willing to work jointly on the project activities and will be selecting agencies that represent the various geographic areas of the state.
- This study is in direct support of the Public Health Impact Task Force (PHITF) recommendations and specifically the recommendations published in the West Virginia University College of Business and Economics, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, *Briefing on Local Health Department Consolidation Potential in West Virginia*. Specifically, the study supports the maintenance of local presence which is currently inequitable across the system; accreditation readiness by assuring alternate delivery models are in place with sufficient capacity to meet standards; and an efficient and effective public health delivery system by providing a mechanism for increasing economic scale and agency capacity to deliver service for a consistent level of performance.
- The goal of the study is to determine how evidence-based policies and procedures related to the combination of local boards of health can be applied to assure the provision of basic public health services across the state and provide equitable coverage for all citizens. Study objectives are as follows:

1. Understand the applicability of various regional models for local agencies considering resource sharing, up to and including consolidation.
2. Identify quantifiable benefits and costs that occur as a result of consolidating 2 or more local boards of health.
3. Determine the factors, including geography, transportation, demographics, socioeconomic variables and board of health fiscal and administrative capacity that will form the geographic design under which local boards of health may combine.

Participating agencies will receive funding in the amount of \$5,000 (as funding is available) to support the activities associated with participation in this project.

- If you are an agency that is interested, please email [dhhrbphclh@wv.gov](mailto:dhhrbphclh@wv.gov) or call the CLH at (304) 558-8870.
- Q & A – None received.

### **General Questions**

- Question – What is the status of the regional tobacco prevention network and the Smokefree WV Initiative? Answer: There is ongoing discussion but at this time a final determination has not been made.
- Question - How soon will a decision be made regarding the tobacco programs? Answer: There is not a definitive date. The Bureau is doing contingency planning with all Bureau programs pending the final budget and would advise local health departments to do the same during this challenging year.
- Question - Is there a possibility of combining the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter invoice since there are anticipated delays? Answer: This would result in further delays. The first quarter is being released as a result of the submission of the required documentation. The second quarter will be released once the documentation is reviewed and approved.

### **Wrap Up – Amy Atkins, Director, Center for Local Health**

- An invitation will be sent for the next statewide meeting today. It will be held July 6<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 pm–2:00 pm in the Diamond Building conference rooms B10-11. Please feel free to join us in person.