

**Public Health Data Standards Consortium**  
**Executive Group, March 26, 2003, 1:30 – 2:30 PM, Eastern Time**

**Call participants:**

**Walter Suarez, M.D.**, Executive Director  
Minnesota Health Data Institute (MHDI), chair

**Elliot Stone, M.U.A.**, Executive Director, CEO  
Massachusetts Health Data Consortium (MHDC)

**Suzie Burke-Bebbee**, Health Informatics Specialist  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)

**Marjorie Greenberg**, Chief  
Classifications and Public Health Data Standards Staff  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)

**Anna Orlova**, Associate Professor  
Johns Hopkins School of Public Health

**Robert Davis, M.S.**, Director, New York State Department of Health Statewide Planning  
and Research Cooperative Systems

**Hetty Khan**, Health Informatics Specialist  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
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**Michelle Williamson, M.S.**  
Health Informatics Specialist  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Health Statistics

**Donna Pickett**, Medical Systems Administrator  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)

**Arturo Coto**, Disease Surveillance Coordinator  
Nebraska Health & Human Services System  
Office of Epidemiology

**Steve Steindel**, Supervisor Health Scientist  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Information Management Resource Office

**Tom Doremus**, Information and Communications Specialist  
Public Health Foundation

**Discussion of proposed agreement from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public health to serve as an “incubating” organization for the Public Health Data Standards Consortium as it transitions to a non-profit organization.**

The Executive Group met to review a letter and Memorandum of Understanding received on March 14, 2003 from Dr. Donald Steinwachs, Chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHBS). This is a proposed agreement from JHU to serve as an “incubating” organization for the Public Health Data Standards Consortium as it transitions to a non-profit organization. No other proposals have been received from other organizations at this time. Another organization that may be interested in providing such services is the Public Health Informatics Institute, headed by Dave Ross and affiliated with Emory University.

At the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Health Data Standards Consortium Steering Committee meeting held on March 12-13, 2003, Steering Committee members agreed that the Consortium should move forward to become more formally established as a non-profit organization. An “incubator” organization can provide an anchor to carry out the Consortium’s agenda and provide the necessary resources during this period of transition.

Committee members discussed the details of the proposal and the extent to which the provisions would support the Consortium in its transition. Steve viewed the proposal as a minimum commitment and asked if the intent of this discussion is to review the letter and develop solicitation criteria for approach to other organizations. Steve is concerned that we allow no structured agreement to reduce the present and anticipated role of the Consortium within the public health and research arenas. Walter stated the draft letter expressed the intent of JHU to be a founding member as well as housing and administrative support on a very limited basis. The decision that rests with the group is to decide how to proceed, as well as develop ideas of working with other entities as well. Arturo identified the intent of JHU as three-fold. That is to:

1. be a founding member of the Consortium
2. provide office space, furniture, and telephone and internet access for the duration of incubation (estimated at three years)
3. appoint the Consortium’s executive director (to be selected and funded by the Consortium) as adjunct faculty

Marjorie felt that there could be more than one entity supporting this incubating status. The issue is to identify what one entity offers and develop ideas of what is needed beyond that. Steve felt there could not be multiple incubators but there could be other organizations supporting the Consortium in different ways. Elliott identified some benefits of an incubator organization, such as access to payroll systems and legal services; also to secretarial services, as well as phones, computers, and Internet. The

proposed Memorandum of Understanding requires reimbursement for copying and for telephone usage. Anna clarified that this letter is based on the business plan developed by the Consortium, and that those things that we feel should be extended can be negotiated.

Steve addressed the requirement that the PHDSC have secured money in an account to provide for the Executive Director salary. Anna felt having four letters of support from founding members could satisfy this requirement. Also of concern are the financial obligations of travel to national meetings. Tom felt we need to develop a comparison of the best incubators providing there is more than one organization with such interest. He believes that having the Executive Director be a faculty member will attract a higher caliber candidate as well as provide the Consortium with greater visibility. There is also the possibility of having students assist with Consortium projects if allowed. Also, the proximity of JHU to the DC metro area is a plus because face-to-face encounters with federal and association members located in this area will sometimes be necessary. Concern was expressed about the benefit package that the Executive Director would receive based on being part-time.

Therefore, the group decided to respond to the JHU proposed agreement with appreciation for the proposal but with the need to clarify the following points:

1. Executive Director issues:
  - a. Is there a choice of whether or not the Executive Director is appointed to faculty?
  - b. What are the expectations for his adjunct faculty appointment to the Department and School?
  - c. As a part-time faculty member, will there be adequate time to engage in Consortium building and solicitation for resources?
  - d. What benefits package will be offered as a part-time faculty and how will this be supported?
  - e. Would there be travel funds for Executive Director to attend national meetings?
  - f. Would JHU assist in appointing Executive Director and in securing funding for position?
2. Terms of support:
  - a. Duration of incubation – can we negotiate this to be 5 years?
  - b. Start date of July 1, 2003 - Is this negotiable?
  - c. Would JHU assist PHDSC in seeking additional resources, at a minimum by endorsing these efforts and making introductions to funders?
3. Administrative support:
  - a. Is this renewable?
  - b. Can we negotiate reimbursement required for copying and telephone?
  - c. For what other secretarial services is JHU expecting reimbursement?
  - d. Office space - OK
  - e. Internet access - OK
  - f. Phone OK

4. Legal Support
  - a. Would we have access to JHU legal department to carry forward application for a 501c3 status?
5. Payroll system
  - a. Who sets up the bank checking account?
  - b. What accounting services will be provided?
  - c. Could grants or Cooperative Agreements to support Consortium work be made to JHU? If so, would overhead be charged?

Notes from this meeting will be circulated to the Executive group to assist with drafting a response to Dr. Steinwachs at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. It also was noted that efforts should begin to form the initial Consortium Board of Directors.