

Flint Water Response Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 31, 3:00 p.m.

Welcome

- Meeting led by Chrissy Cooper (Catholic Charities)

Ground Rules

- No recording devices
- No offensive language
- Questions and answers will happen after all report outs are complete
 - Can write questions down
- Be respectful towards those asking and answering questions
- Don't interrupt

Good 360/United Way of Genesee County

- Have purchased hand sanitizer from Home Depot, baby wipes from Costco, and bottle openers for seniors
- Have given large quantities hand sanitizer to Catholic Charities for distribution
- Sign up sheets still available for requests
- Grants given out this week
 - Supported Child Care Network to reach out to licensed and unlicensed childcare services for distribution needs
 - Our Lady of Guadalupe received grant as well

EPA Report Out

- EPA planning another meeting on April 16 at Mott University Center at UM-Flint for Earth Day with information about EPA's work on lead issue
 - Presentation from 10:00 to 10:30 followed by an open house expo coordinated with larger Earth Day event
- Community component of what EPA does
 - Teams going out canvassing in neighborhoods to make sure they have EPA information in an accessible format
 - Have been involved with speakers' bureau in about forty events throughout city where EPA representatives are available to answer questions and share information
 - If you have an event that you would like EPA to speak at feel free to reach out
 - Long term effort by EPA
- Status update on recovery
 - Over next couple of weeks, EPA will be meeting with FEMA and other experts to review data that has been collected since January
 - EPA has been collecting data since January
 - Issue will not be resolved any time soon
 - Large amount of lead still in pipes

- Over next couple weeks data will be analyzed and that information will be shared
- Health concerns and rash problems—what is EPA sampling for?
- CDC and DEQ have taken questionnaires and then make recommendations for EPA sampling
- EPA samples for heavy metals, potential irritants like pH and chlorine levels, and general water quality
- This data is given to health agencies who reach back to individuals
- Added disinfectant byproduct monitoring (when chlorine breaks down into other compounds)
- Augmented sampling program to include analysis of hot water tanks
 - Have identified heavy metals here as well
- Enhanced program will test for organic compounds, disinfection byproducts, pesticides, herbicides
 - These include carcinogens—if any are identified that will be reported immediately
- On a weekly basis we can go through each point of sampling and science behind sampling in depth if needed
- Rash investigation continues to progress with interviews, taking calls, and collecting as much information as possible about individuals experiencing rashes in Flint
- As of this morning, the number of referrals is 520--of those, 345 are classified as active rash
- Focus of investigation is to identify individuals who have a current, active rash that has either started or worsened since switch back on October 16
- Priority is to do all we can to ensure current water supply is safe as possible
- Will look back at effects prior water supply had as well
- Have interviewed 285 individuals
- Of 285 interviewees, have scheduled 135 dermatological screening exams
- Dermatological screening important part of investigation
- Also reaching out to secure evaluations from other healthcare providers
- Expert looks at rash, studies rash, and makes an expert determination of what rash is
- Referred 131 homes to EPA for water testing
- Legionella is not an organism that is of concern when it comes to rashes
 - Dermatologists and infectious disease experts report that no one examined so far has an infectious rash
 - Looking at metals and other irritants as the potential source
- Questions for EPA
 - Why aren't you testing more homes as part of investigation?
 - 135 houses are being tested
 - A subset of 10 sites are being tested for substances we don't normally expect to find in water system
 - Recent water breaks—instructed to filter and boil water?
 - City must provide guidance for this

- How are reports of rashes distributed geographically?
 - Widespread across cities
 - No clusters identified
- What are results of overall testing?
 - Chlorine levels are published and updated online
 - Chlorine in system fights bacteria
 - Lead levels are shared
 - Filter test results are shared
 - Available on public website (epa.gov/flint)
 - Working on putting together report of general water quality data and getting it out as soon as possible
- Would EPA be willing to conduct research publicly, joining forces with outside experts? Can testing be done live on camera? Can information be released more transparently?
 - No problem with having work filmed and documented for public
 - Getting data out on website may be delayed slightly only because data needs to be put in a format that can be readily understood
- Concern about conflicting messages/dishonesty/transparency, about showering, drinking from filters, and legionnaires—need for residents’ input
- In the 131 homes that have been referred to EPA for testing, what is tested?
 - General water quality parameters and heavy metals are tested for rash investigation
 - 15,000 additional homes have been tested for lead and copper in addition to those homes tested in rash investigation

Flint Water Recovery Workgroup Report Outs

- Physical Health
 - Planning to meet with education group soon
 - Discussed fatigue of community
 - Stress of multiple groups coming to residents’ doors
 - Have been receiving feedback from the community about these concerns
 - Rumors going around that filters won’t be available
 - Not true
 - Please correct any misinformation
 - Rumors about Flint Southwestern students being required to pay for water
 - Not true
 - Schools have abundance of water
- Mental Health
 - Working with resource group on hubs to be one stop shop
 - Need more community input on this from Thursday meetings
 - Any input on locations can be shared with resource group
 - Physical health mobile unit donated to Hurley currently being used by GHS

- Waiting on funding approval for mental health mobile unit—looks like it is moving forward
 - Goal is to hopefully migrate between hubs when established
- Subgroups
 - Psychological First Aid meeting coming up
 - For people immediately responding to the crisis—anyone on the ground doing this work is welcome
 - Stress Management
 - Performed stress management survey to GHS internal staff and provider panel
 - Got baseline for stress levels among providers
 - Water crisis has exacerbated stress among providers
 - Hoping to establish support groups for providers
 - Crisis counseling
 - Going out into community getting up to date information and hear people out
 - Getting sense of people’s concerns
- Medicaid expansion
 - Working hard on programming
 - Will reach pregnant women, children, targeted case management services
- Communications
 - Meets on Mondays
 - Publications forthcoming in two local community newspapers
 - Shell of website will be under review on Monday
 - Still working on getting answers about what agencies are testing water and what they are testing for
 - Working on getting diagram of how agencies work together
 - Anyone doing social media campaigns—please consider sensitivities of situation
 - State of Michigan is redoing the michigan.gov/flintwater website—communications group provided feedback
- Education
 - Education committee met this week to review documents currently being distributed in community
 - Looking for consistency and accuracy
 - Made a number of notes on these documents
 - Any input needed from physical health group will be discussed at upcoming meeting with physical health
 - Approved and corrected documents will be passed on to communications group
 - Documents will have to be updated once PODs are active
 - Presentation given to elementary school teachers on science of lead, effects on brain, what to look for in classrooms, recommended strategies

- Worked on presentation for elementary school children to address their concerns and help them feel secure
 - Concern from social workers about children feeling guilty and anxious
- Recovery Resources
 - FEMA declaration extended through August
 - PODs identified for wards 1, 3, and 6
 - Looking to confirm sites in other wards
 - PODs will be location for FEMA commodities (water, filters, replacements)
 - Hubs
 - Discussing renaming these to indicate that health services will be available at hubs
 - Need more community input to find locations to accommodate hub services
 - Hubs need to be sustainable
 - Already 148 programs and feeding sites in Flint that will continue to be resources in the community
 - Working with about 40 semis at Food Bank with water being distributed to about 45 sites
 - Current rate 224,000 liters of water a day, 1.5 million per week
 - Also distributing nutritional food
 - Lots of nutrition educators in town getting messaging about lead mitigating foods
 - If you have a community expo or lead testing event coming up, can get in touch with these groups

Question and Answer

- Question about chelation therapy for physical health group—how to address pros and cons about this treatment to the public
- Question about water heater issues—getting conflicting messages
 - Call 211 for plumber and pipefitters union
- Questions about distribution of PODs—why isn't state group using truck deliveries directly to homes rather than being taken to distribution points—fatigue for residents to come pick up water, some residents are embarrassed to come pick up water—some residents are ready to help with delivery, concerns about transparency and about money coming in and not reaching community—frustration about how commodities are being distributed
 - Going door to door not a sustainable model for long term
 - No consistent time to reach everybody at their homes
 - Access and functional needs list helps facilitate home deliveries to vulnerable and homebound groups
 - Working to make 211 as simple a process as possible
 - At the beginning there may have been restrictions, but now there are no restrictions on how many cases and filters are given

- Michigan Works program provides some job opportunities and job compensations
- Is there a note left on door if residents are not home?
 - Information is left at door if no one is home but they cannot leave cases if they are taken
 - Food Bank has been distributing food in addition to the water and filters that have been distributed
- Concern raised about importance of providing stress management and support for providers, need for building sense of community, current door to door strategy has flaws, perhaps leave a different kind of message that is more personal
- Many churches have already taken upon it upon themselves to deliver water to homebound and seniors—has DEQ reached out to grassroots organizations that have taken the initiative to get vehicles and distribute water on their own?
 - Working on getting all door to door distribution groups together and figure out what support and resources they are
 - Can provide Laura Marble with information about what your group is doing
- How to reach people with information who can't read? Are people providing materials directly at schools?
 - Communications group working on identifying all the means by which people can get the material they need
 - Creating materials with pictures as well as words
 - Working on translations as well
 - GSD has hosted community workshops and conversations beyond just written handouts as well
 - Flint schools making efforts to have community forums to have information passed out in spoken form
- Statement from representative of mayor's office
 - Recognition of silos in groups working simultaneously to address these issues
 - Mayor wants to bring all these groups together
 - Beyond water—economic development, education, local jobs, and wider community issues need to be addressed as well
 - Want to ensure resources being spent are being used well
 - Goal is to start communicating and pull various groups together
 - Frustrations should be respected
 - Important to work as a team
 - Is mayor going to develop a new group in addition to this community partner group?
 - No—mayor wants to coordinate all groups together
 - Don't want to duplicate efforts among what groups are doing
 - No new group is being created
- Is EPA technology and workforce being activated in Flint or is this work being done elsewhere?
 - Accredited laboratory being used in Lansing

- Other regional laboratories are used as well
 - EPA uses local resources where it can
- Have we identified any filters that can filter over 150 ppb? If so, can these filters be brought out? Does the warm weather change the storage for distribution of bottled water?
- Concern about how this group addresses missing people from this group—suggestion to start calling and inviting people from list of churches
- Accountability about getting these messages to your congregations and groups: 1) check your water filter; if there is no green light, it is not working properly and needs to be checked, and 2) boil water advisories do not relate to lead—cannot put hot water through water filter to eliminate lead
 - Anyone who has information about grassroots organizations or churches that need to be included in these meetings should contact Laura Marble
- Concern about outdoor PODs and safety of plastic water bottles in heat
- Question about EPA phosphate treatment—will these prevent replacement of the service lines? Is phosphate protective layer a diversion from replacing pipes? To what degree is the phosphate layer protecting the water since acidity varies from home to home?
 - Phosphate seal on inside of pipe prevents lead from leaching into water
 - This treatment is not reaching all pipes in homes
 - Best long term solution is removal of lead pipes as well as pipes in homes
 - This process takes years
 - In interim, pipes need to be treated
 - Communication about this needs to be clearer
- In many older homes, people are starting to hoard water because of fear that distribution will stop—stacks of cases of water in high volumes can damage infrastructure of older houses. In addition, water expiration dates need to be discussed—how can we get public messaging out about these issues?
 - Need to increase community’s confidence in water filters
 - Need to figure out best way to communicate about how these filters work (see Dr. Edwards’ research)
 - Encourage community to flush their lines, clean their aerators—filters work well if used properly
- What happens when you put hot water through filter? Do you have to change cartridge or entire filter?
 - Will answer this next week
- The POD that has been opened on Clio and Pierson has accessibility/emergency exit/safety issues—one way in and one way out—when POD is established, need to consider the safety of the staff in building—and need to have specific goals and dates set for progress communicated to public
 - These concerns will be taken back to group
 - The PODs that are currently opened are not publicly announced

- Addressing issue of one entrance at that location—other safety concerns will be addressed as well
- National Guard and GST Michigan Works are committed to ensuring safety
- One PODs are fully open, there will be clearer signs set up that PODs are open
- Looking for applicants for PODs from east side, fourth ward, and looking for applicants who are bilingual or know sign language
- All positions will be posted online at GST Michigan Works
- Timeline information will be going out
- Can't open a POD until we have an agreement with the site
- Sites have changed a lot
- 15 drivers identified
- Warmer weather concerns about water bottle storage and safety of plastic—communications team needs to have as much factual data as possible about this issue
- Why is there trouble getting word out about these meetings through social media and other channels?

Closing

- Over 100 organizations are part of this process and these meetings include churches, non profits, grassroots organizations, federal, county, city, state government
 - Point of meetings is to encourage collaboration and dialogue between all groups
 - Logistics are not simple but residents are foremost priority
 - Many in this group are residents themselves
 - Encourage wider involvement in all these workgroups
 - Important to have all questions and concerns to be brought to the forefront
 - Get involved, come to meetings, get on sign-in sheet to get contact information, meeting times, and minutes from Thursday meetings