



Local Emergency Planning Committee

Gem County LEPC
September 21st, 2021
Meeting Minutes

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Gem County Local Emergency Planning Committee is an organized gathering of community members, response agencies, organizations, and public officials, sanctioned by Congress to work together prior to any emergency, natural or man-made disaster, or hazardous material incident, in an attempt to improve planning, response, and coordination as well as the mutual understanding of capabilities and resources to the situation.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Gem County Local Emergency Planning Committee is to enhance capabilities in order to successfully mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergency situations in Gem Co community.

In Attendance:

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| Laurie Boston, Gem Co. EM | Jay Breidenbach, NOAA |
| Bill Buttici, Gem Co. Commissioner | Curt Christensen, Emmett Fire Dept. |
| Liz Gochmour, LEPC Secretary | Ryan Hale, Emmett Stake Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints |
| Tahja Jensen, Gem Co. Prosecutor | Len McCaulou, Gem Co. EMS |
| Bev Martin, Gem Co. Sheriff's Posse/
Fire Dist. #2 | Dale Mock, Sherriff's Posse |
| Janet Monti, Friendship Coalition | Steve Nebeker, Emmet City Councilman |
| Mark Rekow, Gem Co. Commissioner | Dave Timony, Gem Co. Investigator |
| Brian Whitlock, Idaho Hospital Assoc. | TJ Wilson, Southwest Dist. Health |
| Donnie Wunder, Gem Co. Sherriff | |

Meeting called to order by Curt Christensen at 8:30a.m.

Approval of August 17th Minutes:

- Motion to approve August 17th minutes by TJ Wilson. 2nd by Bev Martin.

Crisis Standard of Care Activation & Local Outlook – Brian Whitlock, President/CEO Idaho Hospital Association:

- Brian has over 30 years of communications, government, public relations and management experience in Idaho and Washington DC. He joined the Idaho Hospital Association in 2015. Prior to joining the IHA, Brian was the Director of State and Regional Governmental Affairs for the Idaho National Laboratory. He was Chief of Staff and State Budget Director to Governor Dirk Kempthorne and served in senior staff positions for Senator Dirk Kempthorne and Senator Jim McClure.
- Hospitals can move to contingency standards of care or crisis standards of care if they are not able to maintain traditional or community standards of care.
- Crisis standards of care provides some guidelines for what hospitals can and should do when they reach those critical levels of not being able to meet the demand of what is coming through the door. The State put a crisis standards of care document in place that provides a checklist for hospitals and health systems to confirm that they have moved from community/traditional standards of care to contingency standards of care.
- In contingency standards of care, a hospital can make decisions to do things a little differently. In an ICU, they can move from a 1 to 1 ratio to a 2 to 1 ratio. Focus is now divided and the chance of an error is increased. You may also open up overflow units. If a hospital's ICU is full and they have stopped doing elective surgeries, they can open up those recovery units for overflow ICU's.

- Kootenai Health in Coeur d'Alene opened a 22-bed overflow area in their conference center in their hospital. After determining that they were unable to operate in contingency standards of care, 10 Northern Counties requested the State to activate crisis standards of care on September 6th. Not all of the hospitals in those counties were in crisis mode, most were operating with contingency standards of care. Kootenai Health, the largest hospital in those counties was unable to accept transfers for a higher level of care. They were transferring patients as far as Seattle, Pocatello, and Boise. St. Luke's Health System requested to have crisis standards of care activated 10 days later after exhausting almost all options of contingency standards of care. A statewide committee of healthcare professionals reviewed the request from St. Luke's and recommended to the director of Health and Welfare that statewide crisis standards of care were activated. The director activated crisis standards of care statewide on September 16th.
- Idaho has never been in the situation to activate crisis standards before. Other states have activated crisis standards in the past in response to natural disasters and terrorist attacks.
- The activation of crisis standards of care provides guidance to hospitals and providers on the front lines on how to expand and extend care to as many patients as possible in order to save as many lives as possible. This does not mean that people are being denied care, it just means that care is being spread across a greater number of people and maybe not at the same level as in community standards of care.
- Not all hospitals will move to crisis standards if they are managing under contingency. There is still a small hospital operating under community standards.
- The hospitals across the state have a daily conference call at 10:00 called Medical Operation Coordination Cell. The call is specific to trying to help each of the hospitals that are experiencing an increase in demand and not having the resources to meet those demands. Each hospital goes through and reports how many beds they have available. Last week, St. Mary's hospital in Cottonwood had a patient with kidney failure. They had called 30 different hospitals to transfer the patient to a higher level of care and were decline by all of them. During this call, they were able to find a single bed that had freed up and were able to arrange the transfer.
- A new statewide web-based system called Alert Sense was set up for all the hospitals to use. A Transfer Center or ED provider or nurse can activate Alert Sense that will send an email or text to designated recipients at each hospital in the state. Last night an alert was sent out from a hospital in Southwest Idaho desperately needing an ICU bed for a respiratory failure patient. This allowed them to have instantaneous access to see if a bed was available.
- Under crisis standards of care, smaller hospitals may have to hold on to patients longer than they should and provide a higher acuity of care than what they are used to until they can be transferred.
- When St. Luke's asked for activation of crisis standards of care, they had opened up over 93 overflow areas across their health system. They have stopped elective surgeries and have paused what they call yellow level surgeries. Yellow level surgeries are those that have been diagnosed with cancer or heart conditions that require a few days hospitalization after surgery for recovery. There are no beds to place those patients into after surgery. Some hospital's ICUs are at 100% and some are 100% COVID, taking those beds away from cardiac, stroke, or critical surgical patients.
- Hospitals have seen the demands outstrip the resources available. This includes beds, oxygen, ventilators, staff, etc. Hospitals are reporting more and more staff are out themselves with COVID or in quarantine due to exposure. Hospitals are using more oxygen than they have in the past and Norco is having trouble replenishing oxygen. They are having issues getting drivers to bring in oxygen from out of state and then distributing it to hospitals. Vapotherm machines that are used for respiratory patients are on short supply,

but during the coordination call, Syringa hospital offered to share two vapotherm machines. IOEM and Norco have been working through some of the challenges of getting oxygen into the state.

- Hospitals that are operating under crisis standards of care are: St. Luke's, Saint Alphonsus, 3 out of the 10 in Northern Idaho, and the largest hospitals in Magic Valley.

Action Item: Postpone Chair/Co-Chair Elections to October 21st meeting:

Motion to postpone chair/co-chair elections to October 21st by Steve Nebeker. 2nd by Bev Martin.

Public Comments:

No public comments at this time.

General Reports:

- **Bev Matin, Fire Dist. #2/Ola Community:** Fire #2 is having trouble getting their 911 alerts on their phones in a timely manner. They are coming through 20-30 minutes behind the tone out. They are relying on their radios. Could Dispatch repeat the address on a tone out? Could they give the address at the beginning and end of the tone out?
- **Bill Buttici, Gem Co. Commissioner:** They are looking for participation on the County's comp plan. The Dispatch Center for the power system is still in progress. They now need an AC unit for the power supply room and Keller Engineering designed a suppression in front of the UPS system which was not in place before. There are no road closures currently in the County.
- **Laurie Boston, Gem Co. Emergency Manager:** The AWR148 class scheduled for November 4th only has 6 people registered. Please encourage more people to register, especially first responders and those in the school district. The class will no be held remotely rather than at City Hall. Laurie will send out the registration information again. Even though crisis standards of care have been enacted state wide, not all hospitals are at that activation level. The FDA vaccine advisors have recommended the COVID vaccine boosters for those 65 +. Pizer has tested a lower dose, about 1/3, for ages 5-11 and is seeking emergency use authorization. SWDH has Gem County ranked at a high community transmission rate. County wide we are at about a 43 % vaccination rate for ages 12 +. As of Sept 19th, we have had 2347 cases and there have been 3 deaths since Sept 7th. Washington County cases are very high and continuing to rise. The positivity rate between Aug 29th and Sept 4th is 13.88%. Valor Health has been approved for two National Guardsmen to help with testing. Just be aware that the stress levels are very high for all those in healthcare right now. Bev: Is the booster shots only for Pizer or is there a Moderna available? Laurie: We haven't been given any direction on that yet.
- **Donnie Wunder, Gem Co. Sherriff:** Sherriff Wunder will talk to Dispatch about the tone out for Fire #2 and follow up with Bev. The staff at the Driver's License office are taking normal precautions when dealing with the public. Patrol are not doing vin inspections at this time and is handling calls over the phone as much as possible. There are no in person visitors allowed at the jail at this time. They had a record-breaking year at Black Canyon Reservoir and an average to below average year at Sage Hen.
- **Tahja Jensen, Gem Co. Prosecutor's Office:** The County has extended their Emergency Declaration until the end of this calendar year. It was due to expire at the end of this month. On Sept 10th, 3rd District Administrative Court Judge Davis VanderVelde entered an order suspending all jury trials until further notice. The order states that a 20-day notice will be given when jury trials will resume. They are using metrics from SWDH on community transmission in order to make those determinations. Part of the order also requires anyone in the Gem County Court spaces wear masks and maintain social distancing.
- **Len McCaulou, Gem Co. EMS:** (Via meeting chat) EMS is seeing an increase in COVID patients that have symptoms of weakness and difficulty breathing. We will continue to be as safe as we can and appreciate all the support we receive from Law Enforcement, Fire, Dispatch, and Valor Health.
- **Steve Nebeker, Emmett City Council:** Construction work on John's Ave should be completed and paved by the end of October. They are doing a lot of subdivision requests and approvals, a lot of them along 12th Ave. Their budget was approved for the 2021/2022 budget year.

- **Chief Christensen, City Fire:** They did a community 9/11 Color Guard Ceremony. They were also involved in the Dream Flight involving taking WWII Veterans on plane flights. City Fire is working with Emmett Police and the High School to come up with a good solution to emergency situations that happen at the High School. More to come on that.
- **Janet Monti, Friendship Coalition:** They continue doing what they do and appreciate the communities support.

Motion to adjourn at 9:20 am. by Tahja Jensen. 2nd by Steve Nebeker.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 19th at 8:30 am. Direction will be provided at a later date on whether the meeting will be in person or remote.