



Harris County
HCPHES
Public Health & Environmental Services
Veterinary Public Health Division



After Action Report 6th Annual Zoonotic Disease Conference



After Action Report

Organizational Name:

Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services Veterinary Public Health
(HCPHES-VPH)
Harris County Veterinary Medical Association
(HCVMA)
National School of Tropical Medicine-Baylor College of Medicine
(NSTM-BCM)

Project Name: 6th Annual Zoonotic Disease Conference

Project Completion Date: September 15, 2013

Project Purpose: Develop and nurture veterinary networks and relationships through education and support and become the premier zoonotic disease networking and information center for veterinary related professions in Harris County.

Short Term Goals: Increase veterinary community awareness of the HCPHES Veterinary Public Health Zoonosis section capabilities and services as well as educate and communicate critical and relevant zoonotic disease information that impacts public health and safety, animal health and emergency/disaster preparedness.

Short Term Impact

- Zoonotic Disease Conference was attended by 109 veterinarians, 46 registered veterinary technicians, 8 certified veterinary assistants, 20 veterinary assistants and other staff; 2 health care practitioners and 9 animal control officers, and
- The veterinary community received new and relevant information concerning zoonotic diseases and public health information.

Long Term Goal: The HCPHES Veterinary Public Health Zoonosis section becomes the focal point for all zoonotic disease concerns, issues, and information emanating from and to veterinary health clinics within Harris County.

Long Term Impact

- Conference attendees received zoonotic information through the HCPHES Veterinary Public Health Zoonosis section conduit;
- Conference attendees have met the HCPHES Veterinary Public Health Zoonosis section personnel;
- Conference attendees were encouraged to use the HCPHES Veterinary Public Health Zoonosis section for surveillance and data gathering of local zoonotic disease outbreaks and trends; and
- Conference attendees were exposed to industry zoonotic disease experts and the HCPHES Veterinary Public Health personnel.

Project Summary:

Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services, Veterinary Public Health (HCPHES VPH), and Harris County Veterinary Medical Association (HCVMA) received the sum of \$3,000 from Jacob & Terese Hershey Foundation to fund 15.6 percent, \$1,405.00 from the National School of Tropical Medicine to fund 7.3 percent, and \$1,000 from Merial Limited to fund 5.2 percent, of the net costs of one zoonotic disease conference event for the local veterinary community.

Materials Development & Venue

The funds from the National School of Tropical Medicine supported the venue rental, table and chair rentals, housekeeping and security services for the conference.

The Jacob & Terese Hershey Foundation and Merial Limited grant funds helped support the development of professional conference materials and handouts for conference attendees. Each attendee was supplied with a 3 ring binder containing conference reference materials, a binder/pocket calculator and a pen imprinted with the HCPHES VPH logo.

The Jacob & Terese Hershey Foundation and Merial Limited grant also helped to fund the catering services. The venue proved to be a professional and well laid out facility and food servings were plentiful. For breakfast, each attendee was offered scrambled eggs, bacon, biscuits, coffee, orange juice and water. Lunch consisted of a salad, rolls, parmesan chicken or vegetable lasagna, pasta, Alfredo sauce, steamed vegetables, macaroni and cheese, and iced tea or water. Fresh baked cookies, coffee, tea and water were provided as an afternoon snack.

Conference Day

Location

The all day conference was scheduled and held at the Baylor College of Medicine-Cullen Auditorium in Houston, Texas. This site was chosen as:

- the local veterinary community is familiar with its location;
- the site is well equipped for professional conferences; and
- collaboration with the National School of Tropical Medicine increased the visibility and professionalism of the conference.

Place cards displaying the sponsor logos were placed in the center of each dining table to let the attendees know how much we appreciated the support of our sponsors.



Speakers

Baylor College of Medicine-National School of Tropical Medicine provided one speaker sponsorship and Merial, Ltd. provided one speaker sponsorship for the event. Dr. Kristy Murray and Dr. Wade Burton shared their insights and expertise on the subject matter presented. Many of our attendees personally expressed their appreciation for these speakers on their conference survey, as well as verbally.

Topics

Conference educational topics primarily focused on zoonotic disease awareness.

Chagas Disease and Other Important Vector-borne Diseases in Texas

Kristy Murray, DVM, PhD

Rabies Viruses in North America

Susan Rollo, MS, DVM, PhD, DACVPM

Pets and the Immunocompromised Client

Desiree L. Evans, MD, MPH, FAAP

An Overview of West Nile Virus Activity in Harris County: Past, Present and Future

Rudy Bueno, Jr., PhD

Cat Scratch Fever: 80's Rock & Roll or Zoonotic Disease?

K. Wade Burton, DVM

At the close of the conference, surveys were collected, and continuing education credit certificates were distributed.



Conference Survey

Conference attendees were asked to complete a conference survey.

The feedback provided was as follows:

- Greater than 95 percent of conference attendees
 - believed continuing education credit was an important feature of the conference;
 - were satisfied with the registration process;
 - agreed that the conference materials were more than adequate and informative;
 - were satisfied with the professionalism and abilities of the speakers;
 - enjoyed the conference setting and facilities;
 - agreed that information provided was informative and accurate;
 - thought the conference was well organized;
 - agreed that the conference staff were helpful and courteous; and
 - indicated that they would recommend future conferences to others.
- Greater than 90 percent of conference attendees
 - agreed with the length of conference presentations and flow; and
 - ranked this conference above average when compared to other conferences.
- 85 percent of conference attendees indicated that they plan to attend the conference next year

The attendees were asked to submit recommendations for future zoonotic disease conference topics. Not all of the topics requested were zoonotic in nature, but they did provide insight into the educational interests of the Harris County veterinary community.

Requested future conference topics included:

leptospirosis; ringworm; sarcoptic mange; brucellosis; common misconceptions regarding zoonotic diseases; nematodes; anything regarding parasitology; public health issues, incidence of zoonotic diseases in Texas and Houston; coverage of viral, bacterial and parasitic diseases (especially emerging ones); diagnosis and treatment of common diseases in the Houston area; Ehrlichia; emerging infectious diseases and the evolution of new viruses; hantavirus; psittacosis, rodent-borne illnesses; lab animal zoonoses; tropical diseases relevant to the import/export of agricultural products; influenza; internal parasites; malaria/yellow fever; herpes B, Yersinia pestis; large animal and exotic zoonoses; intestinal parasites (hookworms, roundworms, Taenia); zoonotic diseases of pocket pets; exotic pet growth in Houston; toxoplasmosis; wildlife zoonoses; MRS, MRSA and MRSP; neoplasms; organic pest control; tick-borne illnesses and treatment; RMSF; practicalities of animal bites; zoonoses associated with feral hogs; zoonotic skin infections; public health concerns in feral cat colonies; review of reportable diseases, diagnosis and reporting process; cutaneous larva migrans; shelter concerns (disease and overcrowding); food-borne diseases associated with food animals and food safety; ORF; Tularemia; Tuberculosis & primates; Hepatitis C; Short tours of public health/hospital facilities; hands-on (wet lab) sessions; zoonoses associated with hunting wildlife; “leading edge” science (micro-RNA, cytokines, stem cells, etc.); Harris County laws, quarantine procedures, rabies post-exposure protocols; strategies for parasite control and increasing vaccination compliance in non-English speaking immigrant communities; how to collaborate with local public health department to educate our communities and help collect relevant data; heartworm disease; parvo; idiopathic epilepsy; feline sarcomas; osteosarcomas; and osteoarthritis in dog; orthopedic surgical procedures.

Suggestions for conference improvements

Attendees were also asked how the conference could be improved.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- **Comfort:** streamline the lunch serving process with an additional 2 lines; offer gluten-free food for those that are allergic; offer more cookies during the afternoon break; streamline CE certificate distribution; have a warmer room; discourage flash photography as it was distracting; shorten breaks and lunch times to adjourn quicker; and aim for a 4:00pm adjourn time.
- **Venue:** negotiate allowing bottled drinks in the auditorium; allow beverages and snacks in the lecture hall; complimentary parking; and host the conference at the zoo again.
- **Attendee Materials:** having the entire set of notes included in the notebook; have larger print on notes pages; and include more blank pages for notes in the handouts.
- **Content:** add a few more sessions; encourage more audience participation; offer rabies titer testing; focus more on the animal side of diseases during presentations; consider 30 minute sessions to cover more topics; invite medical doctors and human medical staff to future conferences; consider gaining CE approval for medical doctors and nurses to increase attendance and educate field on zoonotic diseases; include presentations on rickettsial and tick-borne diseases; and include more relevant information pertaining to rabies.
- **Other:** schedule the conference on a Saturday; and mail out brochures to past attendees.

Praise Comments

“The facility is excellent: it’s close and free.”

“The duration, topics, facilities, handouts and food were all just right.”

“Well designed, great speakers and great attendance”

“Well organized, informative and free”

“Professional venue, good food, just the right group size and relevant topics for subject matter”

“The speakers make information relative, informative and interesting.”

“Very organized and informative!”

“Informative, well-spoken presenters, clear handouts and Dr. Burton was great!”

“Very informative, great topics, great way to reach clinicians and make CE available at no charge!”

“Subjects were very applicable. Very well put together. Thank you for the binder set ups!”

“Tiffany is amazing! Food supplied is nice.”

“Unbelievable at no charge-thank you!”

“Speakers were extremely knowledgeable, the facilities were great; lunch/snacks were great!”

“The aspect of public health topics and continual education is vital in my opinion!”

“It’s the public health spin that makes it interesting and different.”

“Dr. Murray was good!”

“Keep doing the awesome job you are already doing.”

“It was great. Nothing can be improved.”

“Keep this venue!!”

“Dr. Burton was great!”

Grant Expenditures:

The sum of \$2,901.93 was used to pay for the materials, costing an average of \$15.11 per attendee for conference handouts.

The sum of \$1,405.00 was used to pay for the venue rental. Food service expenditures totaled \$5,261.58 averaging approximately \$27 per attendee for food and beverages.

Overall, the Zoonotic Disease Conference was executed to plan and within budget.

2012 Annual Zoonotic Disease Veterinary Conference						
Description	Cost	Contributions				
Project Management	2,800.00	Merial, Inc	Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation	BCM NSTM Funds	HCPHES Funds	Services In-Kind
Support Staff Time	2,000.00					
Transportation	245.00					
Speakers	900.00					
Speaker Gifts	176.43					
Door Prizes	140.00					
Venue Rental	1,405.00					
Food/Drinks	5,261.58					
Tablecloth Rental	300.00					
Attendee Materials	2,901.93					
Printing/Materials Development	3,162.52					
Total Cost	19,292.46					
		5.2%	15.6%	7.3%	41.2%	30.8%
Merial, Ltd. provided speaker travel and honorarium of approximately \$3,000.00. *Not included in our conference budget						

Hot Wash Report:

Soon after the conference, HCPHES VPH chaired a “hot wash” (after incident meeting) to quickly ascertain what worked well and what could be improved upon.

Below are the results of this “Hot wash”:

Sustain	Needs Improvement
Event staff in matching apparel for increased visibility	Encourage speakers to provide handouts to include in attendee materials
Partnership with HCVMA & Baylor	Registration confirmation from faxed registration forms
Conference held on a Sunday in September	More staff for CE certificate distribution
Venue Layout	Design website for conference
Communication with AV and Security staff at venue	Host volunteer orientation Friday before event
Comfortable auditorium seating	CE certificate distribution in dining area vs. lobby
CE Certificate tables facing auditorium for easier distribution	Double serving lines and offer drinks on opposite side of room
Luby's caterer and food options	Be prepared for MAC presentations
Hanging style name badges- different colors for attendees vs. speakers/staff	Use fax to email option when registration forms are submitted to ensure we receive it
Central Houston location	Invite Friends of Countypets to sell caffeinated beverages for donations
Free registration	
Petition venue for allowing drinks in lecture hall	
Maximum attendee size of 200	
Booths for sponsors and co-hosts	
Introduction of speakers done by Dr. White in AM & Tiffany in PM	
Sponsor Tents on Tables	
Sponsor tables in dining/conversation area of conference	

Conclusion:

The 6th Annual Zoonotic Disease Conference was a huge success. Thanks to the hard work and kind generosity of Jacob & Terese Hershey Foundation, Merial, Ltd., HCPHES-VPH, HCVMA and the NSTM-BCM. The conference not only provided a vehicle to significantly increase HCPHES VPH awareness amongst the veterinary community, but also increased overall knowledge regarding zoonotic disease issues. The partnership between the hosts and sponsors complimented each organization’s mission and services.

