

## MEETING SUMMARY

### ICS-TB Working Group meeting, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska, United States of America

**Co-Chairs:** Annie-Claude Bourgeois – Public Health Agency of Canada  
Alan Parkinson – CDC Arctic Investigations Program

#### Attendees

**Serge Déry** – Nunavik Board of Health and Social Services, Canada  
**Donna Fearey** – State of Alaska Public Health, USA  
**Cheryl Case** – Department of Health and Social Services, Government of Northwest Territories, Canada  
**Pamela Orr** – University of Manitoba, Canada  
**Prabhu Grounder** – CDC Arctic Investigations Program  
**Ashley Wayne** – University of Alberta, Canada  
**Flemming K. Stenz** – National Board of Health, Greenland  
**Thomas Rendal** – National Board of Health, Greenland  
**Anders Koch** - State Serum Institute, Denmark  
**Joyce Wolfe** – National Microbiology Laboratory, Public Health Agency of Canada  
**Marcus Lem** – Fraser Health Authority, Canada  
**Maureen Baikie** – Nunavut Health and Social Services, Canada  
**Natalia Pshenichnaya** – Climate Change and Health Project, WHO office, Russian Federation  
**Igor Chernyaev** - The Ural Research Institute for Phthysiopulmonology, Russian Federation  
**Alexandr Vladimirov** - Khanty-Mansiysk Anti-TB Center, Russian Federation  
**Grigory Balancev** – Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Russian Federation  
**Galiya Nizameeva** – Ministry of Health of Krasnoyarsk Karj, Russian Federation  
**Vladislav Tsukanov** - State Medical Research Institute for Northern Problems of Siberian Division, Russian Academy of Medical Science, Russian Federation

#### Opening Remarks

Alan Parkinson opened the meeting and welcomed the delegates. Alan Parkinson made a brief presentation on the ICS-TB Working Group background and past meetings. Roundtable introductions were done.

Alan Parkinson reviewed the agenda with the group and the agenda was approved without any changes.

#### Documents for review

**Membership list:** The membership list was reviewed and working group members were asked to send any updates to their contact information to Annie-Claude Bourgeois ([Annie-Claude.Bourgeois@phac-aspc.gc.ca](mailto:Annie-Claude.Bourgeois@phac-aspc.gc.ca)). Due to competing priorities, Dr. Vibeke Østergaard Thomsen has requested to be removed from the ICS-TB working group list. The ICS-TB working group also welcomed a new member from the Russian Federation, Grigory Balancev (Archangelsk, Russian Federation). Two new members have also joined the ICS-TB working group but were not able to attend the face-to-face meeting: Stacey Ramey from Newfoundland and Labrador (Canada) and Caroline Newberry from Northwest Territories (Canada). An updated list is found on the [www.arcticinfdis.com](http://www.arcticinfdis.com) website.

Pamela Orr asked the co-chairs to clarify whether a representative from either or each of the International Union of Circumpolar (IUCH) or the Canadian Society of Circumpolar Health (CSCH) could become a member of ICS-TB.

**ACTION: Annie-Claude Bourgeois and Alan Parkinson to look into that request and clarify the requirements.**

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#### Tuberculosis Update by Country/Region

Surveillance updates were provided by Annie-Claude Bourgeois (Canada), Donna Feary (U.S. Arctic - Alaska), Alexander Vladimirov (Russian Federation), Thomas Rendal (Greenland), and Anders Koch (Denmark – on behalf of Bolette Sjøborg). Serge Déry from Canada also made a short presentation on a current TB outbreak in a community in Nunavik (northern Quebec, Canada).

As for last year, the presentations will be put up onto the ICS-TB website: <http://www.arcticinfdis.com/>. Following the meeting the presentations will be uploaded onto this site.

Alan Parkinson gave a brief historical review of the ICS, its organizational structure, ICS activities (past, current and upcoming) and lessons learned over the years.

Since the last ICS-TB meeting in Copenhagen, September 2011, the following activities were held in the ICS network;

- ICS Invasive Bacterial Disease Working Group meeting, Vancouver BC, Canada, March 27- 28, 2012.
- International Polar Year (2007-2008) Conference Montreal, Canada April 22-27, 2012, including a session on International Circumpolar Surveillance during the Human Health Session (April 26, 2012). One of the major highlights of the IPY, from a public health point of view, is the incorporation of the human health component in the IPY program as the Arctic Human Health Initiative (AHHI). Six projects on infectious diseases have been initiated under the AHHI, which are still ongoing. A final report on the AHHI activities is planned to be released in May 2013.

Alan Parkinson also indicated that during the International Congress for Circumpolar Health, August 3 to 10<sup>th</sup> 2012, several meetings of the ICS Working Groups would be held, including:

- Hepatitis (Anchorage, August 3)
- Helicobacter pylori (Fairbanks, August 4)
- Tuberculosis (Fairbanks, August 5)
- ICS Steering Committee Meeting (Fairbanks, August 5)
- Climate Change and Infectious Diseases (Fairbanks, August 7 )

#### Retrospective review

Due to time constraints, Annie-Claude Bourgeois proposed to only do a general overview of the documents to be reviewed instead of a thorough review. The group has agreed to shorten the discussion on the “Working Group Documents” and “Retrospective Report – Sharing the Information” and use more time for the “Presentation Sections”.

Annie-Claude Bourgeois provided a summary of the status of each of the following documents:

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Data Retrospective Project has been drafted and approved internally by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. The draft MoU has been distributed to all participating jurisdictions and is currently under review in each of the jurisdiction. So far, the document has been approved by three jurisdictions, namely Nunavut (Canada), Greenland and the Arkhangelsk region (Russian Federation). Annie-Claude Bourgeois requested the members participating to the data retrospective project to follow

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up on the status of the approval process within their respective jurisdiction and send her the title and complete contact information of the designated person who will be signing the MoU. Once the MoU is approved by all the participating jurisdictions, it will be circulated across the participating jurisdictions, and the designated person in each region will sign multiple copies of the MoU. Once the signature process will be completed, the signed MoUs will be returned to PHAC. An original copy of the signed MoU will be sent back to all participating jurisdiction for their records.

- **ACTION: Members participating to the data retrospective project, who have not approved the MoU yet, to follow up on the status of the approval process within their respective jurisdiction and send the title and complete contact information on the designated person who will be signing the MoU to Annie-Claude Bourgeois ([Annie-Claude.Bourgeois@phac-aspc.gc.ca](mailto:Annie-Claude.Bourgeois@phac-aspc.gc.ca)).**  
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- Participants were asked to review the “Data Protocol”, the “Reporting Guidelines” at the last teleconference. Changes submitted have been incorporated and the documents were approved in April 2012. Annie-Claude Bourgeois invited the participants to read through the document and highlight any concerns.
- It was agreed by all participants to postpone the discussion of the “early outline and table mock-up” to a later date, when the data will be available. In the meantime, any members having suggestions on the “early outline and table mock-up” should send them to Annie-Claude Bourgeois ([Annie-Claude.Bourgeois@phac-aspc.gc.ca](mailto:Annie-Claude.Bourgeois@phac-aspc.gc.ca)).
- It was agreed by all the participants that the discussion on the section “Retrospective report – Sharing the information” including the topics dissemination and approval of the report, as well as other publications of the data, will be postponed to a later date. Annie-Claude Bourgeois did a summary of the recommended approval process of the report as discussed on the last teleconference, based on the ICS Invasive Bacteria working group report approval model. It is suggested that for the retrospective data project, all members would be allowed to provide input on the structure of the report (i.e. suggestions on the outline of the report) prior its writing. Once the data are analyzed, only the members who submitted data would be allowed to review the document and verify the data presented in the report related to their own country. Then, the report will be submitted for internal approval at the Public Health Agency of Canada, custodian of the data, followed by the final approval by the ICS Steering Committee before its dissemination.

#### Presentations

##### Overview of the Dynamic Data Management System (ICS-TB Database)

Annie-Claude Bourgeois presented an overview of the database that will be used for the ICS-TB data retrospective analysis project. Briefly, the system chosen by PHAC to store the data is the Dynamic Data Management System (DDMS), a system that has been developed upon request of the PHAC’s Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control to better respond to the organizational needs of improving data collection and consolidation processes as well as a better capacity in analyzing and exporting the data. This system has been developed to capture the data collection and consolidation (i.e. standardization) processes, basic data analysis and exportation within one single system. One of the main features of DDMS is that it can accept data in many different formats (such as Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, Text, etc.) The DDMS is also highly secure, as it has been developed with banking security level. The DDMS presentation will be made available on the ICS-TB website: <http://www.arcticinfdis.com/>.

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The participants indicated interest in having a teleconference with representatives from the Informatics and Technology (IT) group at the PHAC to discuss in details the Interbusiness Vault (for data transfer) and the DDMS.

**ACTION: Annie-Claude Bourgeois to organize a conference call with the IT department at PHAC to discuss the data transfer and database with the ICS-TB members.**

#### Diagnostic strategies

Thomas Rendal made a presentation on TB diagnosis issues in Greenland. Due to the remoteness of the communities and the absence of laboratory capacity for culture analysis (sent to Denmark), Greenland is facing considerable delays in TB diagnosis. Greenland is currently considering the possibility to place a GeneXpert system in their National Hospital in Nuuk. The purpose of the discussion was to determine whether other circumpolar regions had experienced similar situations and what would be the recommendations, especially on the implementation of GeneXpert.

Exchanges among the participants indicated that although promising, GeneXpert interpretation of the results has to be done carefully. GeneXpert was originally designed to be used in smaller communities and countries with fewer resources. The use of GeneXpert requires training and has many factors that can affect the validity of the results, such as the temperature at which the samples are stored, electrical support and transportation conditions.

Smear, culture and drug sensitivity testing remain the gold standards for TB diagnosis. GeneXpert should be used for rapid detection when it is possible to split the specimen so the results of GeneXpert can be validated with the gold standards.

The Russian Federation members indicated that they are currently conducting a study on the use of GeneXpert in high TB incidence communities of the Russian Federation where transportation of specimen samples are an issue due to remoteness. The results of that study should be published this coming fall. The members of the ICS-TB working group requested to be sent a copy of that study once it is made public. It was proposed to the members of the Russian Federation to report back on this study next year at the face-to-face meeting in Copenhagen.

#### Remote communications and use of internet technology

Alexander Vladimirov made a presentation on the use of IP-technology for communications, stressing that the use of phone lines to join the ICS-TB teleconferences were really expensive for the Russian Federation members, around \$150 per call. The Russian Federation members are proposing to use novel internet technology for communications, such as Skype and IP-technology, instead of the traditional phone lines for future meetings. This would allow videoconference, which could be recorded and later uploaded for ICS-TB members who were not able to attend the meeting.

Some participants brought up the issues of setting up internet communications in their respective organization might be restricted. A request was made to Igor Chernyaev to write a short rationale/proposal on the proposed technology to be used and the requirements to install it. This proposal will be used by the members to look into the feasibility of using this communication method in the future.

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**ACTION:** Igor Chernyaev to write a rationale/proposal on communication technology and submit it to Annie-Claude Bourgeois, who will forward the document to all the members.

#### Funds for ICS-TB

Alan Parkinson indicated that he had about \$10 000 left that could be spend on ICS-TB before the end of September 2012 and asked the group their input on how to efficiently use that money. Through discussions, it was agreed that translation of some documents for sharing information purposes would be valuable for the group.

**ACTION:** Alan Parkinson to report back on the feasibility to use the money for translation purposes.

#### **Next teleconference**

Working group members will be contacted via email to set up the next meeting. The meeting will likely be scheduled for early December 2012.

#### **Next face-to-face meeting**

The next face-to-face meeting will be held the during the annual ICS meeting, at the end of September 2013 in Copenhagen. More details will be provided within the next months.

#### **Meeting adjourned**