

Oklahoma Injury Prevention Advisory Committee  
**Meeting Minutes**

January 27, 2012

**Members Present:**

Dr. Roxie Albrecht, OU Medical Center, Trauma Services  
David Bates, Occupational Safety & Health Administration  
Dr. Mark Brandenburg, Chair  
Michael Echelle, County Health Department Administrator  
Lauren Farrah, Safe Kids Oklahoma  
Laura Gamino, OU Medical Center, Trauma Services  
Jessica Hawkins, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services  
Annette Jacobi, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Children First  
Gayle Jones, Independent Contractor  
Chuck Mai, AAA Oklahoma  
Dr. Eric Pfeiffer, Chief Medical Examiner  
Kevin Pipes, Independent Contractor  
Scott Schaeffer, Oklahoma Poison Control Center  
Toni Short, Caddo Nation  
Scott Sproat, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Emergency Preparedness & Response  
Ken Stewart, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Medical Facilities  
David Teague, OU Medical Center  
Garry Thomas, Oklahoma Highway Safety Office  
Don Vogt, Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics & Dangerous Drugs  
Chris West, Oklahoma Highway Patrol  
Dr. Ines Yacoub, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**Guest Speaker:**

Timothy Dwyer, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**Guests:**

Tierra Britton – Staff/Student Oklahoma Poison Control Center  
Mark Harrison, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner  
Whitney Kemp – Staff/Student Oklahoma Poison Control Center

**OU Trauma Staff:**

Cyndi Basch, Trauma Program Manager

**Staff:**

Pam Archer, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Injury Prevention Service  
Sheryll Brown, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Injury Prevention Service  
Regina McCurdy, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Injury Prevention Service

**Welcome/Introduction**

Dr. Mark Brandenburg called the meeting to order, and members introduced themselves. Minutes from the previous meeting on October 28, 2011 were reviewed and changes were noted. (Corrected minutes were emailed to everyone and approved after the meeting.)

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**Presentation on the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner**

Timothy Dwyer, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, conducted a presentation on the Medical Examiner's Office. The presentation is attached. The presentation included a discussion of deaths from prescription drugs. Several comments and questions were received regarding the presentation. Timothy said that those attending could contact him if they had additional questions at [t\\_dwyer@ocmeokc.state.ok.us](mailto:t_dwyer@ocmeokc.state.ok.us).

**Discussion following the presentation**

Jessica Hawkins said that data on drug poisonings from hospitals indicate that about half of the cases are suicides and half are accidental. Most of the cases are females 18-24 years of age. Accidental overdose may result from decreased tolerance to the drugs. In Massachusetts, they determined that men exiting prison were a high risk group. There are also "pharm parties" where kids bring pills to the party and put them in a bowl. Jessica Hawkins said that unintentional poisoning deaths had outpaced motor vehicle deaths. Scott Schaffer said that designer drugs and things like bath salts are also a problem they are seeing.

Dr. Pfeiffer, the Chief Medical Examiner, reported on the Medical Examiner's Office. He said that \$10 million is needed to address the deficiencies. They could potentially build a new office in Edmond with the forensic science school. Land has been donated; however, \$35-\$40 million is needed to build a new facility. At this point it does not look like a bond issue is an option. Oklahoma's Medical Examiner's Office is very understaffed relative to other states. For example, there are only 6 pathologists to review 18,000 cases per year. By comparison Kentucky has 12 pathologist and 2,500 cases. Dr. Pfeiffer said his office is in need of pathologists. Dr. Pfeiffer was asked about the Medical Examiner's Office authority on tribal lands. He said they must be invited to investigate tribal land deaths. They are virtually always involved because the tribes do not have a mechanism to conduct investigations. Several deaths occur in casinos.

Garry Thomas of the Oklahoma Highway Safety Office wanted to know if the blood alcohol level is tested on drivers in motor vehicle crashes. Timothy said that alcohol is tested every time on drivers but not on passengers. Testing for specific drugs is only conducted upon request. Timothy was asked if investigators looked at cell phones. He said that troopers may ask for cell phones to look at the times of phone calls and texts.

Don Vogt asked about training for district investigators that are not medical examiners. Timothy said that the decision on manner and cause of death is not made by local doctors. Timothy told the story of why the Medical Examiner's Office was established following the case of Nanny Doss, who poisoned six husbands with arsenic.

The Oklahoma Injury Prevention Advisory Committee is supportive of legislation to help the Medical Examiner's funding.

**Legislative Update**

Mark Brandenburg said that he contacted Rep. Morrisette and discussed legislation that targets the prescription drug industry. Don Vogt said there is legislation to move hydrocodone to a Schedule II substance and remove drugs like Tylenol from the formulation (i.e., hydrocodone combined with other drugs). This would make it more difficult to get but may become more of a problem. Don Vogt said that Tramadol would be changed to a Schedule V.

The Oklahoma State Medical Association has an article coming out that talks about under-prescribing pain medications and that physicians need to do more. There is some philosophical discussion back and forth about this

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issue. In some hospitals, physician satisfaction surveys are tied to pay. If a person seeking pain medication doesn't get it, they can give the physician a bad review.

Jessica Hawkins said that HB 2468 (Morrissette) would move hydrocodone with another active ingredient from Schedule III to Schedule II. Don Vogt said there is legislation that will make pseudoephedrine a Schedule III drug to make it more difficult to get. This is because of an increase in meth labs, fires, and homicides. Mexico outlawed pseudoephedrine. Oregon saw a reduction in meth labs as a result of a similar law. The drug makers reformulated it so it could not be used to make meth. There is a Shake & Bake method for making meth in a bottle. It is very dangerous. A lithium battery is used and when/if the battery falls to bottom it causes a flash fire. There was apparently someone found using this method in a Wal-Mart store.

Don discussed some of the new features of the prescription monitoring program (PMP). He said that doctors can get information within five minutes of a prescription being filled by their patient. There is an added feature that the PMP can notify the doctor when a patient makes an appointment.

Chuck Mai talked about SB 1027 (Ellis) that prohibits the use of mobile/text devices for persons of any age. He also talked about HB -2898 (Morgan) which prohibits texting while driving among state employees while conducting state business.

Another bill that hasn't been filed (shell bill) would allow cities to set their own laws pertaining to texting – city ordinances. Tulsa is enforcing distracted driving laws by including texting.

Rep. Steve Martin's HB 2525, would allow law enforcement officers to check the tag number to see if the insurance verification and tag are up-to-date and if expired, allow a stop for that alone.

There was discussion about reinstating state vehicle inspections.

HB 2583 (McDaniel) would mandate seat belt use for all vehicle occupants.

### **Injury Prevention Service Update**

A list of *Injury Update* reports and Injury Prevention Service publications was included as a handout.

### **Announcements**

None

### **Upcoming Injury Prevention Advisory Committee Meetings**

The next meeting is June 1, 2012 at OU Medical Center, Presbyterian Tower, Lawson Center in Conference Room A.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.