The New England Consortium (TNEC) holds its Advisory Board Meeting

The New England Consortium (TNEC) opened the second-half of its semi-annual Advisory Board meeting on Monday, November 7, to more than 100 attendees. Those who attended included faculty, staff and students of UMass Lowell along with students and teachers from Essex Agricultural and Technical School who heard these invited speakers: Dr. David Ozonoff, Professor of Environmental Health, Boston University School of Public Health; William J. Desrosiers, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director, Lowell Fire Department; and Benjamin Poidsiadio, Director of Greater Lowell EMS Paramedics and the Chair of the Disaster Committee at Saint's Memorial Medical Center.

Dr. Ozonoff spoke to the group about *Bio-Defense: A Bad Idea Whose Time Has Come*. In his comments, Dr. Ozonoff discussed why the country is not prepared for a biological weapons attack and why we are worse off than four years ago. The reasons espoused by Ozonoff included the distortion of priorities in all levels of science and non-science. He said that the Bush Administration has placed misguided emphasis on anthrax, plague, and tularemia. There has been a 1500% increase in research funds for these agents when in fact there have been no deaths, whereas diseases such as gonorrhea and syphilis have greater consequences and cause more damage and deaths. Yet, there has been a 41% decrease in funding for these types of diseases that have a more powerful affect on our daily lives. Also, there has been a 90% decrease in funding for routine public health.

TNEC Receives Grant from NIEHS

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) recently awarded more than $37 million nationally to 17 organizations to educate workers involved in emergency response and hazardous waste. The organizations will provide training to protect workers and their communities from exposure to toxic materials encountered during hazardous waste operations and chemical emergency response.

UML and the New England Consortium (TNEC) received a $1.1 million grant award for their worker training program. Associate Professor Craig Slatin of the Department of Community Health and Sustainability will serve as principal investigator for the project, joined by Project Director Paul Morse and Assistant Director Wayne Sunborn.

"These awards will provide workers with the skills and knowledge they need to protect themselves, their communities, and our environment from exposure to hazardous materials," said NIEHS Director David A. Schwartz, M.D.

Over the next five years, TNEC has agreed to provide hazardous waste and emergency responder training for 800 to 1,000 workers per year in New England. Workers will participate in numerous training sessions, including Hazard Disaster Preparedness, which TNEC hopes will prevent occupational illnesses, injuries and fatalities.

"We are delighted to have received an outstanding proposal score and happy to obtain continued grant award support from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences."
TNEC Trains United Steelworkers in Computer-Based Simulation

The United Steelworkers Department of Energy Worker Education Health and Safety Training Program funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) descended on to Lowell, MA in late August to learn more about The New England Consortium’s (TNEC) Hazardous Waste Site Simulation (SIM), now used in its 40-hour Hazardous Waste Site Worker Health and Safety Training. The SIM is loosely based on a real world emergency removal action carried out at an abandoned plating facility in Boston, MA.

Twenty members of the U.S. Steelworkers trained for 5 days at TNEC’s training facility and left at the end of the week with high praise about the training and simulation. This training was a collaboration between various NIEHS awardees across the country.

As part of its cooperative agreement with the NIEHS Worker Education Training Program, TNEC works with other awardee organizations to develop curriculum and share expertise on training skills and evaluation projects.

Over the last two years, the two representatives from the United Steelworkers Training Program have met with TNEC trainers and reviewed ways to incorporate computer-based training in its emergency response courses.

Based on their positive experience with TNEC’s simulation, they intend to adapt it for use in their program. The Steelworkers applied for and received funding from NIEHS to set up a similar computer lab as a pilot program to train their members at the Hanford Washington Department of Energy Nuclear Facility.

The New England Consortium (TNEC) Holds its Advisory Board Meeting

“When public health works nothing happens,” Ozonoff relayed to the group gathered at Alumni Lounge on the campus of Umass Lowell. Dr. Ozonoff believes that we are less safe not more safe due to the public health approach that the nation has taken since September 11. Ozonoff is deeply concerned also with the lack of civilian oversight, and he fears that the biological arms race will inevitably stimulate an arms race. It’s a race the United States can ill afford.

William Desrosiers covered the topic: Are We Ready? Emergency Preparedness in Our Region.

Desrosiers discussed how much our outlook on preparedness has changed since September 11. First responders when on-site at an incident not only must consider fire or more dire threat at hand but they must deal with fears related to terrorism. Chief Desrosiers is responsible for working on the Lowell region’s Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and how it functions. Benjamin Podsiadlo discussed how politics drives public health funding and its direction. Podsiadlo noted that New England is better able to respond to hurricanes and blizzards than most parts of the country since we have much experience dealing with these types of natural disasters. But Podsiadlo urged caution when dealing with a pandemic flu outbreak. Public health responders must confront these issues as the need to quarantine people in their homes rather than at health care facilities due to the possibility that first responders themselves become ill from the flu.

The attendees had the opportunity to questions the panelists and engage in further dialogue regarding these pressing public health concerns.

TNEC Receives Grant from NIEHS

Health Sciences as part of our cooperative agreement with NIEHS Worker Education Training Program,” Morse said.

Slatin, Morse and Sanborn will be aided by eight full-time staff members from UML along with a research assistant and additional faculty involvement over the course of their project. TNEC will continue to “build strong links among public health professionals, worker health educators, and labor movement health and safety activists in order to maintain high quality training for hazardous waste workers and emergency responders.”

UML and TNEC have worked with the Worker Education Training Program (WETP) for 18 years and the program has played a vital role in protecting workers and local communities.
News from the COSHs

Rhode Island

Rhode Island’s regulation on school chemical safety went into full effect in August 2006. Under RI Department of Education/Department of Health regulation (Section 39.0 Laboratories, Shops and Other Special Purpose Areas), hazardous chemicals must be removed from schools and no longer be purchased. (Technical and vocational programs have a limited exemption.) Under the regulations schools must do the following:

- Dispose of any of the 400 chemicals recognized in school health regulations:
- Complete a chemical hygiene plan that includes a chemical inventory.

This past summer seventeen high schools removed hazardous chemicals with support of Chemical Safe Schools Program and grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US EPA Region 1. Support from local fire companies has been an important part of getting high schools to participate.

Massachusetts

Statewide labor-environmental coalitions have scored a groundbreaking legislative victory, winning a mandate that requires the state to take important steps toward replacing toxic chemicals with safer alternatives. The Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow (AHT), which includes more than 100 coalition partners, targeted five chemicals—lead, formaldehyde, perchloroethylene, hexavalent chromium, and di-(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP)—to be analyzed for the potential of replacing them with safer ones.

The line item in the FY 2006 budget will provide $250,000 for the Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) at UMass Lowell to analyze: the significant uses of each of the five toxic chemicals used in Massachusetts for manufacturing, consumer products or other uses, potential human health and environmental impacts, and alternative chemicals or technologies, both proven and still in development.

This year, the funding was again included in the budget and again Governor Romney vetoed it. But this time, a coalition of labor and environmental organizations in AHT succeeded in getting the vast majority of the legislature to override the Governor’s veto with a vote of 145 to 4 and just a few hours later, the Senate overrode the veto unanimously.

New Hampshire

NH COSH is partnering with the Manchester Education Association/NEA to bring the “Tools for Schools” indoor air quality program to eight public schools in Manchester, NH.

NH COSH is also working with the New Hampshire Office of Hazardous Materials to plan an all-hazard disaster training day for NH municipal health officers.

Judy Elliot, Director of the NH COSH, will receive the 2006 Martin Luther King Award in recognition of her leadership supporting civil rights for New Hampshire immigrants.

EMS Training

Later this year the New England Consortium (TNEC) will offer EMS Response to Hazardous Materials Emergencies: First Responder Awareness Level Training. This one day training program will be held at the University of Massachusetts Lowell’s training center at Wannamaheg Office and Technology Center 600 Suffolk Street 5th Floor Lowell, MA.

The program consists of Rights and Responsibilities, Hazard Identification, Health Hazard Evaluation, Personal Protective Equipment, Incident Command System and Risk Assessment. The Registration fee is $75.00 pre-registration and the walk in fee is $95.00 pending available space.

The registration fee covers the DOT Emergency Response guidebook, comprehensive training, refreshments and lunch, Certificate of completion of First Responder Awareness Level Training and 8 contact hours of basic, intermediate and Paramedic continuing education credit by the Office of Emergency Medical Services, Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

If you have an interest in attending this course please contact Judy Martineau at 978.934.3257 for upcoming dates.
**TNEC 2006 Open Enrollment Training Calendar**

University of Massachusetts Lowell, One University Avenue, Falmouth 202, Lowell, MA 01854
Phone: 978.934.3257, Fax: 978.934.2012
www.uml.edu/t nec e-mail: t nec@uml.edu

All TNEC trainings are held at the TNEC Training Center, Wannamuck Mills, 600 Suffolk Street, 5th Floor, Lowell, MA, unless otherwise stated.

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**It's the Law**

In July 2006, Massachusetts will require a minimum of OSHA 16-hour safety training for all persons who are employed on public construction job sites. Any employee found on a worksite subject to this section without documentation of successful completion of this course will be subject to immediate removal from the worksite.

If you or your staff have any questions regarding these new regulations or if you will require the OSHA 10-hour training, please feel free to contact TNEC or visit our website where you will find our course schedule for 2006. (www.uml.edu/t nec)