



JMEPG Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: October 29, 2025 @ 2:00pm

Location: Providence Cancer Center Conference Room U2401 3851 Piper St Anchorage, AK 99508 or Teams

Attendees: Kubler, Michael - Providence; Maj Alysha Do - JBER Public Health; Robert Scanlon - Blood Bank of Alaska; Bailey, Bonnie E - Alaska Department of Health; Jamie Johanson- Alpine Surgery Center; Edwards, Eva -ANTHC; Kara Cahill, - MSRMC; Kennedy, Sarah - North Star Behavioral Health; Macans, Michael - Anchorage Health Department; McCain; Brenda - Red Cross of Alaska; Debbie Lowenthal - AHHA; Czech, Edward - Alaska Psychiatric Institute; Benzschawel, James K - ANTHC; Rowles, Tyler - St. Elias Specialty Hospital

Meeting notes:

- **Healthcare Coalition and Disaster Response Updates:** Bonnie Bailey from the State of Alaska Health Emergency Response Unit provided updates on the Healthcare Coalition's recent activities, including the impact of the West Coast storm disaster response, ongoing planning, training, and exercises, and the importance of the Telecommunication Service Priority System (TSP) for communication resilience among partners.
 - **West Coast Storm Impact:** Bonnie Bailey explained that many core partners were unable to participate in the recent Healthcare Coalition meeting due to their involvement in the West Coast storm disaster response, which limited the scope of the meeting and briefings.
 - **TSP Communication Priority:** Bonnie highlighted the importance of the Telecommunication Service Priority System (TSP), noting that several recent incidents in Alaska involved communication disruptions that could have been mitigated if facilities had TSP, and offered to assist agencies in enrolling or understanding the system.
 - **Exercise Planning:** Bonnie reported that the coalition is planning a medical response surge exercise, likely in March, which will be a tabletop with functional elements to simulate an incident overwhelming the hospital system, and invited partners to provide feedback or participate.
 - **Partner Engagement:** Bonnie encouraged partners to reach out with concerns or planning, training, or preparedness needs for the next quarter, and offered to include relevant topics on future agendas.
- **HearNet Radio Network Performance and Participation:** Michael Kubler and Bonnie Bailey led a discussion on the performance and participation in the HearNet radio network, reviewing recent response rates, the importance of regular radio checks, and strategies to improve engagement and technical competency among partner organizations.
 - **Radio Check Response Rates:** Michael Kubler presented data showing that all organizations have responded at least once since July, with typical weekly response rates in the 50-60% range, and noted that 100% of radios have been shown to work, though weekly participation is inconsistent.



- **Training and Rotation:** Bonnie Bailey recommended rotating leadership of radio checks among partners to build staff capacity and reduce intimidation, and offered to provide training and on-site support to ensure technical proficiency and address equipment issues.
- **Technical Challenges and Solutions:** Participants discussed technical issues such as radios being bumped off the network, the need for just-in-time training materials, and the importance of ensuring radios are turned on during disasters; Bonnie noted ongoing outreach to key partners not currently on the network, such as fire and police departments.
- **Scope and Limitations:** The group debated whether to expand the network to other essential services, with Michael Kubler cautioning against overloading the single-channel system, and Bonnie explaining upcoming technical upgrades that will not fundamentally change the one-at-a-time communication model.
- **JMEPG Membership, Governance, and Bylaws Revision:** Michael Kubler facilitated a review of the JMEPG survey results, discussed challenges with officer roles and engagement, and outlined proposed revisions to the group's bylaws and governance structure, including the formation of subcommittees and the use of AI for meeting notes.
 - **Survey Results and Member Feedback:** Michael Kubler summarized survey responses indicating that members value professional networking, information sharing, and exercises, with continuity planning and mass casualty response as top planning topics; he invited further feedback and kept the survey open for additional input.
 - **Officer Roles and Engagement:** The group discussed difficulties in filling officer positions, with Michael Kubler currently serving as chair and Lori as secretary, and considered reducing the number of officer roles for sustainability, while encouraging broader engagement from new and existing members.
 - **Bylaws Revision and Governance Subcommittee:** Michael Kubler proposed revising the bylaws to reflect the group's current structure as an unincorporated nonprofit, planning to vote on the new version at the next meeting, and suggested forming a governance subcommittee to address future organizational development.
 - **Administrative Support:** Michael Kubler suggested seeking HPP funding for administrative support, clarifying with Bonnie Bailey and Deb that JMEPG cannot directly receive funds but can benefit through contracts managed by eligible facilities.
- **Exercise Planning and Funding Utilization:** The group reviewed upcoming exercises, including a mass casualty incident exercise in February and a medical surge tabletop in March, and discussed the need to fully utilize available HPP funding for exercise planning and administrative support.
 - **Upcoming Exercises:** Michael Kubler and Bonnie Bailey described planned exercises, including a mass casualty incident off Kodiak Island in February and a medical surge tabletop in March, inviting partner participation and feedback to ensure meaningful engagement.
 - **Funding Utilization:** Michael Kubler noted that not all available HPP funding was used in the previous year and encouraged the group to be deliberate in utilizing



awarded funds for exercise planning and administrative support, with Lori handling bookkeeping for these activities.

- **Western Alaska Disaster and Red Cross Shelter Transition:** Brenda McCain from the Red Cross of Alaska provided an update on the transition of storm evacuees from shelters to hotel settings, ongoing case management, and the collaborative response efforts involving the Red Cross, FEMA, and the State of Alaska.
 - **Evacuee Transition Process:** Brenda explained that evacuees are being moved from shelters to hotels, with continued provision of meals and case management support from the Red Cross, FEMA, and the state, ensuring ongoing assistance as they work to rebuild their lives.
 - **Collaborative Response:** Brenda highlighted the influx of support personnel from across the country and the importance of maintaining the collaborative group structure to ensure effective disaster response and recovery.

Follow-up tasks:

- **TSP Enrollment Information Sharing:** Send information about Telecommunication Service Priority (TSP) enrollment and its benefits to Mike for distribution to the group. (Bonnie)
- **Medical Response Surge Exercise Participation:** Reach out to Charles with feedback or interest in participating in the planned medical response surge exercise scheduled for March. (All partners) As well as the Mass Casualty Incident exercise on 2/26/2026
- **Bylaws Revision Feedback:** Review the draft bylaws and provide input to Mike prior to the next meeting for consideration in the upcoming vote. (All members)
- **Governance Subcommittee Formation:** Form a governance subcommittee to discuss future direction and revitalization of the group, including membership and bylaws updates. (AK-PAMC-CR-CC2401, Carrie, interested members)
- **Exercise Planning Funding Utilization:** Coordinate as a group to fully utilize awarded HPP funding for exercise planning and related activities this year.