

Summary of Major Themes from 1/28/10 SRP Strategic Planning Information Session

The following is a summary of the major points raised during the information session:

Questions 1 & 2. What scientific themes and issues are the most important to address in the SF Research Program and why?

What prioritization criteria should SRP use to guide inclusion of themes and issues in program activities?

What are the key teams and disciplines needed for the SRP to make the greatest advances in scientific themes and issues most important to the Program?

Acting Associate Director for Science noted that ATSDR needed to identify its critical research needs and communicate those in a consolidated format to SRP.

There are critical health issues at hazardous waste sites that could use SRP assistance. One key example is evaluating manganese exposure via the air pathway. There are community concerns about neurological effects of manganese exposure via air.

ATSDR needs epidemiological data and could use SRP's assistance in trying to approach that need.

ATSDR is also interested in research on the use of sentinel species as surrogates of human exposure.

The health effect of chemical mixtures continues to be a concern at hazardous waste sites.

SRP and ATSDR need to establish a working mechanism (e.g. a functioning interagency committee) that will allow the two agencies to work together.

Naturally occurring asbestos is also a priority concern for ATSDR. An asbestos biomarker for cancer is needed.

ATSDR holds expert panels on critical issues such as asbestos that could benefit from SRP participation.

The ATSDR Division of Health Studies has ongoing work on critical issues that could benefit from SRP participation also, such as the manganese studies in Ohio and West Virginia, VOC's in groundwater at Camp Lejeune, Libby, MT health studies, the ALS directory, diseased populations vs. exposed populations cohorts and the genetic changes from environmental exposures.

ATSDR is working on large sites with multiple air sources. Need novel approaches to assess air exposure impacts, modeling, estimating past exposures, and cement kiln exposures in particular.

Question 3. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the SRP, is the current biomedical/non-biomedical framework the most effective approach? Why or why not?

One commenter noted that the present SRP interdisciplinary research process is working well now.

Question 4. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the SRP, what approaches to training are most appropriate for the SRP to meet its research mandates?

One commenter supported rotations by SRP graduate students with the ATSDR.

Another commenter also supported establishing an intern program for the SRP graduated students to work in Atlanta or the ATSDR regional offices.

It was also stated that ATSDR field personnel do pursue graduate training and proposed evaluating a program for selected ATSDR personnel to work on graduate degrees at SRP universities.

Another commenter noted how important it was for scientists to be trained in how to communicate with communities in clear and understandable language so that they

could best participate in the decision-making in their local community's hazardous waste site.

Question 5. Who are or should be SRP's stakeholders?

How can SRP most effectively receive input from them?

One commenter emphasized that ATSDR was a dominant stakeholder for the SRP Program's research. Collaboration between the two agencies will help both achieve their critical mission.

It was again emphasized that ATSDR and SRP should have an established continuing communication mechanism such as a standing inter-agency committee to promote effective communication between them.

It was noted that ATSDR holds four or more regional-state-tribal meetings during the year. SRP could participate in those meetings to get effective feedback from those stakeholders.

Another commenter noted that ATSDR has State cooperative agreements with 30 State partners and that those interactions could be another good forum for getting input from State stakeholders.

Question 6. What are the best ways for SRP to achieve its goals of research translation that is, making research more accessible by end-users?

What data sharing tools or procedures should SRP use?

One commenter noted that it was important for SRP to work with ATSDR and EPA to promote the use and incorporation of SRP research into new Superfund related guidance

Another commenter encouraged SRP information to be incorporated into the ATSDR web site, such as the "what's new section", to promote use of SRP research by ATSDR staff and other stakeholders.

Question 7. What are the most appropriate approaches to community outreach for SRP?

It was suggested that this was a critical area of mutual interest and that SRP and ATSDR should follow up this meeting in Atlanta with more focused discussions in the future on how the two agencies could collaborate more to support community engagement.