SDWG Arctic Human Health Experts Group (AHHEG)  Update September 7, 2016
Co-Chairs: Thomas Hennessy (US, CDC) and Cody Chip (US, AIA)

AHHEG Meetings
- An AHHEG meeting was held in Tromso, Norway on May 11, 2016 in conjunction with the RISING SUN Scientific Advisory Group. Twelve representatives attended and 8 guests participated including SDWG Chair, Roberta Burns and Canadian representatives Sarah Cox and Jyoti Bhargava. We reviewed the current work plan, heard an update on the Finnish Chairmanship and underwent a review of AHHEG activities and gaps to help inform the SDWG strategic planning process.

AHHEG representatives
- Representatives have been named from each of the Arctic Nations and Permanent Participant organizations.

AHHEG Work plan
1. Existing Projects
   Indigenous Research Ethics.  POC  Ann-Ragnhild Broderstad (Sami Council)
   Plan is to collate and report on existing guidelines for research in indigenous communities in the Arctic region. Goal is to identify common features and desired attributes of such ethical guidelines and provide a reference for communities and research interested in implementing or updating such guidance. The Sami Council has undertaken a process to review the ethical guidelines for specimen banking and to consider the legal structure that is relevant to storage and use of the specimens. Final report is pending.

   International Circumpolar Surveillance for infectious diseases.  POC Tom Hennessy (US)
   The ICS system continues to collect and compare infectious disease data from participating Arctic states. A new report was released on a comparison of tuberculosis surveillance in the Arctic. This showed that the systems were similar enough to include regular combined reports of TB disease in the ICS system. The report can be found here: http://www.circumpolarhealthjournal.net/index.php/ijch/article/view/30322
   The ICS steering committee will meet in Copenhagen on Sept 11 -15 to review progress and plans for the coming year. Considerations include whether to expand the network to include sexually transmitted diseases and to make preparations for the 17th International Congress on Circumpolar Health t

2. New Initiatives
A. Reducing the Incidence of Suicide in Indigenous Groups – Strengths United through Networks (RISING-SUN)
   Lead Agency: Pamela Collins (US, NIMH). AHHEG POC: Cody Chipp (AIA), Solfrid Johansen (NO), Christina Viskum-Larsen (DK), Selma Ford (ICC), Anthony Phillips (CA).

   This mental wellness initiative is led by the United States (U.S.) National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), in partnership with the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Office of Global Affairs in the Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of State, and co-sponsored by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the National Institute of Public Health (Denmark) the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC).

RISING SUN builds on the mental wellness initiative of the Canadian Chairmanship: “Sharing Hope: Circumpolar Perspectives on Promising Practices for Promoting Mental Wellness and Resilience.” The overall goal of RISING SUN is to produce a toolkit that enables communities, governments, and key stakeholders to measure the effectiveness of suicide prevention interventions in indigenous Arctic communities. The project will be conducted over the course of the 2-year U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

**Current Update (September 2016)**

On May 9-10 2016, the NIMH Office for Research on Disparities and Global Mental Health (ORDGMH), together with the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, convened the second workshop of the RISING SUN initiative. Participants of the workshop included members of the RISING SUN Scientific Advisory Group, advocates, clinical professionals, indigenous community members, researchers, and members of the Arctic Council’s SDWG Arctic Human Health Expert Group. The first day of the workshop reviewed the landscape of suicide and suicide prevention in northern Scandinavia (Sápmi - Land of Sámi), followed by breakout sessions to develop ideas for a robust Sámi-Specific Transnational Suicide Prevention Plan. Discussions focused on the challenges and needs the plan should address and the necessary actions to make the plan work.

The second day of the workshop was centered on reviewing the preliminary findings of the Delphi consensus-building exercise. The modified Delphi method is ideal for attaining the goals of this initiative: distilling knowledge and building reliable consensus to produce a toolkit of outcomes and their measures to evaluate interventions that will help reduce the incidence of suicide among indigenous communities of the Arctic. Following the review of preliminary findings, workshop members offered suggestions on how to frame the initial responses to best reflect the views of all stakeholders. In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, the workshop addressed the need to incorporate other sources of information in addition to the responses from the Delphi process, and provided a tentative outline for the supplemental activities. Findings are expected from a Canadian focus group on mental wellness and suicide prevention, the proceedings from the Sámi Suicide Prevention Plan workshop, and results from anticipated focus group discussions in Alaska and Greenland are expected to be integrated into the final RISING SUN products.

The second round of the consensus-building process (modified Delphi method) was completed in June 2016, with 146 (81%) of the original 180 people participating. Participants included advocates, clinicians, community members (e.g., Tribal elders and Native youth), federal and regional government officials, researchers, and survivors of family members who have completed a suicide. As before, individuals represent all of the Arctic States and five of the Arctic Council Permanent Participants (i.e., Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabascan
An initial list of 600 responses was distilled down to 99 outcomes. Those 99 outcomes were distributed during the second Delphi round in which participants were directed to select the top 25 outcomes they viewed as the most important outcomes of suicide prevention programs. The results of the second round are currently being analyzed. The third, and final round of the Delphi process will be underway in Fall 2016 with analyses completed by early 2017.

A final workshop for the RISING SUN project is anticipated to be held in Iqaluit, CA, no later than March 2017. During this gathering, the results of the Delphi process and a suicide prevention toolkit with the identified outcome measures will be presented.

The US-NIMH Team launched the RISING SUN web page that will serve as a platform for background information, news, and further updates. The page can be found at: http://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/organization/gmh/risingsun/index.shtml

B. Improving Health through Safe and Affordable Access to Household Running Water and Sewer.

POC Tom Hennessy (US CDC)

This initiative has three components:

1. A report on water and sanitation services across the Arctic and the water-related health conditions in each area. This will highlight the current conditions and identify best practices for water service in a changing Arctic environment. Details to include proportion of population with service, health indicators, environmental vulnerabilities, economic considerations and innovations. Update: The survey was deployed and 81 persons from six Arctic nations responded. Preliminary results will be shared at the WIHAH meeting (see #3) in Anchorage and a report will be prepared for publication and shared with the SDWG. The survey remains open through September 30, 2016. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/arctic_council_water_sanitation

A summary on the background and aims of this initiative was published in the International Journal of Circumpolar Health in May 2016 and can be found here: http://www.circumpolarhealthjournal.net/index.php/ijch/article/view/31149

2. The “International Conference on Sanitation in Cold Climate Regions” was held in Sisimiut, Greenland on April 12-14, 2016 sponsored by the Danish Technical University (DTU), Kalaallit Nunaanni Teknikimik Iliniarfik (Greenland), the Arctic Technology Centre and Qeqqata Kommunia. The meeting included participants from the industry, the public sector, the science community and other stakeholders to present, discuss and exchange ideas and experience on the management of municipal and industrial waste and protection of water resources in the Arctic. Meeting abstracts and the program can be found here: http://www.conferencemanager.dk/ArtekEvent2016/book-of-abstracts.html

3. A conference, “Water Innovations for Health Arctic Homes (WIHAH)”, will take place on September 18 -22, 2016 in Anchorage, Alaska. This circumpolar conference will bring together approximately 200 engineers, health experts, researchers,
community members, policymakers, and vendors to discuss health benefits, challenges and innovations associated with making running water and sewer in remote northern communities safe, affordable and sustainable. This meeting will consist of expert speaker and poster presentation sessions, along with selected innovative technical demonstrations of home water and sanitation systems. A meeting proceedings will be produced for the SDWG and a special issue of Environmental Science and Pollution research in 2017 will feature peer reviewed articles from both the ARTEK and WIHAH meetings. For more details, go to www.wihah2016.com

B. Arctic One Health Initiative

Lead: Bruce Ruscio, Josh Glasser (US DOS), Tom Hennessy (US CDC)

Summary of Prior Update (October 2015)

Developed to address the complex health issues at the environment, human and animal interface for the early identification, prevention and mitigation of health risks. One Health is an approach to identifying and addressing threats that occur at the nexus of human, animal and environmental health. The goal of this initiative is to encourage the practice of a One Health approach across the Arctic. Specific steps will be to assess the status of One Health activities and capacities in the region by creating a report. Also, to support development of One Health collaborations among nations and permanent participant groups to foster this holistic approach.

A special One Health session was held at ICCH16, with examples of how this approach is being used in Arctic regions. A paper on the topic by the leads was published in the International Journal of Circumpolar Health in Sept 2015. (http://www.circumpolarhealthjournal.net/index.php/ijch/article/view/27913)

An introductory workshop on One Health was held Oct 20, 2015 in Anchorage to describe the principals and current practice of One Health approaches. This was recorded and shared with AHHEG members who could not be in attendance. Presentations can be found here: http://www.sdwg.org/expert-groups/arctic-human-health-expert-group/

Current Update (September 2016)

The Arctic Region One Health Survey was open on the internet from January through March 2016. A total of 334 persons responded, including respondents from all Arctic nations. A full report is in preparation, but initial analysis indicates that ½ of respondents were aware of One Health, but few (13%) received training in the approach. One-third of respondents indicated that responsible agencies had a One Health office or function. Over 95% of respondents indicated an interest in participating in One Health activities. This strong degree of interest and the contact information from the survey will allow development of One Health outreach activities such as the planned Arctic One Health table top exercise for winter 2017.