

Containment Laboratory Community Advisory Committee

<http://www.cityoffrederick.com/cms/page/index.php?id=547>

1. What is your purpose/mission?

The CLCAC is a joint committee of the City of Frederick and Frederick Board of County Commissioners.

It is concerned with community health and safety and the Biosafety level 3 and 4 labs in Frederick County. It was established in November 2010 and has been meeting since January 2011.

The CLCAC:

Fosters two-way communication between community and the operators of the BSL-3 and 4 laboratories at Fort Detrick and elsewhere in Frederick County.

Seeks information about issues of public concern and ways to address those concerns, including the implications of laboratory operations on the safety and health of the community.

Advises & makes recommendations on behalf of the public to government, containment laboratory and Fort Detrick officials regarding opportunities to improve any laboratory-related matters that could impact public safety and health.

The committee is committed to benefiting the community, the labs and public officials.

Scope: Current and future Biosafety level-3 and 4 labs in Frederick County, including those operated by the Army, Navy, Homeland Security, National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases, Department of Agriculture and private labs; (see end of document for definition of BSL-3 and 4 labs)

Independent of labs. No control, oversight or authority over labs. Does not deal with Area B cleanup or cancer cluster study

2. What accomplishments have been achieved in the previous year and since your committee started?

a. **Organized** how we will operate and communicate. (by-laws, operating procedures, officers; established priorities)

- b. **Established ways to communicate with the public.** (website, email lists, press releases, press interviews)
- c. **Established lines of communication** with officials at the garrison and the **BSL-3 and 4 containment labs at Fort Detrick.** (established working relationships with lab officials and staff)
- d. **Learned about Biosafety level 3 and 4 containment laboratory** missions, research and operations, health and safety procedures. Learned about the role of the Fort Detrick garrison for on-post safety, emergency response and infrastructure support. (met numerous times with officials at garrison, USAMRIID, Homeland Security and NIH labs; toured labs)
- e. **Listened and responded to community concerns** and interests. (determined core health and safety questions, held public forums, received public comments at all meetings, input from wide variety of residents, including a number with specific relevant scientific and technical expertise)
- f. **Provided the public with information about the laboratories.** (worked with labs to obtain information that can demonstrate safety performance, obtained responses from officials to questions received in public meetings and by email, posted presentations and responses on website, developing Frequently Asked Questions,)
- g. **Provided the public with information about emergency management plans.** (held public forum with Frederick Emergency Management, law enforcement, first responders, health department, garrison emergency management; provided structured set of questions to address in the forum)
- h. **Represented community** concerns to the 2011 **National Research Council** risk assessment assistance study for the Army's Medical Countermeasures, Test & Evaluation Facility. (provided comments, feedback, met with NRC study committee to discuss risk assessment concerns)
- i. **Touched upon most aspects of the committee's scope** of responsibilities.

3. **What population or demographic is specifically served by your board/commission?**

The work of CLCAC applies to all the residents of Frederick County.

4. **Do you have a prepared agenda and do you adhere through your meeting to the agenda?**

Agendas are posted online prior to meetings and distributed to NACs and email lists. The committee operates by Roberts Rules of Order; agendas are strictly followed. Minutes are taken and posted online. Meetings are televised live (via the City) and are archived for online viewing.

5. **Are there any issues your board/commission may be experiencing with regard to membership, the number of meetings required, etc.?** No issues. The members of the committee work well together and are committed to attending meetings and conducting the work of the committee.

- a. **How often do you meet?** CLCAC was established to meet quarterly. However, the committee voted to hold monthly meetings in order to meet the goals of its mission in a more timely manner. In practice, the CLCAC has also met with laboratory representatives most months.
- b. **Total number of members?** Nine residents (seven regular, two alternate), chosen from written application to serve 3-year terms. **Ex-Officio members:** BoCC, City Aldermen. Liaisons with Fort Detrick and laboratories. Members are volunteers who represent diverse technical and executive backgrounds. Represent private and public sector BSL-3 and 4 laboratory operation and management, safety, facility engineering, public health, and the history of the community's concerns with the lab expansion.

Vacancies? None. **Should the membership be reduced or expanded?** The committee is a good size for the work before it.

- c. **Number of times quorum is achieved/year? How many missed/year?** There has been a quorum at all meetings. There has been 100% member attendance at a majority of meetings.
6. **Do you believe your board/commission would be better served with space in a Frederick County Government facility with access to telephones, computers, file storage?**

That is not necessary to the work that we do. We have established a secure online record keeping system on google docs, independent of current members, to ensure that all emails, documents and other materials are permanently archived. Our electronic presence (city website, official email communications) is important and is well established.

7. **Should your board/commission be abolished? If yes, what would be lost to the citizens of Frederick County?** This committee should continue its work. It is providing an important public service, without cost to the County. We are in a unique position to coordinate information and represent community concerns among a wide variety of public and private entities. The public wants their concerns to be addressed, and to be treated respectfully. The labs want their work and their safety programs to be understood and also to be respected. The material is technical and complicated. Communication has not always gone well. We intend to make a difference and find ways to "make it better".
8. **What future plan(s) or service(s) does your board/commission envision developing for the improvement of the quality of life in Frederick County?** We intend to find constructive ways to address the public's health and safety concerns. Our goal is to help improve trust between the public and laboratory operators. Specifically:

Continue and expand dialog with labs.

Work with the laboratories to improve their transparency to the benefit of both the public and the laboratories, including information about lab research, safety and mishap performance.

Seek clear answers to the public's questions and ways to address concerns. Earn the trust of the public as an honest broker. We are receiving more questions as more of the public learns about the committee.

Roll out Frequently Asked Questions on the CLCAC website. Work with lab officials to get public

information out on their websites.

Learn specifics of the BSL-3 and 4 external safety oversight programs by CDC and others and communicate this to the public.

Obtain basic information about private labs.

Continue to participate in the risk assessment process for the Army's MCT&E.

Reach more members of the community and find more ways to get information to the community.

9. Is there a legal mandate or requirement for the existence of your board/commission?

There is no legal mandate or requirement. The CLCAC was established following 2010 recommendations by the National Academies of Sciences as way to improve two-way communication between labs and community. The recommendation said: "USAMRIID should create a community advisory board, with a broad representation of community views. This board should meet regularly to learn about successes, problems, and improvements in policies and practices; encourage public suggestions for improvements; and help shape the laboratory's public communications and activities—including the development of guidelines for reporting incidents to the public."

USAMRIID, and the Fort Detrick garrison stated that it believed such a committee would be a positive step to take and recommended 1) expanding the proposed scope to include all BSL-3 and 4 laboratories and 2) making the committee independent of the labs. They worked with the County and City to establish the committee and have been both supportive and responsive to us. The Homeland Security and NIAID labs have also been engaged with the CLCAC.

We are grateful that our work has the support of elected officials at the City, County, State and federal levels.

10. Do you believe there are any similar boards/commissions that could be consolidated with your board/commission, and if so, which ones? The mission of this committee does not overlap with any other boards or commissions.

11. How can we help you do your job better? We appreciate your interest in learning about the work we are doing. We believe we can be most effective and positive with the continued active support and participation of elected officials.

12. Is it necessary for a commissioner to attend your meetings or do you just need to know who to call when you need assistance? Commissioner participation in our meetings is important. The committee's strength lies in the professionalism, diversity of expertise, and perspectives of its members. The input of elected officials provides a key perspective. It is important for the public to see the elected and appointed community representatives working in partnership with laboratory officials and others on behalf of the public, to address health and safety concerns.

What are Biosafety level 3 and 4 laboratories?

From the Centers of Disease Control:

BSL-3 labs are used to study agents that can be transmitted through the air and cause potentially lethal infection. Researchers perform lab manipulations in a gas-tight enclosure. Other safety features include clothing decontamination, sealed windows, and specialized ventilation systems. Examples of BSL-3 pathogens include anthrax and plague.

BSL-4 labs are used to study agents that pose a high risk of life-threatening disease for which no vaccine or therapy is available. Lab personnel are required to wear full-body, air-supplied suits and to shower when exiting the facility. The labs incorporate all BSL 3 features and occupy safe, isolated zones within a larger building. Examples of BSL-4 pathogens include ebola and other hemorrhagic fevers.

In Frederick County BSL-3 and 4 lab are located at Fort Detrick and are / or will be operated by the Army, Navy, Homeland Security, National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Disease, Department of Agriculture. There are also private BSL-3 laboratories located in the County.

What kinds of questions are people asking? Lots....here's just a few.

What kind of research are these labs doing? What are they working with?

How do they make sure the pathogens can't get out?

How do they make sure infected animals can't escape?

How will I be notified if there is an emergency? Will I be told what to do?

What happens if a lab worker gets infected and doesn't know it and walks around the community for a couple of weeks before being diagnosed?

Does the hospital or emergency room know who to call if someone comes in with something that might be a lab pathogen? How would they know?

What are they doing to make sure we don't have more anthrax or other attacks from a lab insider?

Can these labs handle an F-4 tornado? Could the pathogens escape if the building is destroyed, the power is off and there's a catastrophic fire?

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Willis, Chair
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