

## MINUTES TASK FORCE ON ALPHA GAL FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2015

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The Task Force on Alpha Gal met on Friday, November 20, 2015, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 149 of the State Capitol in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Committee members present: **Representative** Julie Mayberry, Chair, Dr. James Bledsoe, Mr. Rick Cartwright, Dr. Dirk Haselow, Dr. Curtis Hedberg, Dr. Kelly Loftin, Dr. Michael Looper, Ms. Karen McCumpsey, Ms. Montine McNulty, Dr. Tina Merritt, Dr. Susan Weinstein and Dr. Gary Wheeler.

Non Committee members present: Thomas Hernet (Ms. Zane Chrisman), Scott Pace (Mark Riley) and Zach Peller (Wes Ward).

The meeting was called to order by Representative Mayberry.

### **Consideration to Approve the September 14, 2015 Minutes [EXHIBIT C]**

Dr. Weinstein made a motion to approve September 14, 2015 minutes, Ms. McNulty seconded the motion. Without any objection the minutes were approved.

### **Presentation on Alpha-Gal Support Group, Ms. Tina Moore, Founder, Alpha-Gal Facebook Support Group**

Representative Mayberry recognized Ms. Moore via phone conference. Ms. Moore stated she started the Facebook support group in May, 2012 with 2,047 members nationally and internationally.

Ms. Moore shared some of the comments and concerns from different people that suffer from Alpha-Gal. She noted the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has no reported numbers of how many people are affected by Alpha-Gal.

Representative Mayberry asked if Dr. Merritt had any information to share about testing.

Dr. Merritt stated that testing is currently under approval by the FDA. A company by the name of “Thermo Fisher Scientific” will be providing the testing, under a test media called the “The Cap”.

### **Presentation on Statewide Emergency Medical Response (EMS) Response to Alpha-Gal, Dr. James Bledsoe, Chief Physician Specialist, Arkansas Department of Health [EXHIBIT F]**

Dr. Bledsoe presented his power point presentation on Statewide EMS Response. After traveling the state and meeting with the Trauma Regional Area Council (TRAC) and discussing Alpha-Gal, he put together a presentation to inform the Emergency Management Team (EMT) and most importantly medical directors of Alpha-Gal. The Alpha-Gal Task Force was created by Act 1247, sponsored by Representative Julie Mayberry. Alpha-Gal is caused by a reaction of Galactose-alpha-1,3-Galactose. Dr. Bledsoe discussed some of the other leading causes of Alpha-Gal and its diagnosis as well as treatments. Dr. Bledsoe mentioned this information will be provided to 120 medical directors around the state and 230 EMTs, paramedics and first responders. This information will be presented electronically as well as well face to face meetings.

**Best Practices for Food Safety Managing Allergens, Ms. Montine McNulty, Director, Arkansas Hospitality Association [EXHIBIT G]**

Ms. McNulty discussed some of the things the association is doing to assure the safety of the eating experience for people that suffer from food allergies. Food allergies are widely recognized in the food industry as a growing health issue. From 1998 to 2004, 52% of confirmed foodborne illness outbreaks were from restaurants and 68% of those restaurants did not have a ServSafe certified kitchen manager. Ms. McNulty presented a pamphlet on “ServSafe Management Training” which highlights the importance of food safety training. Since 2012, roughly 6000 people have received training on food safety and cross contamination. ServSafe training was developed by the National Restaurant Association, and is a nationwide training session provided to the food industry. The National Restaurant Association has also created a “tool kit”, along with a 90 minute online training session (a *sample of the tool kit was shown to the committee*). The pamphlet also illustrates the 15 million reasons why everyone should learn about allergens. Moving forward, the restaurant association is on record as being supportive of ServSafe training and aspires to provide at least one certified person on staff in all food industries. Ms. McNulty presented a YouTube video on real life experiences of individuals living with food allergies.

Representative Mayberry pointed out that one of the main goals of this task force is education but also reminded members that they have been charged to submit recommendations to the health committee. It was suggested that one of those recommendations could be to extend the grant for additional certification and training for food service managers which is set to expire at the end of 2016. Ms. McNulty followed up stating that additional funding would help tremendously due to the amount of training that is needed for food and safety purposes which includes providing the training for people with language and cultural barriers. Representative Mayberry mentioned contacting someone with workforce services to reinforce the importance of receiving the grant funds.

Representative Mayberry requested that a representative with Family and Consumer Science present at the next meeting. She also wanted to ensure that information regarding Act 1108 of 2015, sponsored by Senator Linda Chesterfield, which allows all restaurants to grant public access to auto-injectable epinephrine pens (EpiPens), is made available to the food industry.

**Presentation on Frequency of Alpha-Gal Based on Geographical Location, Dr. Michelle Aldrich, Director, Industrial Bio-Test Laboratories [EXHIBIT E]**

Dr. Dirk Haselow stated the data presented today was performed by Quest and Vericore Ltd. He reviewed “Age Distribution of Patients with Positive Alpha-Gal Test Results”, “Distribution of Patients with Positive Alpha-Gal Test Results by Age and Gender”, “Distribution of Patients with Positive Alpha-Gal Test Results by Month and Gender”, “Distribution of Patients with Positive Alpha-Gal Test Results by Month and Age”, “Patients and Positive Alpha-Gal Test Results by Season and Year”, “Distributions of Patients with Positive Alpha-Gal Test Results by Age and Season”, “Patients with Positive Alpha-Gal Test Results by Season and Gender” and “Distribution of AR Patients with Positive Alpha-Gal Test Results by County”. All of the data presented today are the result of testing performed 2013 to 2015. Representative Mayberry asked if the “Distribution of AR Patients with Positive Alpha-

Gal Test Results by County” can be graphed in the form of a map with color shading detail for the next meeting. Dr. Loftin was asked to provide the committee with the known distribution of the ticks as they are known today and educational materials that have been used for avoiding ticks. Representative Mayberry also requests for data on the location of allergist in the state. Dr. Merritt stated that the Allergist Association can provide that information. Representative Mayberry also asked for the assistance of BLR to assist in combining all of this information together to present at the next meeting.

**Alpha-Gal and Medicine, Clinical Spectrum of Mammalian Meat Product [EXHIBITS H-1, H-2]** Representative Mayberry shared information with the committee on the response she received from the FDA.

Karen Crowson and Susie Powell shared their personal testimonies on life with Alpha-Gal.

Next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 29, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.