



## eRA Project Team Meeting Minutes

---

**Date:** Tuesday, October 12, 2004  
**Time:** 9:00–10:10 a.m.  
**Location:** Rockledge 1, 5<sup>th</sup> floor conference room  
**Chair:** Izja Lederhendler, Jim Cain

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, November 9, 9:00 a.m., Rockledge 1, 5<sup>th</sup> floor conference room

---

### Presentations

- ❑ HRSA's Electronic Handbook (Sandra Karen, Libby Hartnett):  
[http://era.nih.gov/docs/HRSA\\_EHB\\_Overview.pdf](http://era.nih.gov/docs/HRSA_EHB_Overview.pdf)

### Opening Remarks

*Izja Lederhendler*

- ❑ Izja reported that the eCGAP team has verified the electronic receipt of 24 applications for the October receipt date. On Friday, October 15, the system will be open for production applications for the November receipt date.
- ❑ Izja reported that he is working closely with Norka Ruiz Bravo and Richard Turman on the Knowledge Management for Disease Coding (KMDC) presentation to be given to the Steering Committee on October 21. Izja acknowledged the strong contributions made by Patti Gaines, eRA business analyst for knowledge management; Archana Bhandari from Mitretek; and Della Hahn from the National Institute for Mental Health.
- ❑ Izja reported that the FY2005 Annual Plan will be shared with the team at the November 9 Project Team meeting. He noted that he has been interacting with the Extramural IT Working Group and incorporating their ideas and priorities into the planning process.
- ❑ Izja noted that the FY2006 planning process will start at the end of November.
- ❑ Izja remarked that data quality issues continue to be a *hot button* for the program. He noted that Maria Bukowski was asked to report on Pioneer application information. Instead of spending a few hours on the report, Maria spent three days working through data quality issues in order to provide the report.
- ❑ Izja and Al Graeff will attend the first monthly meeting of the Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS) board at the Department on November 13. The EGMS board was formed as a focal point for the coordination and resolution of issues related to the integration of OPDIV grants management systems into eRA and GATES.
- ❑ Scarlett Gibb, eRA Planning, Communications and Outreach Branch Chief, and her husband, Bill, are the proud new parents of Shelby Gibb born on October 7. While Scarlett is on maternity leave, Jim Cain will assume her duties.
- ❑ In addition to his role as the eRA Systems Management & Support Branch Chief, Tim Twomey will be the acting branch chief for the Analysis Design & Development Branch

(ADDM). Tim will fill this role in ADDM until a permanent replacement for Sherry Zucker, who retired last month, can be appointed.

## **OPDIV Integration Update**

*Mark Siegert*

In August 2003, Dr. Ed Sontag, assistant secretary for Administration and Management, announced the decision to consolidate grants management systems within DHHS. NIH's eRA System was chosen as the enterprise system for research grants. The Grants Administration, Tracking and Evaluation System (GATES), developed by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), was chosen as the central system for non-research grants (i.e., service delivery grants, formula grants, entitlement grants, and block grants).

By using NIH and ACF as service providers for the entire Department, DHHS hopes to:

- ❑ Streamline work process
- ❑ Capitalize on existing advanced technology and best practices
- ❑ Create an opportunity for cost-effective, intra-agency sharing and elimination of redundant spending
- ❑ Provide a single point-of-interface with Grants.gov and the HHS Unified Financial Management System
- ❑ Maintain reliable and common data across OPDIVs
- ❑ Simplify the implementation of new policies and regulations

Since the consolidation decision was made, Mark has been working closely with the following OPDIVs planning and implementing their integrations with eRA:

- ❑ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
  - At the time of the announcement, AHRQ already used many of the eRA modules
  - AHRQ would like to use eRA Commons in the future
- ❑ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - Last year CDC entered 1523 new applications and made 454 awards through the eRA System
  - CDC has requested some changes to the Grants Management (GM) module to add more approvals to the business flow and is working with the GM team on business process modeling
  - eRA is working with CDC on their financial transactions (similar to AHRQ transactions that go to Core)
- ❑ Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
  - Last year FDA processed 30 applications with eRA
- ❑ Health Research Services Administration (HRSA)

- eRA and HRSA teams are conducting gap/fit analysis and exploring differences in business processes
- ❑ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
  - SAMHSA does not do research grants, but they follow very similar business processes as NIH and they are exploring the possibility of using eRA for their grant processing
- ❑ Office of Public Health Services (OPHS)
  - OPHS is looking at NIH and ACF for the best fit for their grant processing
  - OPHS likes the eRA interface with Grantees (i.e., Commons, Status)

eRA is actively working on the following OPDIV integration items:

- ❑ OPDIV business practice changes (e.g., CDC's requested changes to GM)
- ❑ Getting OPDIV records into Commons and available to the grantee community; allow the use of FSR
- ❑ Unified Financial Management System (UFMS) interface
- ❑ Migration of OPDIV legacy data into IMPAC II databases
  - eRA Architecture team will develop specifications to map XML stream
  - Will address active grants first
  - Targeting completion in time for FY2005 awards for CDC

Mark reported that after negotiations with the Department, eRA was given \$2M to address data migration and OPDIV specific business changes.

Mark noted that some of the OPDIVs that have been directed to consolidate have in-house systems that fully support their own end-to-end processes. HRSA's Grants Electronic Management System (GEMS) is an example of such a system. eRA is looking closely at these systems for opportunities to integrate features that are not yet part of the eRA system.

Mark introduces Libby Hartnett and Sandra Karen, OPDIV Representatives for HRSA, and thanked them for agreeing to present their system to the Project Team.

## **HRSA's Electronic Handbooks for Grant and Program Management**

*Sandra Karen and Libby Hartnett*

In 1997, HRSA decided to take on a Business Process Reengineering (BPR) project to standardize the grants administration processes of their bureaus and offices. Upon the completion of that effort, a single system was designed to implement the standardized processes using an electronic handbook approach. Sandra stressed the importance of having a fully understood and standardized process prior to implementation. HRSA's web-based Electronic Handbooks were brought up in production in July 2003 with no major issues to date.

Sandra and Libby reviewed the attached presentation that describes the GEMS electronic handbook system and provided a demonstration of their production system.

Additional discussion points:

- ❑ HRSA processes approximately 15,000 grants and makes approximately 7,000 awards each year
- ❑ Major application types handled by HRSA include: 5160, 398, 6025, 424 R&R (coming)
- ❑ Electronic submissions
  - Began in January 2004
  - Approximately 10% of HRSA's grants are received electronically
  - Expect increased electronic submission when guidance includes instructions for online submission
- ❑ The reporting features have reduced requests to grants management staff by making users more self-sufficient
  - Reports can be exported to Excel and easily manipulated
- ❑ HRSA proactively pulls reports on incomplete applications to funding opportunities and contacts applicants to offer assistance with on-line submission
- ❑ The system keeps distinct application and grant folders to separate funded applications
- ❑ HRSA is currently populating Electronic Grant files with legacy data from the past two years

## Attendees

Caban, Carlos (OER)	Ikeda, Richard (NIGMS)	Salata, Kalman (CSR)
Cain, Jim (OER)	Karen, Sandra (HRSA)	Salzman, John (OD)
Calderone, Gerald (AHRQ)	Katzper, Linda (OD/DEIS)	Seach, Jim (NCI)
Clark, Howard (Mitretek)	Lagas, Robert (Lagas Assoc.)	Siebert, Mark (OER)
Cummins, Sheri (LTS)	Lederhendler, Israel (NIMH)	Tatham, Thomas (CSR)
Dutcher, Sylvia (Mitretek)	Loewe, Mike (NINDS)	Tucker, Jim (OER)
Flach, Jennifer (OD)	Lynch, Peggy (IBM)	Twomey, Tim (OD)
Freeman, Anthony (AHRQ)	Martin, Carol (NHGRI)	Walker, Cathy (OER)
Hahn, Marcia (OER)	Mayer, Pam (NINDS)	Wehrle, Janna (NIGMS)
Hartnett, Libby (HRSA)	Milner, Tina (OD)	Zhen, Changqing (IBM)
Hausman, Steve (OD)	Moyer, Skip (AHRQ)	