



September COAD Meeting Summary

*****Please refer to the presentation slide deck posted to the COAD's website. This is only an AI generated summary and does not reflect the entire contents of this meeting on September 9, 2026. The meeting was recorded in its entirety. If you would like a copy of that link, please do not hesitate to reach out!*****

Meeting summary AI-generated

Overview

The meeting featured key participants including Jennifer LHeureux (COAD Chair), John Ezell (Jackson County Public Health), Dan Reece (COAD Technical Advisor), and representatives from various committees and partner organizations. The session began with approval of prior meeting minutes, followed by an in-depth presentation by John Ezell on public health preparedness efforts, recent outbreak responses, and disaster management activities related to the FIFA World Cup and WYCO County storm. John highlighted the importance of multi-sector collaboration and shared initiatives such as the Ready the Raku mascot for community engagement.

Committee reports covered ongoing work in access and functional needs, children in disasters, long-term recovery, mass care, spiritual care, behavioral health, planning and exercises, donations management, and volunteer coordination. Financial updates were provided, and the scheduling of the next general meeting was discussed with consideration of the Veterans Day holiday.

A significant portion of the meeting was devoted to a discussion led by Dan Reece on the potential use of drones for rapid and detailed damage assessment following disasters. The group acknowledged the benefits of drone technology in improving situational awareness, resource allocation, and support for multi-agency resource centers. Coordination with regional emergency management councils, volunteer organizations, and local chambers of commerce was emphasized to optimize response efforts. The meeting concluded with appreciation for ongoing partnerships and a commitment to continued collaboration in disaster preparedness and response.

Detailed Summary

Meeting Minutes Approval

The meeting began with the approval of the May and July meeting minutes, which had been previously distributed. Motions to accept both sets of minutes were made and seconded by members representing disaster relief organizations, and the minutes were officially approved to be posted on the COAD website.

- Richard Brummitt moved to accept the May minutes, seconded by John Callahan of The Salvation Army.
- Richard Brummitt also moved to accept the July minutes, seconded by John Callahan.
- Jennifer LHeureux confirmed the official approval and posting of the minutes.

National Disaster Preparedness Month Presentation

John Ezell from Jackson County Public Health presented on disaster preparedness efforts in recognition of National Disaster Preparedness

Month. He discussed public health capabilities, recent responses to outbreaks and natural disasters, and the importance of partnerships across sectors to ensure community readiness and response.

- John Ezell described his role as an emergency planner and mass care chair at Jackson County Public Health.
- He highlighted recent responses including a Cyclospora outbreak and the WYCO County storm.
- John emphasized collaboration with medical systems, emergency responders, and community partners for effective preparedness and response.

Jackson County Public Health Jurisdiction and Events

John Ezell outlined the jurisdiction of Jackson County Public Health, covering over 200,000 people excluding Kansas City proper. He reviewed recent public health events including the Cyclospora outbreak with 280 confirmed cases locally, and the extensive planning and response efforts for the FIFA World Cup and WYCO County storm.

- The Cyclospora outbreak involved national and local cases with ongoing case investigations.
- The World Cup planning included multilingual public health campaigns, disease surveillance, and training exercises.
- The WYCO County storm response involved setting up resource centers and coordinating mass care volunteers.

World Cup Public Health Initiatives

Jackson County Public Health undertook extensive initiatives for the FIFA World Cup, including distributing informational red cards, promoting heat mitigation, and providing naloxone (Narcan) training to hospitality staff. They also utilized wastewater surveillance for disease monitoring and coordinated with regional partners for emergency preparedness.

- Red cards with QR codes were distributed to promote public health information.
- Naloxone training was provided to hospitality industry workers to prevent overdoses.

- Wastewater surveillance helped detect disease trends and substance use in near real-time.

Ready the Raku Mascot and Outreach

The health department introduced 'Ready the Raku,' a raccoon mascot used to engage the public in preparedness activities. The mascot was selected through public voting and is used at events and in educational materials to promote emergency preparedness in a friendly and accessible manner.

- Ready the Raku was chosen via public vote and is used for community outreach.
- The mascot appears at events, in the emergency operations center, and in educational campaigns.
- Plans include developing preparedness curriculum for children using the mascot.

WYCO County Storm Response and Resource Center

Following the WYCO County storm, Jackson County Public Health and COAD coordinated a large-scale response including debris management, resource center setup, and mass care volunteer coordination. Donations of food, pet supplies, and medications were distributed to affected families, with over 50 families assisted at the resource center.

- Debris removal involved county and transportation employees and multiple volunteer organizations.
- A resource center was established with donations from Harvesters, Walmart, and others.
- The Red Cross assisted with organizing the resource center and guiding affected families.

Point of Dispensing and Partnerships

Jackson County Public Health manages point of dispensing (POD) sites for mass medication or vaccination distribution during public health emergencies. They establish memorandums of understanding with

various community partners to secure locations and coordinate rapid dispensing to the population within 48 hours.

- POD sites include schools, community centers, and long-term care facilities.
- Agreements allow access to facilities and provide 24/7 emergency contact.
- Training and exercises are conducted to maintain readiness.

Training, Exercises, and Upcoming Flu Clinic

The health department conducts regular training, call-down drills, and functional exercises to maintain emergency preparedness. An annual drive-through flu vaccination clinic is scheduled for October 23 at Raytown South High School, serving as both a public health service and an exercise for mass dispensing capabilities.

- Emergency response plans cover 15 FEMA-designated public health capabilities.
- Call-down drills ensure partner readiness and communication.
- The upcoming flu clinic will provide vaccinations and test dispensing procedures.

COAD Committee Reports

Various COAD committees provided updates on their activities. The Access and Functional Needs and Children in Disasters committees are developing response protocols. Long Term Recovery is assisting families affected by the WYCO County storm. Mass Care and Health and Medical reported on storm response and volunteer coordination. Spiritual Care is recruiting chaplains. Behavioral Health maintains partnerships with crisis teams. Planning, Training, and Exercise is preparing for future exercises. Donations Management and Volunteer Management reported on ongoing support and coordination efforts.

- Access and Functional Needs committee is drafting disaster response protocols.
- Children in Disasters committee is engaging national expert Dr. Lori Peak.

- Long Term Recovery is helping over two dozen families post-storm.
- Mass Care coordinated resource centers and volunteer efforts during the storm.
- Spiritual Care committee recruited chaplains from police and fire departments.
- Behavioral Health works closely with Red Cross and state crisis teams.
- Planning committee is coordinating next year's mass care exercise.
- Donations Management supported feeding efforts and EOC staffing.
- Volunteer Management coordinated volunteer deployment to WYCO County.

Financial Update and Meeting Scheduling

The COAD's bank balance remains at \$9,908.93, with efforts underway to update bank cards. The next general membership meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 11 via Webex, though the date conflicts with Veterans Day, and feedback is requested on whether to proceed or reschedule.

- Treasurer Allie Breeze reported the current bank balance.
- Jennifer LHeureux solicited input on holding the November 11 meeting despite the holiday.
- No final decision was made pending member feedback.

Discussion on Drone Use for Damage Assessment

Dan Reece proposed developing a guidebook for emergency managers on using drones for rapid damage assessment after disasters. Drones could provide georeferenced data to identify impacted addresses, assess debris, and support resource center planning. The group discussed the potential benefits, challenges, and coordination with regional agencies and volunteer organizations.

- Dan Reece emphasized drones could augment ground damage assessments and improve response efficiency.
- Jennifer LHeureux and Tracie Smith supported drone use for quicker and more accurate damage evaluation.
- Red Cross confirmed national use of drones for disaster assessment but lacks local capability.
- Discussion included coordinating drone resources, data sharing, and leveraging chamber of commerce contacts for volunteer electricians.
- Allie Breeze is enhancing local drone pilot capabilities to support damage assessments.

Action items AI-generated

- John Ezell and the intern Jennifer Laru need to continue reviewing and drafting committee descriptions to clarify roles, procedures, and points of contact for activation and deployment.
- Richard Fretwell and Emma Boyd from the Red Cross should promote and schedule sheltering training or sheltering simulation classes for the community upon request.
- Allie Breeze and her team are working to enhance drone pilot capabilities in the area to support damage assessments in future emergencies.
- John Ezell needs to coordinate with his department to arrange Narcan training sessions for volunteer groups interested in learning how to use it.
- Dan Reece will coordinate with MEMC and the Mid-America Regional Council to explore leveraging drone capabilities and electrical contractor volunteer recruitment through the Chamber of Commerce for future disaster response efforts.
- Dan Reece will follow up with emergency management and regional partners to develop a guidebook for drone use in damage assessment, including gathering input and examples from

national Red Cross and Salvation Army on tactical drone deployment.

- Jennifer LHeureux will update the COAD website with information discussed in the meeting by the evening of the meeting day.
- Jennifer LHeureux will solicit feedback from members regarding whether to hold the November 11 general membership meeting on Veterans Day or reschedule, with a decision needed by October.