

CPHA Policy Committee Meeting

November 16, 2011, 2:00pm to 4:00pm

Public Health Alliance

800 Grant Street, Suite 335, Denver, Colorado

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Attendees: Mark Thrun, Kyle Legleiter, Jennifer Miles, Eliza Park, Ruth Becker, Melissa Mouton, John Ferensic, Nate De Jong, Emily O'Winter, Dianna Damask, Cynthia Somers, Judy Vanmeter, Steve Holloway, Don Parson, Nanette Wong, Lindsey Hopper, Tarik Walker, Rebecca Meyers, Stephanie Walton, Melanie Stopponi

Agenda:

1. Introductions

2. Review of charge to the committee

Identify, through multiple data sources – member survey, partnerships with other organizations, Capitol discussions, CPHA resolutions, etc – policy priorities for the upcoming legislative session and future. Weigh membership priorities with political feasibility, understanding of other organizations that might be taking a lead role, legislator and governor's stated (or implied) intent, and other external information, to prioritize policy issues for presentation for the CPHA board's consideration. Recognize that positions that can be taken include Support (active or not), Oppose (active or not), or Monitor (active or not).

This meeting is intended to establish priorities for Miles Consulting. Over the course of the next several meetings we will be discussing advocacy and policy roles that the committee can play beyond our contract with Miles.

3. Review of member survey on policy/legislative priorities

Eliza reviewed the summary of the member survey. Summary and survey results attached. Jennifer reviewed the resolutions passed by CPHA membership in the Summer of 2011: Support for LGBT relationships, Ban dissolvable tobacco products, Encourage licensing of tobacco retailers, and Require rabies vaccine for pets. Two additional priority areas were added during the meeting: Concerns related to the proposed consolidation of early childhood programs under DHS (most notably the Nurse Family Partnership program) and limiting or taxing sugar sweetened beverages.

Based on various means of looking at the data and discussion, 7 priority areas were explored further:

1. Defense of Public Health funding cuts.
2. Opposition to (or involvement in) the shift of early childhood programs to DHS.
3. Removal of state tobacco tax barriers to the local implementation of tobacco licensing, fees, and tax; Opposition to dissolvable tobacco products.
4. Support for the elimination of state law banning bulk purchase by the state of vaccine.
5. Expansion of oral health programs.
6. Support for a ban of trans fat in schools.

7. Addressing obesity.

4. Discussion of policy priorities to move to CPHA board

Contract with Miles Consulting for active work on 3 issues. Discussed that it may be wise to reserve one of those issues in case something comes up during the session that we need to respond to.

Also discussed briefly the need to plan longer term. Some policy initiatives may take active groundwork this year to pass in the future. In addition, they may take active education of other groups and active coalition building. This will be discussed further in future meetings, but could be a focus of one of our 3 contracted issues with Miles.

Defense of Public Health funding cuts:

Though Amendment 35 dollars appear to be safe as Republicans have stated those funds should be used as voters intended and the Governor did not utilize these funds in his proposed budget, there remain concerns regarding state budgets deficits, education cuts, and Medicaid expansion. Many are concerned that PH dollars may still be at risk. Defense of these dollars was the number one member priority in many ways of looking at the data.

Protection of community health funding was also prioritized. The Community Health Center Association, also represented by Miles Consulting, appears to be taking the lead in defending these budgets.

Opposition to (or involvement in) the shift of early childhood programs to DHS:

There was vigorous discussion opposing, and not completely clear as to intent, the shift of early childhood programs to Dept of Human Services. There was clear lack of understanding of how the shift of the Nurse Family Partnership to DHS would improve services. There were also concerns expressed about the need to re-build relationships, staffing concerns, and concerns regarding the shift of this program at the service delivery level, and in changes in agencies providing the service.

CALPHO and PHNAC appear to be taking a lead in this and it may be their number 1 priority.

Removal of state tobacco tax barriers to the local implementation of tobacco licensing, fees, and tax; Opposition to dissolvable tobacco products:

State law creates financial penalties for local jurisdictions that implement a fee, tax, or even license on cigarette retailers. There was recognition that fee or tax may not have political support at present, but many jurisdictions would like to license retailers and/or locally tax cigarettes. Some locals have circumvented this law by licensing retailers of non-cigarette tobacco products, but recognize this does not identify all cigarette retailers. It is not clear that there is well-organized coalition yet to help move this. CDPHE unclear as to how Governor would view this bill. CPHA passed a resolution encouraging licensing this year.

Sen. Jeanne Nicholson appears to have been approached to carry this issue.

Colorado is a test market for dissolvable tobacco products. FDA has not yet released a statement on how these will be regulated. In Colorado, they do fall under the restriction from minors law as a non-cigarette tobacco product (akin to eCigs), but they are not taxed as tobacco. It is not clear that there is well-organized coalition yet to help move this. CPHA passed resolution this year that asked tobacco companies to withdraw these products from Colorado market. The Joint Budget Committee staff recommended these products be taxed as tobacco products. Distributors of these products wish to be taxed for consistency as some retailers are taxing and some are not.

Sen. Nicholson has also been approached about carrying this issues in the legislature. Options include banning these products, requiring they be behind the counter, or referring a measure (if necessary, some question if a referral is necessary as a tobacco tax already exists) to tax them.

Support for the elimination of state law banning bulk purchase by the state of vaccine:

Several years ago during creation of statewide vaccine registry, a line was inserted in CO law disallowing the bulk purchase of vaccine. There is broad support for this in the CPHA membership and at CDPHE with the assumption that this would significantly reduce the cost of vaccine.

CDPHE currently determining if they would proceed with this. If they do, they would take the lead. Given Pharma deep pockets, much help would be needed if this moves forward.

Expansion of oral health programs:

Broad support from CPHA membership for this. A bill is likely to be proposed to expand oral health benefits to pregnant women under Medicaid.

Colorado Dental Association taking the lead on this along with oral health coalition. Agreed to allow dentists to lead.

Support for a ban of trans fat in schools:

American Heart Association will likely propose a bill to limit or ban trans fats in schools. This is AHA national initiative this year. Rep. Massey likely to carry bill. Some discussion that schools are likely to be opposed to this regulatory and potential cost burden at same time state is reducing funding again. Some feel this opposition may be intense.

AHA has asked for CPHA support.

Addressing obesity:

Obesity rises high in member priorities. Brief discussion of agreement that CPHA agrees that we would support policy change to impact obesity, but no known policy initiatives at present. Group was prompted to bring any obesity related ideas to us. Kyle will also provide updates to the committee from the Healthy Eating Active Living Policy coalition, which regularly tracks these issues and works to identify potential avenues for policy. Other committee members are welcome to participate in the HEAL Policy Coalition as representatives of CPHA. Contact Kyle for meeting times and dates if interested.

Recommendations to the CPHA board:

1. Reserve part of Miles consulting time to defend funding cuts if needed.
2. Explore and consider supporting a. bans/limits on dissolvable tobacco or b. removing barriers to local licensing of tobacco retailers.
3. Support bulk purchase of vaccine if CDPHE moves forward.
4. Share opposition with board to consolidation of childhood programs. Discuss with board CPHA versus CALPHO role.
5. **Planning for future meetings**

Will send out poll for best meeting time. Plan to meet in-person, with dial-in options, monthly during legislative session.