FOUNDATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

POLICY WORKGROUP

Meeting Four Minutes

The Foundational Public Health Services Policy Workgroup members met on July 30th, 2014 from 10:00am to 1:30pm in Olympia, WA.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Understand what the policy workgroup has done so far, what the next steps in the process are, and what the final product will include.
- Identify solution space constraints and opportunities.

WELCOME

Fauna Larkin from BERK welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting of the Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) Policy Workgroup. She reviewed the meeting objectives and explained the day's discussion will help the group to further develop the final product.

John Wiesman welcomed everyone and explained that he was excited about the pivot point of this meeting in determining the direction FPHS will take. He stressed that this is a space and time for everyone in the workgroup to look for solutions that address the significant gaps that public health faces. John explained that the purpose of meeting in different locations such as the eastern side of the state, the western side of the state, the state legislature and a potential future meeting at a tribal reservation, are to emphasize the inclusion of populations throughout the Washington.

John also explained that this was not the time to go to the legislature and ask for an additional $100 million for public health. Due to budget restrictions, public health needs to cut several programs. This group needs to bring all their brain power together to think of creative ways to find funding.

Todd Mielke welcomed everyone and added that it was important to focus on what decision makers, like the legislature and local government officials, may be thinking. It is important to think about how to promote public health to a decision maker that may not know anything about public health. Todd provided an example of the funds from the sale of marijuana as an issue to promote an argument for more public health funding based on the language of the initiative.

Marilyn Scott welcomed everyone and emphasized the importance of tribes at this FPHS table. She explained that after the second work group meeting, she reached out to tribal leaders throughout the State. Currently, many tribes throughout the State are working on an exercise to identify the funding streams that tribes have access to outside the state budget. She noted that John has invited all the tribes around the State to join the FPHS discussion.

PIVOT POINT: RECAP OF MEETINGS 1-3

Fauna reviewed the Read-Ahead Materials. The Recap of Meetings 1-3 discussed where the policy workgroup has landed after the first three meetings, where the group is headed, and the action items left to follow up on from the first three meetings.

Policy workgroup members stated that it is important to present a clear and thoughtful message that builds on the technical work group's material. More research in determining how public health works with departments like Ecology and DSHS is important.

A work group member suggested that the pivot point document does not discuss how to finance public health. There is no discussion about the balance of financial resources between local and state via the foundational elements. Fauna explained that this issue will be addressed in the final document.

FINAL PRODUCT

Fauna presented the proposed idea for a final product – a document that will present the FPHS and address the issues discussed in this group. There was some discussion regarding the audience of this document with some work group members suggesting additional audience members like the business community and other associations. Other work group members suggested targeting it to the general public. Fauna reminded the work group members that it was important to target the document towards the legislature. The more people are added to the audience, the less targeted the document will be.

Work group members stressed the importance of local support that exists for agencies like law enforcement and public safety. Currently, there is not a local advocacy role like that for public health. Todd discussed how it was important to know that associations, agencies and tribes have other competing priorities, and it was important to be aware of that.

SOLUTION SPACE:

The policy workgroup members present divided into three discussion groups based on which types of organizations they represent –public health, associations, elected officials. Work group members that were joining by phone were in their own group. Each group was asked to brainstorm and discuss the challenges and realities of getting to FPHS, and then report back to the whole group. Then, the work group members were asked to discuss the opportunities and leverage points for getting to FPHS in their small groups and report out.

Part 1- Challenges

Work group members that represented associations said it was important to note that associations have a lot of other competing priorities. The associations group suggested it was important to have a more holistic approach towards health and wellbeing. Additionally, there was concern about where the funding would come from.

Work group members that were elected officials discussed how the political realities of the McCleary decision and its lack of funding for any non-education issues were a problem. Another challenge they identified is how local governments are not granted the ability to generate money, which can be a problem in funding public health at the local level. Additionally, there can be a perception that public health addresses underserved people and small portions of the population. Some opponents of increased funding for public health have single issues for which they do not support public health such as family

planning and needle exchange. Another challenge identified is how certain financial costs of health care in jails have become County responsibility.

Work group members that were public health workers suggested it was time to change the philosophy of public health and focus politically. Additionally, they pointed out that savings accrued through public health do not always go back to the funder. Another challenge identified is the decentralized public health model in Washington. It was suggested that a more centralized public health model might be beneficial.

Work group members on the phone suggested that inflation is higher than the funding increases. Additionally, the upfront cost could save more money in the long run. Another challenge identified was that residents continue to come to public health clinics for confidential services like family planning; however, public health is not reimbursed for those costs. Another challenge is that there is a lack of training around assessment.

Part 2 - Opportunities

Work group members that represented associations felt that opportunities lay in the taxation of tobacco and e-cigarettes. Funds that are earmarked to the Basic Health Plan could go to public health. Another identified opportunity was to integrate systems. Currently, people have to go to different places for primary care, specialty care, and yet a different place for public health. There were also opportunities with the State Innovation Health Plan.

Work group members that were public health workers discussed that having a defined core will help to streamline policy issues and the "ask" that is going to the legislature, as well using FPHS in budget planning decisions. Other opportunities may be in developing public health champions or in developing an institutional approach towards public health.

Work group members that were elected officials suggested opportunities that included looking to see how all jurisdictions can contribute to public health, the implementation of 502, property tax formulas, a bigger tax vote, and taking advantage of federal dollars.

Work group members on the phone suggested making a number driven public health model to back up the personal stories that public health nurses are good at articulating. Other opportunities included a shame campaign to show that there has been inadequate funding for public health for a number of years.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Fauna explained that the next steps would be to take the presentations, discuss them and organize them during the afternoon session with the FPHS co-chairs. They will be used to guide the next steps of the FPHS policy workgroup.

CLOSING REMARKS

The co-chairs thanked all work group members for attending the meeting. Todd stated that the group has gathered a lot of data today, and will think about how to take that information and funnel it back. Marilyn proposed a way to best utilize the McCleary decision for public health could be to take advantage of DEL funding because of its connection to the maternal/ child health education program. John said that he was leaving the meeting with an optimistic view. He explained that bringing together the various sectors, the whole government, political and organization bodies will show the full picture. Holding the challenges and opportunities together will promote detailed policy options. It will be a challenge to think of this in a visual way, but this work group will accomplish it. The co-chairs will do some work to accelerate the group discussion before the next meeting in Spokane on August 20th.