



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
PO Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

March 12, 2008

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members
FROM: Tara Wolff, SBOH Policy Advisor
SUBJECT: POLICY COMMITTEES—STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

Background and Summary

According to the State Board of Health By-laws, the Board can set up two types of committees—policy and ad-hoc. The by-law section concerning policy committees states:

Policy Committees

1. The Board may establish Policy Committees to help execute its work plan.
2. Policy Committees will comprise volunteers from among the Board's members.
3. Each Policy Committee will select a Committee Chair unless one is appointed by the Board Chair when the committee is established.
4. The Executive Director shall identify a lead staff person to support each Policy Committee.

Today we would like the Board to: (1) review its current policy committees structure and discuss its relationship to the *Board of Health's 2007 Five-year Strategic Plan*; (2) decide if there is a need to either abolish policy committees that are no longer meeting, or establish new policy committees; and (3) examine existing policy committees to see if any changes (i.e., name/focus, membership, etc.) would be helpful. We are also hopeful that once a committee structure is agreed to, members will volunteer to serve on those committees. After the full Board adjourns today, the policy committees will have an opportunity to meet, select chairs, and further organize.

Recommended Board Action

The Board may choose to consider a motion to abolish existing policy committees, establish new policy committees, and/or rename existing policy committees.

Discussion

The Board's current structure for policy committees dates back to the development of "Priority Work Areas" developed in 2000. The original committees were—Access, Environmental Justice, Health Disparities, and Children's Health and Well-Being. After the Board completed its 2001 report on environmental justice and began work on a report on community environmental health assessments, the Environmental Justice Committee became the Environmental Health Committee.

During the last couple rounds of strategic planning, the Access Committee agreed to advise on the issues related to public health capacity, and the Children's Health and Well-Being Committee agreed to advise on prevention more broadly, and in particular on nutrition and physical activity. These committees, however, were never restructured to fit with the Board strategic plan goals.

These goals currently are:

1. Strengthen the public health system.
2. Increase access to preventive services.
3. Reduce health disparities.
4. Encourage healthy behaviors.
5. Promote healthy and safe environments.

Although the strategic plan does not have a specific goal related to children, Activity 4.1.2.1 states that the Board will, "Re-establish a Children's Health policy committee charged with developing a work plan for the Board to build on Phase One of the Children's Alliance campaign."

As recently as two years ago, all four committees all had a least three members, one of which served as chair, and most of them met fairly regularly. Changeover of Board members has depleted the membership of some of these committees, however. An attached document describes each of these committees, their recent and current membership, and their recent activity.

This agenda item is an opportunity for Board members and staff to discuss whether the existing committee structure continues to serve the Board or whether it should be modified. It is also an opportunity to discuss committee membership. Time has been set aside after the meeting for committees to meet briefly, and an effort will be made to schedule committee meeting time in conjunction with the May Board meeting.