



## **NYSPHA POLICY AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE**

*Revised 1/14/12*

**Purpose:** The New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA) seeks to support good public health policy that will improve the health of New Yorkers. The purpose of the NYSPHA Policy and Advocacy Committee (PAC) is to prioritize and lead the federal, state, and when appropriate, local advocacy efforts of the Association.

### **Committee Responsibility:**

- Create and post NYSPHA legislative priority list (Policy Agenda) for the year
- Develop plans to actively support passage of priority legislation
- Maintain and utilize the Association's online action alert tool
- Provide legislative reports to the Board
- Maintain the Advocacy pages on the NYSPHA website
- Collaborate with other organizations, especially the Public Health Association of NYC, to pass priority legislation
- Develop and post memos of support for priority legislation to share with sponsors
- Provide written updates to the membership

### **PAC Roles and Membership:**

- Chair – A board member with an interest and preferably expertise in public policy work. There is no set term but would be limited by a person's time limit on the NYSPHA Board. The Chair is responsible for developing agendas and facilitating the calls or meetings.
- Committee Members – Membership should include members of the Board, general members and the Executive Director. Ideally, the policy committee would include a wide range of backgrounds and expertise so that the broad experience and focus of the membership is represented and informs NYSPHA's priorities. Each member is encouraged to focus on a particular priority area, depending on a member's background and job, and be a liaison to other groups that take the lead

in that policy area (e.g., tobacco, access to care, nutrition, cancer screening, HIV). Members may be asked to assist with a particular bill by making a limited number of phone calls to help PAC gather intelligence about a bill and/or participate in legislative office visits if needed.

**Time commitment:**

Members are encouraged to commit to one complete legislative session which runs 6 months between January and the end of June. During that time, calls will be held at least every month to stay apprised of Executive and Legislative actions and to plan NYSPHA activities.

**Process:**

Decision-making is based on Policy Committee discussion.

When a quick decision about supporting specific legislation is needed, the Policy Chair in consultation with the Executive Director or the President can determine the NYSPHA's support for a bill.

A three-tiered approach will be used to prioritize bills:

1. Top priority legislation that NYSPHA will work to build support at multiple levels in order to promote passage. NYSPHA takes a leadership role.
2. NYSPHA is not a lead organization but is very supportive. The Association will sign on letters of support and mobilize our members.
3. NYSPHA is supportive but the bill is a lower priority. The Association will offer our name to support the cause.

Priority bills or proposed legislation should adhere to the following criteria:

- A. It would be expected to have substantial public health impact and population reach in New York State;
- B. It is reasonably feasible for the legislation to be passed within a two to three year time frame;
- C. It is consistent with the Attached Guiding Principles approved by APHA and NYSPHA in 2008.

## NYSPHA Guiding Principles November 2008

- 1) We believe *prevention* must drive our nation's health strategy.
  - Prevention means improving the quality of people's lives, sparing individuals from needless suffering, and eliminating *unnecessary costs* from our health system.
  - Fundamental public health actions are proven to help prevent and reduce the rates of illness and disease. A greater emphasis on prevention could significantly reduce rates of chronic illness and corresponding healthcare costs.
  
- 2) We believe New Yorker's deserve healthy and safe places to live, work, and play.
  - By supporting policies and programs like promoting healthier schools, smoke-free environments, and improved community design, the government can do more to meet its responsibility to help citizens lead healthier lives.
  - The government must protect air, water, and food; minimize chemical exposures; and provide communities with healthier environments.
  
- 3) We believe New Yorker's deserve to know what government is doing to keep them healthy and safe.
  - The New York State government's role is to ensure that the public health system has sufficient resources and meets basic standards for protecting the public's health. The government must also show that it is spending public health dollars effectively and in ways that clearly improve the public's health and safety.
  
- 4) Every New Yorker should have the opportunity to be as healthy as he or she can be. Every community should be safe from threats to its health. All individuals and families should have a high level of services that protect, promote, and preserve their health, regardless of who they are or where they live.
  - Preventive services such as educating the public about health risks, early screening for disease, immunizations, and access to healthcare should not be limited to a select portion of the population, but *accessible by all New Yorker's*.
  
- 5) Current funding levels do not allow the state and local public health system to adequately carry out its statutory role to protect, promote, and preserve health:
  - Monitoring the health of the public
  - Enforcing public health laws
  - Diagnosing and investigating health problems in the community
  - Mobilizing community partnerships
  - Linking people to needed health services
  - Developing policies that support individuals and community health efforts
  - Assuring a competent public health and individual healthcare workforce
  - Researching new solutions to today's health problems
  - Evaluating the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of individual and population based health services