



**American Public Health Association  
Public Health Education and Health Promotion Section  
Health Communication Working Group**

**BY-LAWS**

Approved September 15, 2010

**Article I – Name**

This Working Group of the Public Health Education and Health Promotion Section, American Public Health Association (APHA) shall be known as Health Communication Working Group (HCWG). It shall be composed of individuals whose interests include health communication with or without APHA membership.

**Article II – Vision, Mission, and Values**

**Our Vision**

The Health Communication Working Group (HCWG) will be the leading advocate for, and authority on, the use of communication and marketing approaches to improve public health.

**Our Mission**

The mission of the HCWG is to create a forum for interaction and information exchange to encourage:

- innovative, effective, theory-based, research-based, and consumer-oriented health communication programs and processes that are fully integrated into public health practice; and
- high quality health communication theory and research. We will accomplish this by establishing opportunities for discourse and by building a connected network of communication, public health, and medical practitioners and researchers.

We will accomplish this by establishing opportunities for discourse and by building a connected network of communication, public health, and medical practitioners and researchers.

**Our Values**

- *Audience involvement:* We support communication strategies based on audience research, analysis, segmentation, and active involvement to promote the health of individuals and communities.
- *Creativity:* We pursue creativity with a purpose: using creative approaches that take into account the scientific and political realities of a public health issue and that are mindful of the realities experienced by the target audience.

- *Diversity:* We embrace the diversity of all the disciplines and people who investigate, design, implement and evaluate health communication processes to improve public health and medical outcomes and celebrate the inherent creativity in each.
- *Empirical Evidence:* We support the application of scientific principles to the design, implementation, and evaluation of health communication programs. We are committed to using what is currently known and adding to the knowledge base of the many disciplines involved in health communication.
- *Ethics:* We believe in instilling in our members a commitment to the highest level of ethical standards and professional integrity.
- *Excellence:* We are dedicated to achieving high-level scientific and programmatic excellence that contributes to improving the quality of health communication processes.
- *Learning:* We strive to create optimal opportunities for learning from one another and the many constituencies we represent.

### **Article III – Membership**

Membership in HCWG is open to all dues-paying APHA members or non-APHA members. APHA members have the option of selecting PHEHP as their affiliation, and may hold membership in other APHA Sections, SPIGs, Forums, and/or Caucuses. Individuals who are interested in health communication but are not active APHA members are also acceptable for HCWG membership. However, only members who meet the following criteria are eligible to run for HCWG Chair Elect, Secretary, or Treasurer:

- maintain primary or secondary affiliation status with PHEHP for at least two consecutive years prior to election; and
- serve as HCWG subcommittee chair for at least one year or HCWG subcommittee member for at least two years.

As the HCWG is membership-driven, it is important that we seek input from our membership and keep them informed of activities. This shall be accomplished by:

- soliciting member input, feedback, and comments via the listserv;
- sending regular reports from each Steering Committee meeting/teleconference (hereafter refers as meeting(s)) and subcommittee meeting to the listserv;
- announcing upcoming calls on the listserv;
- maintaining a current HCWG web site; and
- holding a business meeting at the APHA Annual Meeting at which the year’s activities shall be summarized and member input solicited.

### **Article IV – Officers**

#### **Section I – Duties & Term of Office**

##### **A. Chair**

The Chair provides leadership and coordination for the activities of HCWG, and serves as a partner with the full group in achieving its mission. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the group and its members:

- are aware of and fulfill their governance responsibilities;
- comply with applicable laws and bylaws of HCWG, PHEHP, and APHA;
- conduct group business effectively and efficiently; and
- are accountable for their performance.

In order to fulfill these responsibilities, and subject to HCWG's bylaws, the Chair

- leads and facilitates HCWG meetings;
- attends the APHA Annual Meeting;
- represents HCWG on all official business;
- reports to the Steering Committee on issues relating to group operations and/or strategic direction;
- sits on various committees;
- proposes policies and practices;
- appoints the chairpersons in consultation with the Steering Committee;
- helps guide and mediate group actions with respect to organizational priorities and governance concerns;
- encourages the group's role in strategic planning, overall operations, and evaluation;
- monitors financial planning and financial reports;
- monitors the performance of officers and subcommittee chairs;
- fosters participation of health communication professionals in HCWG;
- submits various reports to the group, to funders, and to other stakeholders;
- proposes the creation of subcommittees, as necessary;
- carries on the business of HCWG when it is not expedient for the Steering Committee to meet;
- serves *ex officio* as a member of subcommittees and attends their meetings when necessary; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as defined in the bylaws.

Term of Office:

The Chair serves for a one year term. After one year of service, the Chair serves in an *ex-officio* capacity. A member may be elected as the HCWG Chair more than once. The outgoing Chair will serve as the Chair of the Nomination Subcommittee for one year.

## **B. Chair-Elect**

The Chair-Elect serves as deputy to the Chair and fulfills the Chair's responsibilities if she/he is unable to do so. Specifically, the Chair-Elect

- actively participates on HCWG steering committee calls and subcommittee calls as necessary ;

- performs responsibilities of the HCWG Chair when the Chair cannot be available;
- attends the APHA Annual Meeting;
- reports to the Steering Committee on issues relating to group operations and/or strategic direction, as needed; and
- performs other responsibilities as deemed appropriate by the Steering Committee.

Term of Office:

The Chair-Elect serves for a one-year term, and ascends to the position of Chair at the end of her/his term of office.

### **C. Secretary**

The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that accurate and sufficient documentation exists to meet requirements and to enable authorized persons to determine when, how, and by whom the business was conducted. In order to fulfill these responsibilities, the Secretary records minutes of meetings, ensures their accuracy and availability, proposes policies and practices, submits various reports to the Steering Committee, and performs other duties as needed.

Specifically, the HCWG secretary:

- maintains records of HCWG business and ensures effective management of the records;
- manages minutes;
- attends the APHA Annual Meeting;
- ensures minutes are available to members within three weeks of each meeting;
- is sufficiently familiar with governance procedures to note applicability during meetings;
- manages the HCWG-APHA-Steering Yahoo Group; and
- performs responsibilities of the Chair when the Chair and Chair-Elect cannot be available.

Term of Office:

The Secretary serves for a one-year term. A member may be elected for more than once.

### **D. Treasurer**

The Treasurer is responsible for HCWG's financial records. Specifically, the Treasurer:

- is responsible for keeping a written record of all financial transactions and maintains all financial records;
- keeps records of both the annual operating budget allotted by PHEHP and the ongoing enrichment budget of funds raised by members;
- is the point person for contacting PHEHP/APHA for the release and receipt of funds;
- handles check requests from subcommittee members and corresponding PHEHP approvals;
- works with donors and APHA on credit card donations;

- tracks annual meeting expenses;
- keeps the HCWG Chair, and occasionally the PHEHP Chair and Treasurer, apprised of financial issues;
- attends fundraising and finance related calls;
- assembles the budget requests from subcommittees to be approved by the Chair and the Steering Committee;
- attends the APHA Annual Meeting;
- compiles a written financial report to be submitted annually to the Steering Committee; and
- performs all financial duties as assigned by the Chair and the Steering Committee.

#### Term of Office:

The Treasurer serves for a one-year term. A member may be elected more than once. The Treasurer may serve three consecutive terms for a maximum of three consecutive years. After serving three consecutive years, a block of at least one year is required before being a candidate for Treasurer.

#### Section II – Election

Election of HCWG Chair Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer shall take place during the Business Meeting. Only active APHA members who maintain a consecutive one-year HCWG membership (as measured by subscription to the HCWG-APHA Yahoo Group) and who are present at the Business Meeting are eligible to vote.

A public announcement of the election with each candidate’s biography, and the time and location of the election shall be posted at least two weeks before the election. In the absence of a nomination or qualified candidate, the HCWG Chair may assign qualified members for the next term. The Steering Committee confirms the results of the election or assignment.

### **Article V – Steering Committee**

#### Section I – Membership

The HCWG Steering Committee is comprised of its officers-Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, past HCWG Chairs, and Subcommittee Chairs. The HCWG Chair is the chairperson of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee members shall commit to nurturing and enhancing the mission and vision of the HCWG.

The Steering Committee shall make decisions based on consensus or a majority vote. An odd number of Steering Committee members must be assured prior to any vote. The past HCWG Chair who served in the earliest term among the past HCWG chairs and does not serve as an officer or a subcommittee chair shall not vote at the time when an even number of voters are

present. The Chair shall break ties whenever necessary. HCWG members without voting privileges are encouraged to participate in the Steering Committee activities.

## Section II – Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the Steering Committee is to coordinate the activities of the HCWG. Ongoing responsibilities include:

- meet by telephone monthly to review HCWG activities and progress toward meeting objectives;
- identify areas where progress is not being made and address them;
- review the strategic plan annually and revise as needed;
- assist subcommittees in strategic planning and implementing activities;
- coordinate with the PHEHP leadership; and
- develop and maintain relationships with health communication organizations and professionals outside APHA.

## Section III – Powers

- (a) The Steering Committee has the power to hear and make final decisions on all HCWG business;
- (b) The Steering Committee has the power to make recommendations to the HCWG Chair and to propose amendments to the By-Laws;
- (c) The Steering Committee reviews and approves all operational plans associated with the vision, mission and goals of HCWG.

The Steering Committee will have the power to reevaluate the strategic plan, and any subcommittee plans, for alignment with the overall vision and mission of HCWG. All work plans are expected to be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval by February 1st of every year. Any plans submitted to the Steering Committee that are found to be not in alignment with the overall purpose will be further evaluated and approved/denied based upon a majority vote of the Steering Committee.

## Article VI – Subcommittees

HCWG's functional operations are carried out by its subcommittees: Awards, Communication, Film and Media Festival, Fundraising, Healthy People 2020, Membership, Nomination, Program Planning, Social Event, Strategic Planning, and other ad-hoc task forces deemed necessary by the Steering Committee. Subcommittees are constituted each year as needed and as determined by the Steering Committee.

### Section I - HCWG Subcommittee Chair

- is a HCWG member and preferably has been a member of the subcommittee for at least one year prior to term as subcommittee chair;

- recruits subcommittee members;
- leads and actively participates in subcommittee activities;
- sets the tone for the subcommittee's work;
- ensures that subcommittee members have the information needed to do their jobs;
- oversees the logistics of subcommittee's operations;
- attends monthly Steering Committee meetings via conference calls;
- reports to the Chair and the Steering Committee on subcommittee tasks, decisions, and recommendations;
- assigns work to the subcommittee members;
- sets the agenda and runs the meetings;
- ensures distribution of meeting minutes to the subcommittee members and the HCWG Chair;
- initiates and leads the subcommittee's annual evaluation and report;
- submits subcommittee's minutes to the Chair within seven days of acceptance and approval by the subcommittee members; and
- submits an annual report to the Chair.

#### Term of Office:

The HCWG Subcommittee Chairs are appointed by the HCWG Chair, and serve for a term of one year. Subcommittee chairs may be re-appointed.

#### Section II - HCWG Subcommittee Responsibilities

##### Awards:

- one member serves on the PHEHP Awards Committee;
- disseminates Call for APHA and PHEHP Award Nominations;
- creates slate of nominations and reports to the Steering Committee;
- ensures the creation of nomination packets and submits them to PHEHP by deadline;
- introduces awardees at the Awards Reception; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

##### Communication:

- develops and implements strategies for increasing HCWG's visibility in APHA and PHEHP;
- addresses and coordinates HCWG communication needs as identified by the HCWG Steering Committee and subcommittees;
- applies membership recruitment ideas to communication channels and social media;
- develops promotional materials for, and publicizes the HCWG events at the APHA annual meetings;
- oversees and coordinates HCWG website updates to promote HCWG activities, announcements and news items;

- publishes HCWG eNewsletter;
- represents HCWG in the Coalition of Health Communication; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

#### Film and Media Festival:

- disseminates call for submissions;
- recruits and assigns abstract reviewers and moderators;
- maintains quality abstract review guidelines and moderator's guide;
- secures scores and abstracts from reviewers;
- categorizes abstracts into sessions;
- secures session program, time, and location;
- oversees the HCWG component of the festival at the Annual Meeting; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

#### Fundraising:

- identifies potential sponsors;
- develops the solicitation procedures, letters, and categories of sponsorship;
- develops and maintains relationships with potential and current sponsors;
- raises enrichment funds from sponsors to support HCWG social event as well as other initiatives;
- ensures appropriate recognition of sponsors; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

#### Healthy People:

- collects and organizes the input of members concerning the development, implementation, and evaluation of Healthy People (goals, objectives, & action plans);
- informs HCWG members about the implementation developed by the offices of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to enable access to and the support of Healthy People objectives;
- represents HCWG in collaboration with other professional and/or government entities; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

#### Membership:

- recruits new professional and student members to the HCWG;
- develops recruitment ideas/mechanisms for social media and communication applications;
- improves and maintains formal mechanisms for networking among members and the PHEHP/APHA;
- manages the HCWG-APHA Listserv at Yahoo Groups; and

- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

#### Nomination:

- administers the nomination and voting process of HCWG Officers;
- disseminates Call for Officer Nominations;
- creates slate of nominees and reports to the Steering Committee;
- assembles nomination packets and publicizes them;
- introduces nominees at the business meeting; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

#### Program Planning:

The Program Planning Subcommittee is responsible for coordinating the PHEHP Health Communication scientific and solicited sessions at the APHA Annual Meeting. Specifically, the subcommittee:

- works with the PHEHP Program Planning Committee;
- clarifies scientific and solicited session availability and timeslots;
- disseminates call for abstracts and promote APHA presentation opportunities;
- recruits and assigns abstract reviewers;
- maintains and disseminates high-quality abstract review guidelines;
- secures scores and feedback from reviewers;
- panels accepted abstracts into coherent oral, poster, and roundtable sessions;
- develops session learning objectives and designates presentation order;
- notifies authors of abstract acceptance / rejection (via online system);
- recruits and assigns moderators to oral and roundtable sessions;
- maintains and disseminates moderator guide to session moderators;
- develops the proposal for the solicited session(s);
- finalizes scientific and solicited session program, including time, dates, and locations;
- obtains and summarizes moderator's feedback immediately after annual meeting; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

#### Social Event:

- coordinates with PHEHP leadership, program planning and social committees;
- brainstorms/proposes a theme for the social event;
- considers the venue assigned by APHA or other options;
- estimates budget for social event;
- ensures that local universities are sent publicity and invited to the social event;
- requests donations for door prizes from publishers;
- orders food and beverage for social event;
- collects promotional or sponsoring items;
- sets up and orchestrates the Social Event on site; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

## Strategic Planning:

- solicits and organizes the opinions from members;
- presents the strategic plan for review and approval;
- performs annual evaluation and review of the strategic plan;
- revises the strategic plan; and
- performs other duties as the need arises and/or as assigned by the HCWG Chair.

## **Article VII - Meetings**

HCWG officers, Subcommittee Chairs, and members meet at least once per year in-person during the APHA Annual Meeting. In addition, monthly meetings can be held via conference calls at the time determined by the HCWG Chair.

## **Article VIII – Removal of Officers and/or Subcommittee Chairs**

The performance of all officers and subcommittee chairs will be evaluated on an annual basis to assess overall contributions to the operation of HCWG. In such instances of questionable, undesirable, or inadequate performance, any HCWG officers can recommend action for removal/termination of an officer or subcommittee chair's appointment. Upon the determination of a simple majority ruling by the HCWG Steering Committee, the Steering Committee shall notify the officer or subcommittee chair in writing of their decision.

The document outlining the majority decision of the Steering Committee will be signed by the HCWG Chair, specify an effective date of removal, and sent within 24 hours of the decision to the officer or subcommittee chair in question.

Any officer or subcommittee chair who is recommended for removal must respond within 30 days from the date of the Steering Committee's written notification. Responses must be sent in writing to the HCWG Chair for consideration, and final decisions will be determined by the Steering Committee.

## **Article IX – Changes to the By-Laws**

The By-Laws can be modified, revised or otherwise updated by the Steering Committee. Any HCWG member can recommend changes to the By-Laws by sending official notification to the HCWG Chair. Official notification is defined as submission of a written change request to the HCWG Chair, who is responsible for notifying all members and specifying a date, time, and place for Steering Committee discussion of and decision on changes submitted. Any recommendation for a change to the By-Laws must also include a rationale for the change.

Changes to the By-Laws require a favorable vote by two-thirds of the HCWG Steering Committee members present for discussion.

Members shall be notified of proposed changes to the By-Laws 30 days prior to the vote by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall solicit member's inputs during this period of time.

Changes to the By-Laws become effective after the adjournment of the Steering Committee meeting in which the change was discussed and favorably voted upon.

#### **Article X – Parliamentary Authority**

Official meetings of the HCWG membership, Steering Committee, or subcommittees, shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* when not inconsistent with rules already contained in the HCWG By-Laws. Official meetings are defined as meetings of the Steering Committee or any other meetings as required by APHA for decision-making purposes.