

APHA Action Board Chair's Report for 2022

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Action Board Chair

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I. Overview

APHA's Action Board (AB) helps coordinate grassroots advocacy activities on the association's legislative priorities. It encourages participation in advocacy initiatives among the association's Sections, and state and regional Affiliates (hereafter, Units). Members of the AB serve for a three-year term and help engage the Units they are assigned to take action on APHA's advocacy priorities. In addition, the Chair and Chair-designate of the Action Board and two additional members selected by the Chair serve as members of the Joint Policy Committee.

II. Activities

This was a year of transition for the Action Board (AB). Following approval in November 2021 by the Governing Council, the AB was restructured to address chronic vacancies and disengaged members. We converted from a unit-represented body of 36 members to one with 17 members who indicated their strong interest in advocating for the association's policy priorities. The goal of the restructuring was to improve the AB's effectiveness by improving engagement by the association's large and diverse member. The size of the AB is now equivalent to the Education and Science Boards, with each AB member assigned to be a liaison to two or three Units. By May 2022, all vacancies on the AB were filled.

Members of the AB spent considerable time over the year working to connect with leadership in their assigned Units. The purpose of this outreach was to:

- Describe the purpose of the Action Board;
 - Explain the AB member's role as liaison to the member Units;
 - Inquire about each Unit's preferred mechanism(s) to receive information about advocacy opportunities throughout the year;
 - Learn about the Unit's experience and/or committee structure for engaging in advocacy;
 - Discuss APHA's policy priorities can be framed relevant to each Unit's area of expertise;
- and
- Offer training and/or assistance in organizing and conducting advocacy on behalf of the association.

Key activities from Action Board members this year included:

- Meeting virtually with their members of Congress during National Public Health Week and as

part of the Speak for Health campaign;

—Reaching out to and developing relationships with Units to encourage use of APHA’s advocacy tools;

—Disseminating advocacy materials, such as Action Alerts, Legislative Updates, social media resources, to Units;

—Assisting Unit leadership to encourage their members to meet with members of Congress during the Speak for Health campaign;

—Discussing and assessing methods being used to engage with Units to continuously improve our effectiveness; and

—Organizing a session for the Annual Meeting, entitled, Promising Practices in Public Health Advocacy: Lessons from the Field.”

III. Speak for Health Campaign

[Speak for Health](#) is how APHA members stand up for public health interests. Speak for Health is a year-long campaign, but is most active during the August Congressional recess, while members are visiting their districts.

Action Board members sent weekly reminders to their assigned Units to encourage them to connect with their Members of Congress through Action Alerts, email messages, phone calls, or meeting. APHA members were asked to engage by sending four different Action Alerts on the following topics: increasing public health funding; protecting women’s health and reproductive rights; supporting the Inflation Reduction Act (with its important provisions on drug pricing and climate change action); and addressing gun violence. Over Congress’s August recess period, 267 advocates sent 860 messages on these topics to their lawmakers. They were also encouraged to use the resources developed by the Government Affairs office, such as state-specific fact sheets and one-pagers, to write op-eds, attend in-person and virtual town halls, and use social media. Action Board members made themselves available to assist Units with these efforts.

III. Communications

The Action Board held bimonthly conference calls. The agendas included updates on Congressional action, discussion of upcoming advocacy initiatives, and reports by the Chair on Executive Board and JPC meetings. AB members reported on their outreach to their assigned Units, sharing ideas on what worked and challenges encountered engaging with some Units. AB functioned smoothly because of support from the Government Affairs office because they handled the electronic meeting invitations and reminders, drafting the agendas, taking meeting minutes, and more.

IV. Additional Activities

Joint Policy Committee

Four Action Board (AB) members served on the Joint Policy Committee (JPC): the chair, the chair-designate, and two members invited by the chair. Members participated in all JPC activities and reported relevant information to the AB on bimonthly calls. The AB Chair co-chairs the JPC.

Executive Board

The Action Board (AB) Chair serves as an *ex officio* member of the APHA Executive Board and participates in Executive Board meetings and committee meetings. In partnership with the other co-chairs of the JPC, the AB Chair shared relevant JPC reports with the Executive Board.

Further, the AB Chair shared relevant information about the Speak for Health campaign and other advocacy activities.

V. Action Board Next Steps

To begin 2023, the Action Board (AB) will have a complete roster of members, with 11 of the 17 continuing their 3-year term. They will continue to build relationships with their assigned Units with the goal of increasing broader membership engagement in advocacy on APHA's priorities. As a group, we will benefit from this year's experiences operating under the new structure and provide advice to the new, first-year AB members.