

APHA Public Health Policy Briefs

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

Why Public Health Policy Briefs?

APHA builds public health capacity and promotes effective public health policy and practice. To help guide and inform its work and the work of its members and Affiliates, the Association considers the adoption of **evidence-informed Public Health Policy Briefs that are** submitted for consideration by its members annually. Each submission undergoes a thorough and rigorous review by the Evidentiary Review Committee, considering the input of members and designated subject matter experts. Those proposals that meet the required criteria are then forwarded to the Governing Council for consideration and final adoption.

The Proposed Public Health Policy Brief development cycle is one of the Association's most important activities, as it provides evidence for the field of public health. It provides resources and tools to the field at large. These Policy Briefs are often cited in court cases, academic articles, and legislation. They are one of the most viewed items on the APHA website.

What Are Public Health Policy Briefs

APHA Public Health Policy Briefs serve as an information resource to many, including APHA staff, members, Affiliates, partners, media, and policymakers.

The Policy Briefs:

- Provide the evidence base for legislative and regulatory recommendations, including letters, comments, and testimony to Congress, the White House, federal agencies, and the judiciary.
- Help in the development of legislative, regulatory and media advocacy activities.
- Provide easy access to the latest research and
- Assist in developing briefing material for the media, fact sheets, reports, and infographics used in education and advocacy work. Additionally, congressional staff and regulatory agencies refer to APHA Policy Briefs as a reference or resource when developing legislation and regulations.

Policy Briefs must be consistent with APHA's mission, vision, and values, be relevant to current or future public health issues, and avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest between the authors' financial or other personal interests and the goals and policies of the Association.

Policy Briefs should describe and endorse a defined course of action, ranging from legislation and regulations to developing new policies for non-governmental

organizations and private enterprises. The recommendations or action steps included in Policy Briefs must be externally directed.

To avoid dating the policy statement, support for legislative or regulatory changes should not refer to specific bill numbers, policymakers' names, or presidential administrations.

Public Health Policy Briefs do not define but inform the Association's advocacy efforts. They provide evidence to support the Association in speaking on these public health issues.

Note: Public Health Policy Briefs should not be used to generate support for APHA to take a specific course of action or to support a particular statement or letter. While Public Health Policy Briefs may provide a base of support for APHA to take such action, they should not be the only reason a member unit develops a Policy Brief. The Executive Board directed the Executive Director to develop a letter and sign-on process. That process can be accessed <<here>>.

Expedited Review for Governing Council Endorsement of National Frameworks and Action Plans

Support for guiding frameworks, national plans, and reports from cabinet-level agencies and their subdivisions may be considered in a separate endorsement process. To qualify, these documents must align with the APHA vision, mission, and strategic plan, focus broadly on a health policy, and remain non-partisan. Additionally, they must not endorse specific pieces of legislation, ensuring that the focus remains on advancing public health and promoting health equity.

These endorsements should be submitted to the Speaker of the Governing Council with a two-page letter explaining the justification for the expedited process. The Speaker of the Governing Council will then forward the letter to the Executive Director, who has been delegated the authority to lend support by the Executive Board.

Section 2: GUIDELINES

Introduction

These guidelines, adopted by the Governing Council, guide the Association's Proposed Public Health Policy Brief development process by setting forth principles to govern and outline procedures to guide the coordinated participation of all parties. The Executive Board monitors the operation of the Proposed Public Health Policy Briefs development process to assure adherence to the principles set forth here and to report any procedural modifications adopted to facilitate the development of valid Policy Briefs for APHA.

This document provides guidelines and instructions for authors of Proposed Public Health Policy Briefs. Authors must prepare proposed Policy Briefs according to the specifications described in this document for proposals to be considered for the APHA proposed policy brief process.

IMPORTANT: The intent to write proposed Policy Briefs and revisions must be submitted by the respective deadlines. Late submissions will not be accepted. Proposals that fail to follow guidelines and/or are not accompanied by all required materials will not be accepted into the process and reviewed.

Role of Association Units

Procedural Responsibilities: Development of the Policy Briefs of the American Public Health Association involves coordinated efforts by several Association units. The bylaws define functions for specific units involved in this process as follows:

- **Evidentiary Review Committee** coordinates the evaluation of APHA's Policy Briefs. The Evidentiary Review Committee is encouraged to collaborate with experts, internally and externally, and other relevant entities to enhance the accomplishment of its goals.

The **Evidentiary Review Committee** assesses all proposed Policy Briefs, reports its initial recommendations for adoption to authors, makes recommendations for revisions to authors before submission to public hearings, and recommends those that meet the criteria for hearings; organizes and coordinates the hearings; reviews the comments and suggestions presented at the hearings and incorporates those that improve the proposed Policy Briefs; creates a consent agenda; and reports its final recommendations for adoption to the Governing Council for its vote.

The **Evidentiary Review Committee** oversees the association's annual policy brief (formerly policy statements) review and archiving process. It reviews requests to keep policy briefs proposed for archiving active and presents its recommendations to the Governing Council at the annual meeting.

- **Governing Council:** The Governing Council is responsible for adopting Policy Briefs that articulate APHA's position on public health policies to impact legislation and regulation (Bylaws, Article V, Section 6 (A)).
- **Executive Board:** The Executive Board is authorized to adopt interim Policy Briefs, which shall be in effect until the next meeting of the Governing Council (Bylaws, Article VI, Section 7 (H)) and may commission the development of Policy Briefs for adoption by the Governing Council. The Executive Board carries out the policies of the Governing Council between annual meetings and monitors the operation of the policy brief development process and implementation of Policy Briefs.

Organizational Support: APHA's system relies heavily upon the volunteer efforts of able, interested members to initiate and develop Policy Briefs. All organizational constituents – sections, SPIGs, forums, Student Assembly, affiliates, and caucuses – are urged to work cooperatively in developing and revising proposals within the scope of these guidelines.

Overview of Guidelines

Submissions Must Come from Member Units

All submissions are required to come from established and recognized Member Units of the American Public Health Association. The intent to write and proposed policy brief submission should be accompanied by a signed letter from the Member Unit leadership indicating sponsorship/co-sponsorship. See the Proposed Public Health Policy Brief Outline for a template. Proposals that do NOT include the sponsorship letter will not be considered.

Sponsorship means that the Member Unit is responsible for the proposed policy statement, and the many, if not all, authors are from that Member Unit.

Co-sponsorship/collaborating unit indicates that more than one Member Unit is collaborating on the proposed policy statement and that some of the authors of the proposed policy statement come from the co-sponsoring Member Units. Member Units are encouraged to engage the breadth of APHA Member Units, including Affiliates, Caucuses, SPIGs, Forums, Student Assembly, and Sections.

Member Unit leadership eligible to sponsor the submission includes Affiliate Presidents, Section, Student Assembly, SPIG, Forum, or Standing Committee Chairs, The Chair of the Executive Board, and Caucus Chair or Presidents.

No external sponsorship, endorsements, or support letters are allowed. They will not be accepted or reviewed. They will not be included in any posted documents.

Endorsement

Endorsements are different from Sponsorships. Endorsements represent agreement with the proposed policy statement by a Member Unit when they have not been actively involved in developing and submitting the proposed policy statement.

Endorsements **should only be sought after a second review by the Evidentiary Review Committee**. Endorsements submitted before this review will not be accepted. Endorsement Letters must be submitted no later than 24 hours ahead of the Governing Council Session in which the Policy Briefs are scheduled to be discussed and voted on. A list of Endorsements will be provided to each Governing Council prior to action being taken on the proposed Policy Briefs.

Endorsements are only accepted from APHA Member Units. No individual or external endorsements are allowed and will not be included in any posted documents. Member Units are encouraged to engage the breadth of APHA Member Units, including Affiliates, Caucuses, SPIGs, Forums, Student Assembly, and Sections.

All endorsements must be made by Member Unit leadership eligible to sponsor the submission, including Affiliate Presidents, Section, Student Assembly, SPIG, Forum, and Chair of the Caucus or Presidents.

Corresponding Author

Each submitted proposed policy statement should include at least one member of APHA who shall serve as the contact for the proposed policy statement and will receive regular communication regarding the proposed policy statement throughout the process. The corresponding author must remain a member of APHA throughout the process. If their membership lapses, a new corresponding author must be identified within 5 business days; otherwise, the Policy Brief will be removed from the process.

Authorship

The proposed policy statement's authorship details (phone, e-mail, address, title, APHA Membership ID, and Member Unit Affiliation) beyond that of the corresponding author will not be shared during the review. Adopted Policy Briefs do not include author details as they become the property of APHA.

All individuals who contributed to the authorship of the policy brief must be APHA members, be listed on the cover sheet, and have submitted conflict of interest disclosures. Any individual who is not a member at the time of submission or any step of the process will be removed.

Emphasis on Broad Topics

Policy Briefs should aim to be comprehensive in scope, reviewing the breadth of evidence-informed strategies that address macro-level public health issues. For example, a policy on public health preparedness for weather-related disasters is preferable to one focused on a specific intervention, such as hurricane preparedness for inland Appalachian communities. The policy development process aims to equip the Association with a broad base of adaptable, evidence-based strategies applicable across multiple scenarios and contexts.

However, where relevant, it is important to acknowledge and highlight specific contextual factors that may disproportionately affect certain populations or groups. Additionally, addressing health inequalities affecting specific segments of the population remains crucial to the policy process.

The primary focus should be developing Policy Briefs relevant to a wide audience and extending beyond time-limited situations or specific events. For instance, a policy on childhood hunger is more effective than one addressing childhood hunger caused by an ongoing famine. Policy Briefs are meant to be adaptable and provide enduring solutions that can be applied across various public health contexts.

When uncertainty arises during the policy development process, refer to the mission, vision, and values of the American Public Health Association as a guiding framework.

Limitation on Number of Policy Briefs

No more than 14 Policy Briefs, excluding priority Policy Briefs, may be considered for adoption through normal processes throughout the year. This limit ensures each statement is given appropriate consideration and that no portion of the process is rushed. The ERC will consider intent to write submissions on a rolling basis and the first 14 approved will be permitted to move forward. Intent to write approval is only for one review cycle. Any policy brief not moving forward or rejected are required to submit a new Intent to Write in a subsequent cycle.

Exception: Policy Briefs requested by the Executive Board shall not count towards this limit.

Executive Board Adoption: The Executive Board may adopt an interim policy brief that shall be in effect until the next meeting of the Governing Council. Such interim Policy Briefs shall be posted on the APHA website and treated as priority area submissions by the Evidentiary Review Committee. It must be reaffirmed at the next meeting of the Governing Council.

Writing Groups

The Executive Board or Evidentiary Review Committee may commission the development of proposed Policy Briefs. They may request one or more member units --

sections, affiliates, SPIGs, forums, caucuses, and the Student Assembly -- to work with other APHA constituent groups and experts from outside the Association. The Executive Board may adopt Policy Briefs as interim Policy Briefs or directly submitted into the policy brief development process for adoption by the Governing Council. If adopted by the Executive Board as an interim policy brief, it must be voted on by the Governing Council at its next meeting. If it has not gone through the formal policy brief development process and is approved by the Governing Council, it will be treated as an approved priority area.

The Executive Board has the authority to direct the Executive Director to prioritize the development of specific Policy Briefs.

Submission

Each year, the Association calendar has a deadline for submitting proposed Policy Briefs. Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposals should be submitted electronically to the Evidentiary Review Committee for review at APHA's national office at policydevelop@apha.org.

Referral of Proposals Beyond the Scope of the Policy Brief Process

This policy brief development process is how APHA addresses **external** policy matters. Accordingly, submissions not about external policy will be deemed by the Evidentiary Review Committee as other than proposed Policy Briefs and referred as follows.

- a. Any items relating to the Association's internal operations (including the APHA budget, staff, and programs) will be referred to the Executive Director.
- b. Items in technical standards (e.g., program guidelines, evaluation criteria, etc.) will be referred to the Evidentiary Review Committee.
- c. Non-policy-based Policy Briefs (such as commemorating a significant event) will be referred to the Governing Council Secretary and Speaker for separate handling.
- d. Items in educational standards or professional qualifications will be referred to the Education Board.

SECTION 3: Public Health Issue Brief Process

Process Steps

The policy statement process will follow the following steps:

1. Intent To Write Submission
2. Feedback on Intent to Write
3. Proposed Policy Brief Submitted
4. Subject Matter Expert, Evidentiary Review Committee Initial Review, Member Feedback, and Public Hearings
5. Evidentiary Review Committee Discusses and Provides Initial Assessment
6. Feedback to Member Unit on Policy Brief
7. Proposed Policy Brief Revision Due
8. Evidentiary Review Committee 2nd Review
9. Evidentiary Review Committee Second Assessment & Recommendation
10. Additional Revisions, if recommended
11. Evidentiary Review Committee Final Review and Markup
12. Recommendation to Governing Council

Calendar of Submission (Timeline)

Activity	Deadlines*	Year
Intent To Write Submission	Rolling July-Sept	Year 1
Feedback on Intent to Write	Rolling late July-early Oct	
Proposed Policy Brief Submitted	Early February	Year 2
Subject Matter Expert, Evidentiary Review Committee Review, Member Feedback and Hearing	Feb/March April	
Evidentiary Review Committee Discusses	End of April/Start of May	
Feedback to Member Unit	Early June	
Proposed Policy Brief Revision Due	Early August	
Evidentiary Review Committee 2 nd Review	September	
Evidentiary Review Committee Second Assessment & Recommendation	September	
Additional Revisions, if recommended	October	
Final Markup	At Annual Meeting	
Recommendation to Governing Council	At Annual Meeting	

*Hard Dates To Be Set By Implementation Committee

Description of Specific Steps

Steps 1 and 2: Intent to Write Process

Member Units interested in developing a proposed policy statement must complete an Intent to Write form (details below) related to the proposed policy statement. Within 30 days of review, the Member Unit will receive a communication about the status of the Intent to Write proposal. A sponsorship letter from an APHA member unit must also be included in the intent to write submission. Proposals that do NOT include the sponsorship letter will not be considered.

The Intent to Write form includes:

- Draft title of the proposed policy brief
- Contact Information for corresponding author
- Sponsoring Member Unit sponsorship letter
- A description of the problem to be addressed in the brief (citing the importance to public health and rationale for consideration)
- One potential evidence informed strategy to address the problem

In addition, the corresponding author must include a signed statement indicating no conflicts of interest.

Feedback on Intent to Write

The Evidentiary Review Committee will assess each Intent to Write Abstract for appropriateness for the Policy Brief Process. It will work to identify potential collaborations within the Policy Brief Process, particularly when topics overlap or are duplicative. The Committee will then provide one of four action items:

Actions at this step include:

- **Advance:** The Member Unit is approved to develop a proposed policy brief.
- **Additional Information Needed:** A conditional approval, but there is a need for increased clarity before advancement.
- **Incomplete:** The Intent to Write Form lacks critical information and cannot be processed as submitted. The Intent to Write may be resubmitted and corrected.
- **Not Appropriate:** The topic within the Intent to Write is inappropriate for the proposed policy statement process. Feedback will be provided to the corresponding author to bring the Intent to Write into compliance.

Feedback Provided

The Corresponding Author will receive an electronic letter communicating the decision of the Evidentiary Review Committee. In the case of Additional Information Needed, Incomplete, or Not Appropriate, relevant information will be provided along with applicable deadlines.

Combination

The Evidentiary Review Committee may request authors of separate (but related) proposals and others to collaborate to develop a single, succinct, jointly developed proposal.

Posting of Advanced and Additional Information Needed Intent to Write Statements

Intent to Write Abstracts given an Advance or Additional Information Needed (Conditional) will be posted and made available to the Membership. The aim of this is to encourage engagement of other Member Sections. The Corresponding Author content will be provided for Member Units and Members to contact regarding ideas and/or potential engagement.

Re-Submission of Intent to Write Feedback

Based on the submission timeline, multiple options exist for Member Units to resubmit Intent to Write Statements.

Additional Information Needed: Within 14 days of receiving the Additional Information Needed review, the Corresponding Author should submit the requested information.

Incomplete/Not Appropriate: The authors may request a meeting with the Evidentiary Review Committee to receive additional feedback. If appropriate changes are possible, they will be encouraged to make these changes. They may resubmit the Intent to Write before the Annual Process submission deadline. If not within the Annual Process submission deadline, they may resubmit the Intent to Write for Consideration within the next Annual Cycle.

Step 3: Proposed Policy Brief Submitted [See Policy Brief Outline Instructions]

A complete proposed statement is submitted to policydevelop@apha.org

Procedures

Details of schedule, format, and processing considerations are subject to periodic review and revision by the Evidentiary Review Committee. Staff will provide specific information and procedural assistance upon request.

1. Preliminary Processing

Acknowledgment: Receipt of each proposed policy brief will be acknowledged by APHA staff to the person identified as its submitting originator.

Classification: Upon receipt, each proposed policy brief will be tentatively classified by staff according to subject matter and assigned to subject areas for review. The subject areas will vary yearly, depending upon submissions.

Distribution: Immediately after the proposal submission deadline, copies of all submissions that appear to meet the criteria given above will be posted on APHA's website for review.

Step 4: Subject Matter Expert, Evidentiary Review Committee Initial Review, Member Feedback and Public Hearings

4.1 Subject Matter Expert

Subject Matter Expert Peer Review

The Evidentiary Review Committee will engage at least one independent subject matter experts to conduct a blinded review of each submitted policy statement. This step is integral to the process, ensuring that the problem and strategies outlined in the proposed policy statement are adequately informed by current and robust scientific evidence and that action steps are feasible, ethical, and equitable considering the political and economic context. By incorporating the expertise of subject matter experts, we aim to ensure that our policies are developed through an unbiased and comprehensive assessment, thereby upholding the integrity and credibility of our policy-making process. The Association will maintain a database of appropriate members who may serve as subject matter experts.

Step 4.2 Member Feedback

The association relies on the expertise of its members to review the proposed Policy Briefs. We seek reviews from individual members and member units, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation that leverages our Association's diverse knowledge and experience.

The Association will make the proposed Public Health Policy Briefs available on its website. Member Units will be notified that proposed Policy Briefs are available for whatever internal review they deem desirable and feasible and to return any comments to the Evidentiary Review Committee by the deadline for consideration at the initial review of policy statement proposals during its spring meeting. Individual members may also submit reviews and feedback. Members and Member units will be asked to comment on all aspects of the proposed statement, with particular attention given to the context, including historical, cultural, ethical, health, resources, and social and political considerations, the rigor and appropriateness of the provided evidence, the evidence-based strategies, and the action steps. Additionally, alignment with APHA Strategic Priorities and Public Health Ethics should be considered.

All Member Units are highly recommended to participate in the Public Health Process. Feedback will only be accepted from APHA Member Units and APHA Members. No outside feedback will be accepted and will be discarded if submitted. As best possible, feedback should be more than assertions and supported by clear evidence and/or best practices.

Member Feedback Hearing

As part of the Member Feedback Process, the Evidentiary Review Committee will host at least one Member Feedback Hearing on the proposed Public Health Policy Briefs. At a date and time of the Evidentiary Review Committee's choosing and announced at least one month in advance to authors and APHA Members, the Evidentiary Review Committee will provide up to 15 minutes per proposed Public Health Policy Brief. Member Feedback should focus on content items, not structure. Member Feedback should be focused on engaging in a dialogue with the authors. These sessions should not be used to repeat material submitted in the written feedback.

Steps 4.3, 5, and 6: Evidentiary Review Committee Review, Assessment, and Feedback

The Evidentiary Review Committee will hold an ongoing review of the proposed Policy Briefs throughout the review process. They will review and summarize the results of the Subject Matter Experts, the Public Health, and the Member Feedback Hearing on the proposed policy briefs, and their review will be used to recommend each.

At this time, the Evidentiary Review Committee will make one of two recommendations:

Assessment 1: For Content and Structure

A Recommendation for Progression with Revisions: the Evidentiary Review Committee will reconsider the proposal before forwarding it to the Governing Council for consideration **ONLY** if it is:

- (a) Revised addressing the specific suggestions contained in the conditional assessment report and received by the date specified in the letter from the Evidentiary Review Committee; or,
- (b) Combined with other related proposals into a single, succinct proposal jointly developed by the separate authors according to the specific suggestions contained in the conditional assessment report and revised and received by the date specified in the letter from the Evidentiary Review Committee.

Recommendation for Removal of Process: the Evidentiary Review Committee suggests the withdrawal of the proposal due to the number and scope of revisions necessary for the proposed policy brief to meet policy brief review criteria as described in the author's guidelines. Authors may choose to revise the proposed policy brief for a second review. Still, if APHA receives no correspondence indicating an intent to proceed within two weeks of receipt of correspondence of the recommended rejection assessment, the proposal will automatically be removed from the process. Proposed Policy Briefs that receive a rejection can begin the process again through the Intent to Write, the following cycle.

Step 7: Proposed Policy Brief Revisions Submitted

Upon receiving feedback from the Evidentiary Review Committee, authors will be given the opportunity to revise their Policy Briefs based on the feedback. Authors must

address each suggested comment, even if the response is justification from the authors why a piece of feedback is not relevant. A justification by the authors not to address a comment must be supported by evidence. It is not appropriate to simply state you disagree with the comment. See Appendix X for the structure of providing feedback.

At this time, the statement will undergo a second review by the Evidentiary Review Committee. Following these revisions, the Evidentiary Review Committee will review the stated Policy Briefs and make the following recommendations:

Steps 8 and 9: Second Assessment: For Content and Reviewer Feedback Addressed

An Unqualified Approval: All necessary revisions and comments were appropriately addressed. The Evidentiary Review Committee recommends forwarding the proposed policy brief to the Governing Council without revisions.

A Conditional Approval: The Evidentiary Review Committee recommends that the proposed policy statement be forwarded to the Governing Council, pending additional minor revisions. If minor revisions are not completed, the proposed Policy Brief will be recommended for rejection.

Recommend Rejection: The proposed policy was not adequately revised and does not meet the policy brief review criteria described in the author's guidelines. A rejection assessment at this stage automatically removes the proposed policy brief from consideration in the current cycle. Still, it may be re-submitted during the next annual proposed policy brief submission process.

Initial assessments and recommendations to authors will be posted to the Proposed Policy Brief page of the APHA website.

Following the resubmission due date, the revised proposed policy brief and author's responses to the first assessment comments and the Evidentiary Review Committee's second assessment, once completed, will be posted to the Proposed Policy Brief page of the APHA website.

If member units have additional feedback regarding the proposed policy brief, these recommendations should be shared directly with the Chair of the Evidentiary Review Committee at policydevelop@apha.org. Member responses or feedback regarding the proposed policy revisions or recommendations should be directly shared with authors.

Step 10. Conditional Approval with Revisions (Revisions if Necessary)

The Evidentiary Review Committee may recommend a Conditional Approval if, apart from the need for Minor Revisions, a proposed policy brief is at the stage where it can be recommended for adoption.

Minor revisions refer to small, straightforward changes or corrections. These changes do not require substantial reworking of the content and may include adjustments such as:

- Correcting typographical errors or grammatical mistakes.
- Clarifying specific points or language.
- Adding or modifying a small amount of information for clarity or completeness.
- Providing additional supporting evidence.
- Updating references or formatting to meet guidelines.

Minor revisions can be made without altering the document's structure or key arguments. Examples of revisions at this stage that are inappropriate include:

- Drastically altering the evidence-informed strategy or action steps.
- Introducing new topics, policies, populations, or contexts that change the purpose of the proposed policy brief.
- Addressing multiple comments from the initial review that were not adequately addressed.

As these revisions are minor, member units will be given no more than three weeks to address these changes. They must submit a marked-up and non-marked-up version to the Evidentiary Review Committee no later than three weeks after receiving the comments.

Additional Member Review at This Stage

Member Units will be invited to review the proposed policy briefs at this stage. Only comments directly related to previous comments will be accepted for consideration by the Evidentiary Review Committee. As such, to ensure the reliability and integrity of the process, Member Units should submit all relevant comments regarding the proposed policy briefs during the Feedback Process (Step 4). There will not be a call for additional comments. Member units must submit comments or suggestions to policydevelop@apha.org by the specific date.

Step 11: Final Markup

At the Annual Meeting, the Evidentiary Review Committee shall commit to a Final Makeup Session for those granted Conditional Approval, any Unqualified Approvals that received edits from member units and which the authors acted on the recommendation, and any Policy Briefs that have gone through the Appeal process.

The Evidentiary Review Committee may make minor edits to the proposed Policy Briefs they deem necessary to recommend adoption. Authors will be notified of any additional edits made in this mark-up session when they receive the Evidentiary Review Committee's final recommendation on adoption.

The Evidentiary Review Committee's final recommendation on each proposed policy brief will be either **Recommend Adoption** or **Do Not Recommend Adoption**. For those proposed policy briefs that the Evidentiary Review Committee does not recommend be adopted, a short explanation of the recommendation will be provided both to the authors and the Governing Council.

Immediately following the Evidentiary Review Committee's final markup session, the final versions of the proposed Policy Briefs and the Evidentiary Review Committee's recommended action on adopting each policy statement will be posted on the web and emailed to all Governing Councilors.

Step 12: Final Report to the Governing Council

Form and Content

The Evidentiary Review Committee will draft a final report to the Governing Council, consisting of its precise recommendations for Governing Council action on proposed Policy Briefs utilizing a format that facilitates ready identification of any changes recommended from the proposed Policy Briefs officially distributed to it. The report will also include the proposed "consent agenda" — those proposed Policy Briefs around which the Evidentiary Review Committee recommends be adopted. In addition, recommendations for any PPS not on the consent agenda will be included. For those Proposed Policy Briefs that the Evidentiary Review Committee does not recommend be adopted, the Evidentiary Review Committee will provide a short explanation for the final recommendation. The Evidentiary Review Committee shall also have a summary of any changes made to the proposed policy brief during their markup session, which is available upon request.

Consent Agenda

The Evidentiary Review Committee will first report to the Council the proposed consent agenda, which lists, by title, those proposed Policy Briefs it recommends to the Governing Council for adoption relative to which it believes there is a consensus about how the proposed policy brief should proceed.

The simple request (without explanation) of any Governing Councilor will result in removing any title(s) from the consent agenda as proposed by the Evidentiary Review Committee.

Separate Consideration

The Evidentiary Review Committee will then present (in a rational sequence of its choosing) its final recommendations for each proposed policy statement not already adopted, including those proposed Policy Briefs the Evidentiary Review Committee recommends not to be adopted by a majority vote.

The Committee's presentation will initially be limited to (1) summarizing any changes in Evidentiary Review Committee recommendations since its previous report to the Council and (2) explaining the reasons for its recommendations briefly. Subsequently, Evidentiary Review Committee representatives will be allowed to elaborate in response to questions or challenges raised from the floor of the Governing Council. For a proposed policy brief that the Evidentiary Review Committee does not recommend, the Governing Council may vote to adopt or not adopt it.

Advancement of Policy Briefs Once Passed

The following action items will be completed following the passage of proposed Policy Briefs by the Governing Council.

1. **Publication:** Policy Briefs adopted by the Governing Council will be posted on the APHA website following professional copy-editing. Notification will be provided to the members through the usual Association channels. Staff will maintain a compendium of APHA Policy Briefs, and updated versions will be periodically published, as determined by the Executive Board. A Press Release Announcing the Passed Policy Briefs will be available at the end of the Annual Meeting.
2. **Dissemination of Activities:** In conjunction with the sponsoring member unit, APHA will develop a one-page Fact Sheet, including 1) Actions Steps, 2) Actors, 3) Resources, 4) Timeline, 5) Assumptions and risks, 6) Measures of success (outcomes and data sources,). A template will be made available for authors to complete, which will then be copyedited, formatted, and finalized in conjunction with APHA Staff.
3. **Educational Outreach:** APHA staff will host a webinar(s) following the adoption process, detailing the policy briefs and garnering implementation support during the first year of the policy briefs. Additionally, in the year following passage, the sponsoring Member Unit will be provided the opportunity to provide a brief update at the Annual Meeting on the status of the policy statement topic. This will be in the form of a written report to the Governing Council and a special session focusing on the Policy Briefs from the previous year. The Corresponding Author and Chair of the sponsoring member unit will be contacted with these opportunities.
4. **Evaluation:** Upon the archiving of the policy brief, the Evidentiary Review Committee, which shall develop a process of evaluation, will transmit a report to the Governing Council on the outcome of the measurable goals, indicating if they were achieved, not achieved, or partially achieved.

Section 4: Priority Areas

Priority Areas

In consultation with staff, the Evidentiary Review Committee may identify priority areas for proposed Policy Briefs at its discretion. These priority areas will represent critical

gaps in the Association’s Policy Briefs and/or emerging policies within public health. Generally, they will not be covered by an existing policy statement except in emerging evidence or situations.

Fast Track for Priority Areas

Given their priority to the Association, these proposed Policy Briefs have a fast-track option for adoption. They may be submitted for consideration at the Mid-Year Meeting or Annual Meetings of the Governing Council or to the Executive Board for adoption between meetings of the Governing Council. A maximum of five (5) proposed Policy Briefs can be developed annually through the fast-track option. In addition to following the proposed policy brief authorship guidelines, to be considered for the fast-track priority option, author teams must do the following:

- The lead author must complete an online training on writing a proposed policy brief and affirm the completion of this task.
- They will work with the Evidentiary Review Committee and APHA staff members to identify key literature on priority topics.
- They will work with policy chairs’ working groups to help connect member units/expand collaborative writing groups.

Process Steps

See Section 3 Descriptions for actions available at each step.

1. Contact policydevelop@apha.org to indicate an interest/writing group in developing a fast-track priority proposed policy brief.
2. With the Evidentiary Review Committee, jointly develop an Intent to Write submission
3. The Evidentiary Review Committee votes and if the Intent to write is approved the authors moves forward to submission of a full proposed policy brief .
4. Proposed Policy Brief Submitted
5. Iterative Subject Matter Expert, Evidentiary Review Committee Review, Member Feedback and Member Hearing Process
6. APHA Staff and Evidentiary Review Committee Chair Provide Feedback
7. Revision Due
8. Evidentiary Review Committee Recommendations
9. Additional Revisions, if recommended
10. Evidentiary Review Committee Final Review and Markup
11. Recommendation to Governing Council

Deadlines in January and May		
Activity	Mid-Year Meeting Deadlines	Annual Meeting Deadlines
Intent to Write Submission Due	Rolling Aug/Sept	Rolling Jan/Feb

Feedback on Intent to Write	Rolling Sept/Oct	Rolling Feb/March
Proposed Policy Brief Submission Due	Jan	May
Subject Matter Expert and Member Review and Public Hearing	Jan	May
Evidentiary Review Committee Review and Feedback	Feb/March	June/July
Revisions Due	End of April	End of August
Final Review with Recommendations	May	September
Additional revisions, if necessary	Late May/Early June	Early October
Evidentiary Review Committee Final Review and Markup, Recommendation to Governing Council	Early June	At Annual Meeting

Section 6: Appeal Process

Appeal to Executive Board of Evidentiary Review Committee Decisions

The fundamental purpose of appeals to the Executive Board is to ensure that no procedural irregularities occur in the policy-making process for a specific proposed policy brief. The purpose is not to revisit the strengths or weaknesses of scientific findings outlined in the policy proposal. Such scientific review is the responsibility of the Evidentiary Review Committee; it is not the responsibility of the Executive Board. Procedural irregularities could include (but are not limited to) the following: a) a disagreement about a missed deadline; b) a Subject Matter Expert reviewer or Evidentiary Review Committee member’s failure to report a conflict of interest; or c) an irregularity in Evidentiary Review Committee voting procedures.

Appeal Submission

The author(s) of a policy brief that has been disapproved or combined by the Evidentiary Review Committee with another policy may appeal that Evidentiary Review

Committee decision to the Executive Board. Requests for such appeal must be made in writing to the Executive Director and the Chair of the Executive Board for consideration by the Executive Board by the date and mechanism specified in the letter notifying the author of the disapproval. The information to be submitted in the appeal letter is:

1. Specific description of why the author(s) is (are) claiming that the Evidentiary Review Committee process (as outlined in the APHA Policy and Procedures) was not followed. If the author(s) claim(s) procedural irregularities, the author(s) need(s) to outline the specific departures from procedures.
2. The original proposed policy brief is attached.
3. The disapproval letter from the Evidentiary Review Committee as an attachment.

Appeal Distribution

The Executive Director and the Chair of the Executive Board will ensure that a copy of the appeal is sent to the Evidentiary Review Committee.

APHA staff will verify that the appeal letter was submitted on time and that the required elements, as described above, were included in the appeal letter. These guidelines must be followed to ensure the appeal goes forward.

- If the appeal passes staff review for completeness, the Executive Committee (EC) of the Executive Board will review the appeal to determine if it meets the requirements for an appeal described above.
- If the Executive Committee agrees that the appeal meets the criteria for an appeal, the documents will be distributed to the full Executive Board. An appeal agenda item will be added to the agenda of the next Executive Board meeting (held via teleconference).
- If the Executive Committee finds that the appeal does not meet the procedural criteria, the authors will be notified that that appeal will not go forward.

Appeal Review

One designated author can present their case verbally, based on their appeal criteria, to the Executive Board. Time will be allotted for questions and answers. Five minutes will be allotted for the author to present the appealed case. An additional five minutes will be allotted for questions and answers by the Executive Board. The Evidentiary Review Committee Chair will then present the viewpoint of the Evidentiary Review Committee and will have five minutes allocated for questions.

Subsequently, on the call, the Executive Board deliberates on the Evidentiary Review Committee appeal during the executive session. (The author(s), Evidentiary Review Committee staff liaison, and Evidentiary Review Committee chair may not participate in or listen to the EB decision-making process.)

The Chair of the Executive Board will communicate the Executive Board's reasons for its decision in writing to the author(s) and the Evidentiary Review Committee within seven days of its decision.

If the Executive Board decides to uphold the appeal, it may request the author(s) to work with the Evidentiary Review Committee [if appropriate] to revise and improve the proposed policy on the date of notification of the upheld appeal. The revised submitted policy brief will then re-enter the policy process. It will be reviewed by the Evidentiary Review Committee and made available to the Governing Council for the Tuesday policy statement votes at the Annual Meeting.

If the Executive Board does not uphold the appeal, the recommendations of the Evidentiary Review Committee will remain.

Official Distribution: The original proposed Policy Briefs, as well as any subsequent revisions and all Evidentiary Review Committee assessments, will be available on the APHA webpage to all members. Immediately following the Evidentiary Review Committee's final markup session, the final versions of the proposed Policy Briefs and the Evidentiary Review Committee's recommended action on adopting each policy statement will be posted to the web and emailed to all Governing Councilors.

Membership Notice: Proposed Policy Briefs reported by the Evidentiary Review Committee for Governing Council consideration will be made available in full to the membership on the APHA website or otherwise as appropriate and necessary.

Section 7: Archiving

Policy Statement Review, Updating and Archiving

Over time, Policy Briefs become outdated and not reflective of current science or the current environment. The policy statement/policy brief archiving process aims to archive Policy Briefs that are no longer accurate, feasible, and/or applicable and identify important Policy Briefs that need to be updated and submitted to the annual policy statement development process. Archived Policy Briefs no longer guide APHA policy and practice but serve as historical documents, remain available to members in the policy statement database, and can be revised as a new policy at any time.

Automatic Archiving Process

All Policy Briefs are automatically archived seven years post-adoption.

Archiving Review

APHA will announce the Policy Briefs scheduled for archiving two years in advance of the auto-archiving. This announcement will be made when the priority areas for the upcoming cycle are released. Some announced Policy Briefs scheduled for archiving may be recommended as a priority area at the same time they are announced for archiving.

This announcement aims to alert members to what Policy Briefs will be archived. Member Unit will have the opportunity to submit revised Policy Briefs, citing the previous policy brief. The revision of any policy statement is treated as a new submission and is held to all the guidelines and requirements of the process at that time.

As Policy Briefs are scheduled for archiving, all Governing Councilors and APHA members will be asked to review the Policy Briefs relevant to their member units and whether they wish to maintain an existing policy for a period not to extend past one year.

A brief marked for archiving may be kept active for one additional year through action prior to the Governing Council. No brief designated for archiving can be kept active for over one year.

Process

A Member Unit may request to keep a policy brief scheduled for archiving active for one year. If an APHA Member Unit believes that the evidence in a policy statement scheduled for archiving remains accurate and the action steps remain feasible and applicable, they can submit a special request to the Evidentiary Review Committee for review of the science, references, and action steps of the policy brief set to be archived. The Member Unit does not have to be the initial Member Unit who sponsored the Policy Brief. A rationale for keeping the policy brief active and removing it from the consent agenda for archiving, as well as the name of a corresponding author and writing group for the revision, must accompany the request.

Such a request must be submitted by August 1 of the year when the policy brief is scheduled to be voted on for archiving. Each request will be reviewed by the Evidentiary Review Committee (consulting additional volunteer content experts from relevant APHA components as needed) and will be recommended whether to archive the policy brief as scheduled or keep it active for one additional year. The Evidentiary Review Committee Chair will report the extension to the Governing Council during their report.

To ensure a transparent process for APHA members and staff, the following steps are suggested to address Policy Briefs that have been deemed current by an APHA member through a special request to the Evidentiary Review Committee (via the Governance Liaison):

Step One

- APHA Governance Staff will review the special request to ensure the rationale is complete and specifically speaks to the current relevance of the policy
 - The description must include support that the science and action steps in the statement remain accurate, feasible, and applicable (**not more than one page**)

Step Two

- Evidentiary Review Committee Members review the request, coordinating with the Member Units to consult content experts as needed
 - The evidentiary Review Committee will review comments for each submitted request and provide an “Archive “or” Keep Active for one additional year” decision for each request reviewed.

Step Three

- The Evidentiary Review Committee chair will report the recommendation to the Governing Council.

Future

- All Policy Briefs voted to be “kept active for one year” will be set to archive at the close of the next Annual Meeting automatically.
- Any appeal of a decision of the Evidentiary Review Committee may be presented to the Executive Board in writing five business days following the initial determination letter.

Note that members can submit a new proposed policy brief following the policy brief guidelines on policies covered in any policy briefs that has been archived at any time if it is relevant to current or future public health policies. Any new proposed policy briefs must be submitted through the normal policy brief development process.

Section 9: Other Provisions

Extra-Process Adoption: Apart from the established policy brief development process defined herein, under conditions of an emergency or otherwise compelling nature, the Governing Council can vote to suspend its own rules and take up consideration of a specific proposed policy brief (e.g., one not considered by the process established herein). In such circumstances, assuming the support of the Speaker, both consideration of and adoption of Policy Briefs shall require affirmation by a two-thirds vote of the Governing Council. Otherwise, the Governing Council must also vote by two-thirds to override the Speaker's will.

Policy Reversals: Ordinarily, APHA neither "rescinds" all nor "deletes" parts of previously adopted Policy Briefs. In the rare case of a new policy brief that effectively reverses or essentially negates all or major elements of an earlier policy brief, it must be noticed, by explicit reference, that the former "supersedes" the latter. The APHA Policy Brief Database will be updated to reflect a sunseting of the superseded policy.

Policy Shifts: Over time, any policy briefs of APHA can be expected to experience incremental changes resulting in modification or updating. In cases where the previous policy brief has not explicitly been superseded, APHA will default to the most recent policy brief on record. Of course, the most recent explicit policy brief stands.

Adopted by the APHA Governing Council, November 2024
Amended by the APHA Executive Board, May 2026