

# ACHA ADVOCACY GUIDELINES

## Annual Advocacy Procedures Outline:

- 1) *Priority Issues*
  - 2) *Advocacy Advisory Group*
  - 3) *Fact Sheets*
  - 4) *Proactive Research*
  - 5) *Response to General Advocacy Requests*
  - 6) *Major Questions Guiding Consideration of Advocacy Action*
  - 7) *Educating and Informing the ACHA Membership*
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- 1) **Priority Issues** - Following the annual Advocacy Coalition charge, "Review and update the ACHA Advocacy Issues list a necessary," the Advocacy Coalition will review and update ACHA's priority advocacy issues list. The coalition shall make recommendations to the Board of Directors (BOD), or the Executive Committee (EC) on behalf of the BOD, not later than August 31<sup>st</sup> of each year to add or delete advocacy issues from the list based on ACHA's mission, vision, and strategic plan and the current national climate regarding college health. The BOD (or EC) shall review and approve or modify priority issues for the program year. The ACHA Advocacy Coalition may propose new priorities to the BOD during the program year, if urgent, and the BOD (or EC) shall review and approve or disapprove of any new priority advocacy issues as soon as possible.
  - 2) **Advocacy Advisory Group** - By August 31<sup>st</sup> of each year ACHA's Advocacy Coalition chair/s shall work with each ACHA ad hoc committee chair (except the Awards, Fellows, Program Planning, and Corporate, Federal, and Foundation Grant Review Committees) and ACHA section chair/s to appoint one member from each committee or section to serve on an Advocacy Advisory Group in an effort to support the Advocacy Coalition with issue-specific expertise as it relates to each committee and/or section when necessary. A committee and/or section chair may serve on the Advocacy Advisory Group.

- 3) ***Fact Sheets and Proactive Research*** - Each year the Advocacy Coalition and ACHA national office staff, in conjunction with the Advocacy Advisory Group, shall develop fact sheets for each of the listed priority issues. The fact sheets shall contain the association's official position on each priority issue and be used to educate the membership, legislators, and the public about ACHA's advocacy priority issues. The fact sheets shall be created and/or updated, by October 1 of each year and presented to the BOD (or EC) for review, modification, and approval prior to the BOD's Annual Capitol Hill Visit.
- 4) ***Proactive Research*** - Throughout the year, the Advocacy Coalition and ACHA national office staff shall scan the national political climate to identify advocacy opportunities related to the priority issues list via informational resources such as newspapers, television, and/or other media including internet tools such as the Library of Congress's online "THOMAS" legislative center. The Advocacy Coalition and ACHA national office staff shall also identify advocacy opportunities related to the priority issues list via regular communications with other national health organizations including but not limited to the Coalition for Health Funding, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, the Coalition of National Health Education Organizations, the Society for Public Health Education, and the American Public Health Association.
- 5) ***Response to General Advocacy Requests*** - The following sequence shall be followed for all advocacy action requests regardless of external deadlines for response:
  - Any and all requests for ACHA to advocate for or against a particular issue (whether related or unrelated to the priority issues list) shall first be reviewed by the Advocacy Coalition chair/s and when necessary by members from the Advocacy Advisory Group.
  - The Advocacy Coalition chair/s shall then forward their advocacy action recommendation (inclusive of any input received from members of the Advocacy Advisory Group) via the national office staff to ACHA's president and executive director.
  - The final ACHA advocacy action shall be determined/approved by the ACHA president, in consultation with the ACHA executive director. When necessary based on the scope/impact of the advocacy request and as time permits, the ACHA president shall consult the BOD or the EC on behalf of the BOD when making the advocacy action decision.
  - The ACHA president or executive director shall forward the final advocacy action decision to the Advocacy Coalition chair/s. The national office staff shall then facilitate action, if any, for the advocacy request.
  - In instances where an advocacy request is very time sensitive and requires an immediate decision, the ACHA president, in consultation with the executive director, shall make the advocacy action decision with subsequent notification to the BOD and other ACHA stakeholders related to the advocacy topic.

- 6) **Major Questions Guiding Consideration of Advocacy Action** - While deliberating on their recommendation, the ACHA Advocacy Coalition chair/s, Advocacy Advisory Group, executive director, and president shall consider the following:
- Is the requested advocacy action consistent with best practices in behavioral health, health promotion, higher education, and medical practice, and is it consistent with the vision, mission, and strategic goals of ACHA?
  - Is the issue related to the organization's priority issues and/or fact sheets for the program year?
  - Is the requesting agency nationally recognized as a reputable organization in public health or higher education?
  - Have other national organizations supported and/or not supported the issue? (Which organizations are they?)
  - Does the timeline of the request allow the Advocacy Coalition chair/s an appropriate amount of time to acquire feedback from members of the Advocacy Advisory Group if necessary?
- 7) **Educating and Informing the ACHA Membership** - Upon the recommendation of the Advocacy Coalition chair/s and the approval of the ACHA president, the national office staff shall educate and inform ACHA's membership via ACHA's online Federal Advocacy Support Tool, *Action* newsletter, blast email, and/or college health list serves about selected college health or public health related issues that ACHA has decided to advocate for or against. Furthermore, the Advocacy Coalition shall continue to provide ongoing professional development in order to build advocacy skills for the leadership and membership of ACHA.