



Meeting of the
POLICY COMMITTEE

December 12, 2008, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Matthew Lesieur and Darryl Ng, Co-Chairs

Members Present: Terri Faulkner, Peter Gee (alt. for Dorella Walters), Yolene Gousse (alt. for Damian Bird), Coco Jervis, Matt Lesieur, Paul Meissner, Darryl Ng, Jan Carl Park, Andresa Person

Members Absent: Susan Alston, Sean Cahill, PhD, Gregory Cruz, Elaine Greeley, Esther W.Y. Lok, Reynolds Mulero

DOHMH Staff Present: Nina Rothschild, DrPH

Others Present: Marcelo Soares

Material Distributed:

- Agenda
- Minutes from the Policy Committee meeting on November 20, 2008
- Sign-on letter to Senators Harkin and Specter and Representatives Obey and Walsh concerning HIV/AIDS appropriations
- Sign-on letter to President-Elect Obama concerning Representative Ramstad as a possible “Drug Czar”
- Two-page document for President-Elect Obama concerning HIV/AIDS priorities
- Letters to Senator Ted Kennedy and Representative Henry Waxman concerning Ryan White technical fixes

Welcome/Introductions: Matt Lesieur and Darryl Ng welcomed participants. Members introduced themselves.

Review of the Meeting Packet: Nina Rothschild reviewed the contents of the meeting packet.

Development of a Protocol for Sign-On Letters: Jan Carl Park stated that individuals or organizations bring letters to the attention of the Policy

Committee and ask for the Committee to bring the letters to the attention of the Planning Council for a sign-on. Often, these issues are time-sensitive – and the process of bringing the letter from the Policy Committee to the Executive Committee and from the Executive Committee to the full Planning Council is cumbersome. Recently, EC members signed onto letters (one concerning appropriations, one concerning the possible appointment of Congressman Jim Ramstad as a “drug czar”, and one on AIDS policy) on behalf of the full Planning Council. The Planning Council by-laws only contain a brief passage concerning the ability of the EC to act on behalf of the PC in an emergency, and we need a more formal mechanism for referring these documents from one Committee to the next Committee and to the full PC. Mr. Park asked the Policy Committee members to develop a protocol. Having the Policy Committee sign onto a document before the document goes to the EC is preferable. Committee members agreed on the following:

- An urgent matter has a turnaround time of 72 hours or less. With a turnaround time of 72 hours or less, the Co-Chairs of the Policy Committee are empowered to act on behalf of the full Policy Committee, support a document, and forward it to the Executive Committee. Co-Chairs will inform policy members that urgent/time sensitive matter has been forwarded to the Executive Committee. Policy Committee members are encouraged to contact Co-Chairs if they have opinions or positions on urgent/time sensitive matters.
- A less urgent matter has a turnaround time of more than 72 hours. With a turnaround time of more than 72 hours, a document should be distributed to the full Policy Committee and, if the Policy Committee approves, should be sent to the EC.

Committee members agreed that this protocol should be incorporated into the Planning Council bylaws. DOHMH staff will draft a protocol, forward the protocol to the Policy Committee, and the Policy Committee can forward the protocol to the Rules and Membership Committee which will meet in January.

The Executive Committee will also have to draft a protocol for situations in which it will need to sign off on behalf of the full Planning Council. DOHMH staff will draft the protocol, forward it to the EC, and the EC can forward it to RMC. As with the Policy Committee protocol, the EC protocol will define a routine process and an urgent process.

Review of Letters to Senator Kennedy and Congressman Waxman Concerning Technical Fixes to Ryan White HATMA: Mr. Lesieur reviewed the bullets in the letter on topics including unobligated funds, Part D medical expenses, the Severity of Need Index (SONI), usage of HIV case data, the EMA/TGA split, hold harmless, and authorized appropriations. Committee members discussed whether the letter should explicitly advocate for a

specific duration of time before the next reauthorization. Dr. Rothschild noted that a longer period between reauthorization discussions might be productive because organizations would have a chance to focus their energy on fighting the epidemic rather than engaging in struggles over various aspects of the legislation. Having the next reauthorization take place during an off-year in the election cycle might also be good because advocates wouldn't have to split their energy between the campaign and reauthorization and instead could fully focus on reauthorization. The last reauthorization in 2006 was only for three years, rather than five years. Policy Committee members agreed not to take a position on the length of the reauthorization in the Kennedy/Waxman letters.

Review of FAPP Two-Page Document to President-Elect Obama on HIV/AIDS Policy: Individuals from FAPP (the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership) and from other organizations came together to draft the document. The plan is to create one unified document, rather than multiple overlapping documents from different organizations. Organizations can choose to sign on or not to sign on to the FAPP document; they cannot modify the document. Five Committee members voted in favor of forwarding the document to the EC, and three members abstained; the document will be sent.

Federal, State, and City Budget Cuts:

- State: the Governor will release the State budget during the week of December 15th, and the prospects are not good. The Democrats in the NY State Senate are embroiled in a struggle over leadership. We are waiting to see what the impact of the budget on HIV/AIDS programs will be. Committee members agreed that a sheet summarizing the State budget proposal would be distributed at the next meeting.
- City: the City recently discovered that corporations overpaid their taxes to the City, and the City has to pay back \$800,000,000 to these corporations. The City is proposing additional cuts of \$500,000,000 and may use that to plug the \$800 million dollar hole. Although HIV/AIDS-service organizations receive earmarks from individual City Council members, those earmarks may be drastically reduced because of the economy. The City budget will be released in mid-January, and the Policy Committee members will have an additional discussion at that time and in February so that the Planning Council can respond in a meaningful way. Peter Gee asked whether any ideas are being proposed to generate revenue. One such proposal is to tax cosmetic surgery and beer.

Policy Committee members discussed the potential impact of the economic downturn and the associated changes in Federal, State, and City funding on the care and treatment of PLWHAs. Terri Faulkner asked about the impact of the fiscal situation on Ryan White funding. At this time, the New York EMA does not anticipate much of a cut in its funding from HRSA. Marcelo Soares asked whether the switch to Medicaid managed care would actually save money for the system. New York State had to include an anticipated fiscal impact statement when it applied to the federal government to transfer almost all PLWHAs to managed care, and the State maintains that the transfer is being made to improve the quality of the care rather than to save money.

Policy Committee members agreed that they should advocate for a federal stimulus package and against cuts. The federal government spends roughly \$2 billion on AIDS care in New York City, and the best step we can take is to expend funds promptly and ensure that there is no carryover.

New Business: Committee member Paul Meissner, who is also the President of PHANYC (the Public Health Association of New York City), is advocating for Dr. Camara Jones to become Surgeon General in the Obama administration. Dr. Jones is currently at the CDC as research director of Social Determinants of Health and Equity. Mr. Meissner asked the Planning Council to support her candidacy and agreed to send material concerning Dr. Jones to Dr. Rothschild, who will circulate it to members of the Policy Committee.

Review of Minutes from the November 20th Meeting of the Policy Committee: Committee members voted in favor of approving the minutes with one abstention.

Next Meeting: Committee members agreed to meet again on January 16th.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.