

Public Health Legislative Policy Guide

Background

Legislative policy analysis and development are important functions of Public Health. Policy development is one of the core functions of public health as defined in a 1998 book entitled *The Future of Public Health* published by the Institute of Medicine (IOM). In the *Public Health 2004-2007 Strategic Plan* for the County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services (DHS), policy and advocacy is described as being one of Public Health's strategic initiatives.

Public Health's role in legislative policy issues is twofold:

1. *To review and analyze proposed legislation* related to public health issues of importance in Los Angeles County and recommend legislative positions; and
2. *To advocate for initiating legislation on policy issues* focused on improving the public's health in Los Angeles County.

Public Health works closely with the DHS Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR) on public health legislative policy issues. Section I below will outline the guidelines that Public Health staff should follow when reviewing and analyzing proposed legislation (state and federal) that may impact public health efforts in the County. Section II below will describe Public Health's role in legislative policy development and advocacy on public health issues for Los Angeles County.

I. Guidelines for analyzing proposed public health legislation

One of the functions of the Public Health Policy program is to track proposed legislation on important public health issues for Los Angeles County. To facilitate this process, Public Health has developed a protocol for handling requests for review or analysis of proposed legislation on public health issues.

Each program within Public Health has been asked to designate a contact person for policy issues. The policy contact person will be responsible for conducting the program's review or analysis of proposed legislation and recommending a position on it, or for ensuring that another appropriate person within that program conducts the review or analysis.

The Public Health protocol for tracking requests to review or analyze proposed legislation is described below:

1. OIR reviews all legislation and distributes bills that impact health services to DHS staff. The County Administrative Office (CAO) refers requests for review or analysis of proposed legislation on health-related issues directly to DHS' OIR. (Should your program receive a request for analysis from another source, e.g.,

directly from a legislator or from the CAO, please send a copy of that request to the Office of Intergovernmental Relations).

2. OIR legislative analysts Fuji Uyeda and JoAnn Davé forward requests for review or analysis of proposed legislation on all matters related to public health to Deloris Artis and/or Anna Long in the Public Health Policy unit.
3. The Public Health Policy program enters each request for review or analysis of proposed legislation into a legislative tracking database developed by LaTonya Calloway and currently managed by Deloris Artis.
4. The Policy Office decides which Public Health program(s) should be involved in reviewing and analyzing the proposed legislation and sends the request to the contact person(s) within the program(s). As much as possible, the Public Health Policy Office allows time for programs to conduct a detailed analysis, if required.
5. The program's policy contact person prepares an analysis of the proposed legislation (or ensures that the appropriate person within the program does so), recommends a position on it and determines its impact.
6. All analyses should be approved by the appropriate supervisor before they are submitted to the Policy office.
7. The Public Health Policy office reviews the program's analysis of the proposed legislation and, if approved, forwards it to the OIR.
8. The OIR reviews the program's analysis of the proposed legislation and sends it to the CAO if a County position is requested.
9. Upon request from DHS, the CAO's office reviews the analysis of the proposed legislation and determines if the County should take an official position on the bill.

Can Public Health Support Proposed Legislation?

At times programs may be asked by legislators or community groups to support a piece of proposed legislation. Programs may also become aware of legislation through consortia or organizations in which they participate. It is important that program wait until the bill has gone through the official review process before supporting or opposing the bill. Once the CAO's office has declared the County's official position on a bill, Public Health may advocate the same position. **Programs cannot take or advocate a position on legislation before the Board or the CAO has taken a position.** Once the Board/CAO has taken a position, Public Health programs may advocate for the County's position.

The CAO maintains a list of both state and federal legislative bills for the current session and the County's position on them on its website at:

http://cao.co.la.ca.us/igr/scripts/leg_info.htm. This list is updated on an as-needed basis. If a Program needs information about the County's official position on a bill and cannot find this information on the CAO's website, they may call Fuji Uyeda at (213) 240-8373 or JoAnn Davé at (213) 240-8347.

More information on this issue may be found in Attachment I, which is a memo from the CAO's office dated April 15, 2005 entitled *Procedures for Development and Representation of County's Legislative Policy and Positions*.

II. Policy Development in Public Health

Every year in late September to early October before the start of the State legislative season, Program Directors will receive a copy of the State Legislative Agenda and will be asked to submit legislation and provide feedback on legislative policy issues and program specific goals related to the functioning of their programs, as necessary. A similar process occurs for the Federal Legislative Agenda.

Once approved by the Board, the Agendas provide guidance to the CAO and other County Departments in the introduction and analysis of legislation. The CAO determines a County position on a bill based on the Legislative Agenda policies and goals.

Public Health programs will be required to review the Legislative Agendas and provide the following, as necessary:

A. Submission of Legislation

The County will only sponsor legislative proposals (bills) for introduction in the State legislative session with the highest legislative priorities and rely on the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and other agencies to sponsor other program-specific legislative goals that are identified.

Public Health programs that decide to introduce legislation are required to inform Anna Long who oversees the Public Health Policy office. If Public Health decides to introduce legislation, the appropriate program will be asked to prepare a policy brief outlining the need for legislative action on the issue. The program will discuss this with the Public Health Executive Team member to whom they report. If approved to go forward, the program will take this to their Executive Team member to present to the Executive Team for discussion.

Once the Executive Team members approve of introducing the legislation, Public Health programs will develop language for their proposals, keeping in mind that the authors (legislators) will be inclined to introduce only those bills with clear-cut solutions to problems and little opposition. The proposals are to be approved by County Counsel and include a one-page fact sheet with the description of the

problem to be corrected, explanation of existing law, what the proposed measure would do, and likely support and opposition. The County advocates in Sacramento will use these one-page fact sheets as they try to secure authors for our bills. If the issues to be addressed are highly complex, a more detailed document may also be needed in hearings and advocacy efforts.

B. Review of Policies and Goals

Public Health programs will be required to review the policies and goals impacting Public Health on the Legislative Agendas to update them to reflect current policies and priorities of the County. Programs are requested to revise, delete or add policy and goals as necessary. In these cases, the Director of the program will inform Anna Long of the changes. If Public Health agrees to the changes, the program will prepare a policy brief outlining the need for the changes and discuss this with the Public Health Executive Team member to which they report. If approved to go forward, the program will take this to their Executive Team member to present to the Executive Team for discussion.

In both aforementioned cases, the briefs will be reviewed by the Public Health Policy office and, if approved, forwarded to Fuji Uyeda or JoAnn Davé or OIR for their review. The OIR will submit the proposed legislation and policy and goal updates to the CAO for approval. Once approved, the CAO will seek an author for the proposed legislation and reflect our policy and goal updates on the Legislative Agendas.