

MINUTES:
UW Population Health Institute
Advisory Board Meeting
May 20, 2005
Wisconsin Medical Society
330 East Lakeside Street, Madison, WI
Friday, May 20, 2004
10:00 AM -1:00 PM

Members present:

Greg Nycz
Carol Graham
MaryAnn Lippert
Steve Brenton
Helene Nelson
David Riemer
Nancy Kaufman
Cindy Helstad - Representing Susan Turney
Eric Stanchfield by phone

Staff present:

Patrick Remington
D. Paul Moberg
David Kindig
Robert Rancourt
Robert Newsom
Marion Ceraso

All Board members and staff introduced themselves.

David Riemer made one correction to October 2004 minutes and the corrected minutes were approved.

Dr. Remington summarized the Director's Report for 2004 and included a verbal update of activities in 2005 to date. "The County Health Rankings, 2004" was briefly described and discussed. Monthly seminars, State Policy Forum (supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) were discussed. Two new outreach programs, the Wisconsin Public Health Leadership Institute (a joint project with the Medical College of Wisconsin) and The Population Health Practice Fellowship Program, are both funded by the Partnership Fund for a Healthy Future were explained.

Donna Friedsam's and other staff's work with Wisconsin's American Indian communities and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council in community-based research and program evaluation was briefly discussed. The work on Wisconsin Diabetes Quality Improvement Project resulted in a paper to be published in the Journal of Managed Care.

The Data Colloquium presented February 7, 2005 was praised by members as outstanding and Helene Nelson was acknowledged for her efforts to get the state and the university together on this project.

Remington informed the Board that “core funding” and the Dean’s support of the idea of “core funding” that made many of the Institute projects possible and the importance of getting this message to whoever replaces the dean when he steps down from that office in the near future. Board members were encouraged to show their support anyway they are able.

This led into a discussion of Issue Briefs which continued later in the meeting. Feedback from Helene Nelson, Mary Ann Lippert, Greg Nycz and others provided examples of state-wide and local utilization of the Issue Briefs, as well as some of the politics surrounding them. Topics for future briefs were also floated. Donna Friedsam reiterated that the goal of the Issue briefs has been to provide a timely analysis of a single topic of interest in two pages, often in response to externally generated inquiries. Nancy Kaufman suggested that Issue Briefs to guide practice should be distinguished from those meant to generate debate.

The County Health Rankings were also discussed and deemed a terrific contribution for use at the local level by Greg Nycz. This led to further discussion regarding useful data aggregation (e.g., multiple counties). Sub-county levels of aggregation were also discussed as a need in large counties. Nancy Kaufman indicated an opportunity to partner in use of Aurora’s data (they serve up to on third the state’s population) and suggested that other partnerships should be formed to share data.

Carol Graham highlighted the reliance of the Public Health Oversight Committee on the Institute for evaluation of the State Health Plan.

The discussion returned to the Director’s Report on activities in 2004 and 2005 to date. Steve Brenton and Helene Nelson provide very positive feedback on the colloquium on Health Care Information held in February. This led to a discussion of the importance of Institute core funding to allow conferences of this nature. Further discussion of the importance of maintaining core funding in face of changes in medical school administration was noted.

Dr. Remington next led a brief discussion of the strategic planning process underway in the Institute. The report on the SWOT analysis prepared by Sybil Better was discussed. Board member feedback suggested that decisions regarding focus versus breadth would drive the plan.

David Riemer recommended an emphasis on determinants of health and a broad range of possible points of intervention to have the largest impact. Helene Nelson suggested that the Institute’s role relative to broad elements of the state health plan (e.g., improve overall health, transform public health) could be to “advance particulars where opportunities present.” The broad focus was not problematic, and will lead to targets of

opportunity that will make a difference. Nancy Kaufman also reiterated the need to accept that (funding) opportunities play a significant role in any organization where people doing the work are contingent on external funding. She suggested the mission acknowledge that we take advantage of funding to keep staff and facilitate their growth. She also sees external funding as leverage for maintenance of the core.

Maryann Lippert indicated that local communities want recognition that their small steps to improve local health conditions feeds into improvement of health status of the state. She saw the need to translate the big picture to local community partners, and vice versa.

Greg Nycz further elaborated that the framework provided by the state health plan can guide by providing tools for collaboration and emphasis on infrastructure priorities and cost effectiveness. He also suggested that this was a mechanism to incorporate David Riemer's comments.

Helene further indicated the need for an action bias in issue briefs and other products. Nancy Kaufman suggested further partnering to move ideas into practice, collaboratively conducting and testing demonstration projects.

Eric Stanchfield praised the Institute's partnerships with the trust fund and suggested that to be most effective the Institute should tie into the initiatives key people have under way.

Concluding discussion in this segment suggested that if we position the Institute's role/mission toward the state health plan, we will be a particular asset for community partnerships, help in the medical school's transformation, and tie into many of the efforts underway.

The role of the Board was also discussed. Several members expressed an interest in more frequent (perhaps quarterly) Board meetings. However, the discussion also emphasized a need to have a good structure for such meetings, including engagement of the Board in very focused choices and specific decisions. Another suggestion was to have a different focus at each meeting, e.g., an annual overview, with other meetings devoted to environmental feedback and specific advice. Board advice on hot political topics could also be useful. There was consensus that the Board and the Institute could, with mutual benefit, work together to effect population health in the state.

After lunch, past issue briefs were discussed briefly with the obesity among students getting a lot of attention as a "hot button" topic and timely topic. The list of possible future Issue Briefs topics was discussed and ranked by Board members. Of most interest was a brief on worksite wellness programs and comparing WI's health outcomes with other Midwest states; followed by infant mortality disparities and community-based participatory research.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.