

APHA Executive Board Policy on Recognition [and Discontinuation] of Forums

Definition of a Forum

A Forum in APHA is a membership unit composed of APHA members who are working together to produce outcomes or meet goals on a specific issue that is of important to public health and supports APHA's mission. A Forum crosses disciplinary and Section or Special Primary Interest Group (SPIG) boundaries and requires expertise that may reside in more than one place in APHA.

Eligibility

To be considered a Forum, a group applying must meet the following criteria:

- Minimum of 75 APHA members from two or more Sections or SPIGS
- Address an interdisciplinary topic that is of strategic importance to public health that is not or cannot be covered through existing individual Sections or SPIGS
- Sponsorship of at least two (2) Sections
- Formal leadership structure with at least a chair and chair-elect, and designated membership chair (reported along with any other officers annually to ISC/SC and APHA staff)

Process initiation¹

The process for establishment of a Forum is initiated with APHA Component Affairs and is guided by whether or not a moratorium¹ on additional components exists.

A proposal for consideration as a Forum must:

- Clearly articulated purpose and need for the Forum
- Description of how the proposed Forum would support APHA's mission and goals
- Provide a listing of at least 75 APHA members who will, once established, be the initial core of Forum membership
- Identify achievable and measurable outcomes (work plan)
- Assure that the Forum is non-duplicative of standing Section and SPIG activities, and/or provides a forum to allow standing section/SPIG groups with the similar interests/focus to foster collaboration rather than duplicate activities across Sections or SPIGS.
- Have a letter of co-sponsorship from a minimum of two Section chairpersons
- Designated point person for purposes of dialogue regarding the Forum proposal

¹In 2011 the ISC recommended that a moratorium be adopted on new components due to APHA staffing limitations. In 2014 an extension of a moratorium on APHA components was approved by Executive Board. This moratorium states that there can only be 58 components (Section, SPIG, Caucus and Forum). However, if a component is discontinued, the next group on the APHA Component Affairs waiting list may apply to become an APHA component

Approval Process

Phase I Intersectional Council (ISC) Review: The ISC will review and provide feedback on the Forum proposal. Recommendations of the Intersectional Council Steering Committee (ISC-SC) will be informed, though not determined, by this ISC feedback.

Phase II ISC-SC Review and recommendation: ISC-SC will study the proposal for creation of a Forum in conjunction with all Section/SPIG feedback. The ISC-SC will submit its recommendation to establish or not establish the Forum to the Governing Council for approval. The Executive Board will review the ISC-SC recommendation before it goes to Governing Council for a vote.

Phase III Governing Council approval: The Governing Council will vote on the recommendation of the ISC-SC. If the Forum receives provisional approval, it will then have six months to document via the membership database a membership base of at least 75 APHA members. If the Forum does not meet this membership requirement, the provisional approval will be cancelled.

Forum Terms and Expectations (and Discontinuation)

The ISC-SC will review Forum performance yearly using the same format as for Sections and SPIGS. Forum leadership is expected to complete an Annual Report outlining the Forum's progress in meeting the goals/objectives articulated in the Work Plan as well as providing an updated Work Plan. Annually Forum leadership will report to APHA Component Affairs and the ISC/SC the names and offices of Forum Leadership including contact information for these individuals.

Every seven (7) years, Forum leadership wishing to continue the Forum will submit a renewal application not less than six (6) months prior to its sunset date. A renewal application must include:

- Current work plan with description of progress, or not, on goals and objectives
- Explanation of why goals were unable to be reached including a report of effort expended on reaching these goals
- Revised plan and estimated length of time required to meeting outstanding goals/objectives
- Letters of support from a minimum of two (2) Sections

Forums not submitting a renewal application or an unsuccessful renewal application will be dissolved on their sunset date unless still under review by the ISC-SC (as described in the initial approval process) or Executive Board.

Forums may also be dissolved for failure to adhere to the APHA policies including those related to:

- Use of membership information and protecting membership privacy
- Use of APHA communication technology for communicating with members
- Lack of collaboration with other APHA groups

Forum Support and Responsibilities

APHA will provide no financial support for Forums. However, Forums may raise funds under the same procedures governing Sections and SPIGS. Forums may request an account with APHA for these enrichment funds. This account will be governed by all operational procedures in line with those of Sections and SPIGS.

Forums will have a space for communication on APHA Connect.

The Forum Membership Chair will serve on the APHA Membership Committee and may receive membership lists consistent with Section/SPIG policies.

Forums will be allowed business meetings at the APHA Annual Meeting and two (2) Scientific Sessions. Scientific sessions in excess of this number would need to be provided by one of the sponsoring sections. Forums are encouraged to coordinate with their cross-component counterparts to harmonize scientific sessions to reduce duplication and competition across sessions on the same topic.

Incoming forum leadership should complete the APHA 101 webinar to become familiar with APHA procedures.

Forum chairs will have an annual conference call with the ISC-SC Chair and Director of Component Affairs to provide a space to discuss forum issues with leadership and staff.

Forums will be assigned a representative from the ISC-SC with whom they can communicate throughout the year. This liaison will request to be included in Forum communications, including, if possible, conference calls. This liaison will review the Forum Work Plans and Reports and provide feedback on both to the ISC-SC.

Recommended for Approval by ISC-SC: July 9, 2015
Approved by Executive Board: September 21, 2015