

2023 APHA Action Board Report

Shirley Orr, MHS, APRN, NEA-BC

Action Board Chairperson

October 23, 2023

Overview

The APHA Action Board works closely with APHA Governmental Relations staff to provide robust advocacy on behalf of critical public health issues and advance the association's legislative priorities. The Action Board supports and encourages advocacy work by member units within APHA, including APHA Sections and Affiliates. During their 3-year terms of service, Action Board members connect with and engage their assigned member units to advocate for APHA's priority issues during special advocacy events and throughout the year. In addition to their other Action Board responsibilities, the Chair, Chair-Designate, and two members also serve on the APHA Joint Policy Committee; the Chair also serves on the APHA Executive Board.

Action Board Highlights

The APHA Action Board coordinated its work through quarterly meetings, a mid-year meeting and an annual meeting. Meetings included discussion of legislative updates and discussion of strategy for ongoing and special advocacy campaigns. Governmental Relations staff provided reports during each meeting, and the Action Board Chairperson reported on the work of the APHA Joint Policy Committee and Executive Board.

The Chair-Designate engaged the full Action Board in planning the board-sponsored advocacy session that will take place during the APHA Annual Meeting in Atlanta. This session will showcase examples of successful advocacy initiatives led by APHA members from across the country.

Throughout the year, each Action Board member implemented a two-pronged approach to advance advocacy regarding APHA legislative priorities. Through regular contacts with their assigned member units, Action Board members disseminated and encouraged the use of APHA advocacy tools and resources by APHA members. In addition to this ongoing work to promote advocacy by APHA members, each Action Board member individually engaged with their elected members of congress to discuss APHA legislative priorities during National Public Health Week in April and during the Speak for Health Campaign in August.

Advocacy Outcomes

Through the collaborative efforts of the Action Board and APHA Governmental Relations staff over the past year, 1407 advocates sent a total of 1910 messages to members of Congress regarding priority public health issues, including public health funding, climate change, gun violence prevention, and reproductive health care access. During the August Speak for Health campaign, weekly promotion of action alerts and advocacy tools resulted in over 100 advocates sending 280 messages to members of Congress.

Continued Improvement Plans

Moving into 2024, the Action Board will continue its work with a full roster of members. Nine of the 17 members will continue their three-year term and two have chosen to serve a second term.

While member-driven advocacy has been a critical part of APHA's overall advocacy effort, there is a need to prepare and support even more members in direct advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels. In the coming year, Action Board members will explore and implement new strategies to increase involvement in public health advocacy among APHA members to build additional momentum for a comprehensive policy agenda to achieve health equity.