



## **APHA Action Board Chair's Report for 2021**

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### **I. Overview**

APHA's Action Board helps coordinate the association's grassroots and grassroots advocacy activities and encourages participation in advocacy initiatives among the association's Sections, SPIGs, Caucuses, state and regional Affiliates, and other member units. Members of the Action Board serve for a three-year term and help engage the units they represent to take action on APHA's advocacy priorities. In addition, the Chair and Chair-designate of the Action Board and two additional members selected by the chair serve as members of the Joint Policy Committee.

### **II. Activities**

In 2021, the Action Board organized its work primarily through two internal workgroups: Direct Advocacy and Annual Meeting preparation. These groups served to expand and enhance the work of the Action Board. The workgroups identified activities and met via conference calls throughout the year to keep efforts on schedule.

Key activities from Action Board members this year included:

- Dissemination of APHA resources to members, including social media resources
- Dissemination of APHA advocacy priority messages, including action alerts, internally (to APHA members and components) and externally (to elected officials, through social media, etc.)
- Encourage components to read the monthly Legislative Update
- Submission of letters to the editor and op/eds on public health issues in local newspapers; this included formation of an op/ed writing group among Action Board members
- Virtually visiting their members of Congress on Capitol Hill during Public Health Week
- Planning an advocacy training session at the Annual Meeting, entitled, "Mobilizing a Public Health Campaign"
- Participation in the Speak for Health campaign
- Continued discussions to increase the effectiveness of the Action Board
- Development of Advocacy curricula which utilize APHA resources, in collaboration with the APHA Executive Board Strategic Planning sub-committee

### **III. Speak for Health Campaign**

[Speak for Health](#) is how APHA members stand up for public health interests. Action Board members sent weekly reminders to their component's members, inviting them to connect with elected officials during the campaign. Speak for Health is a year-long campaign but is most active during the Congressional August/September recess, while members are visiting their districts. During the 2021 Speak for Health campaign, APHA members were asked to engage by sending four different action alerts

on the following topics: public health funding, preventing gun violence, climate change, and supporting health equity. Members were also asked to write op-eds, attend town halls, and set up meetings with their elected officials, and were provided resources with tips and guidelines on how to do so. During the Speak for Health Campaign, a total of 237 advocates responded and sent 1,179 total messages to Congress. The most popular action alert email was the racial equity-focused email. The most used Speak for Health resources were the state fact sheets and the action alerts. The most popular fact sheets were the gun violence fact sheet and racial equity fact sheet.

#### **IV. Communications**

Bimonthly conference call meetings were held during the year for planning purposes and to update members on advocacy priorities and committee action items. Internal communications were strengthened through electronic meeting invitations, agendas, and meeting minutes in order to keep all members informed of activities, roles, and responsibilities. Members also met during workgroup calls through the year and communicated via email in between meetings.

#### **V. Additional Activities**

##### ***Joint Policy Committee***

Four Action Board members served on the Joint Policy Committee (JPC): the chair, the chair-designate, and two members invited by the chair. Members participated in all JPC activities and reported relevant information to the Action Board on bimonthly calls. The Action Board Chair co-chairs the JPC.

##### ***Executive Board***

The Action Board Chair serves as an *ex officio* member of the APHA Executive Board and participates in Executive Board meetings and committee meetings. In partnership with the other co-chairs of the JPC, the Action Board Chair shared relevant JPC reports with the Executive Board. Further, the Action Board Chair shared relevant information about the Speak for Health campaign and other advocacy activities.

#### **VI. Action Board Next Steps**

The Action Board leadership continued an internal review process this year to determine effectiveness of the board. Chronic vacancies and unengaged membership have contributed to challenges in measuring the board's impact. The Action Board chair, chair-designate, and other past leaders of the board have worked with APHA staff and bylaws and governance leaders over the past few years on a proposal to improve the effectiveness of the board. The proposal has been refined based on discussions with multiple association leaders and committees and revisions to the Action Board's structure will be considered by the Governing Council at the Annual Meeting.