

STRATEGIC THINKING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Montana Public Health Association (MPHA)

July 21, 2005

Session Summary

SESSION OBJECTIVES

1. Review progress made by the MPHA in the last 24 months.
2. Explore and discuss important factors in the current operating environment to establish realistic context for discussion and planning.
3. Describe and commit to a proactive and realistic future scenario for MPHA and establish a strategic framework to support that vision.
4. Identify and agree to critical roles and responsibilities necessary to successfully achieve the vision.

COMPLETED AGENDA TOPICS

Discussion Ground Rules

Participants established the following ground rules to encourage productive discussion in the session:

- Avoid side bar conversations.
- Be honest – open, direct and focused.
- Welcome all ideas and comments.
- Own your own stuff – use “I” statements.
- Honor time limits.
- Turn off cell phones.
- Demonstrate respect in you communication and your behaviors.
- Strive for consensus.

Participant “Warm-Up” – Virtual Scavenger Hunt

1. **A lesson we learned together in the past 12 months**
 - Very few know who we are or what we do and we don’t have policies in place that speak for the group.
 - We can matter and we do have an opinion on important issues.
 - When there is a controversy, people tend to speak up more.
 - We’ve recognized that we need direction on where we need to go
 - We need to work as a group, not as individuals with personal agendas.
 - We need to work as a team.
 - We are a quasi-political entity to be reckoned with.

2. **A milestone event or situation for MPHA in the past year**
 - The letter to the Governor about the Director's appointment
 - Meeting with the Governor's Office
 - Recognition by the Governor's Office
 - Recognition of our opinion
 - Comments on the Director's appointment
 - Governor's support for the organization

3. **Something we hoped to accomplish but didn't**
 - A comprehensive communication plan
 - The new Director at the State level
 - Fill a Native American position
 - Encouraging additional sections to join our organization
 - Having a different kind of Director at the State level
 - Higher membership numbers

4. **An Important MPHA value that should never change**
 - Members benefit from networking and educational opportunities
 - Promotion of public health for all Montanans
 - Keep speaking for public health in Montana
 - Putting public health first
 - Being proactive
 - Advocacy for healthier lives for all Montanans, especially Native Americans.

5. **One new or emerging significant challenge**
 - Creating and implementing an effective Strategic Plan
 - Become a more valuable, significant organization
 - Determining what we do and where we stand on different issues
 - Methamphetamine

6. **A specific "initiative" we should take on as a priority in the next 12-24 months**
 - "Branding", making public health important, recognized again in the State and local communities
 - Strengthen communication and strengthen the Regions
 - Developing/adding more sub groups within MPHA (i.e., Prevention Specialists, etc.)
 - Assuring an adequate, prepared workforce
 - Being a strong, influential organization
 - Strengthening communication
 - Promotion of the organization as a leading one – not a tag-along

7. One thing we need to change about how we do business as an organization

- Have one voice and have a voice
- Better communication among members
- Develop more leadership as a Board
- Commitment including Board member commitment
- Recruitment of members

8. The most difficult thing our members deal with every day

- No time, no money; day-to-day multiple activities
- Being more involved and taking an interest in MPHA
- Time constraints and distances
- Money for public health

9. One piece of “vision” that would take MPHA beyond where we are now

- We would be advocates for public health.
- We are the “go-to” organization for public health
- We need to look outward beyond our organization for partnership, visibility and taking an active role for public health in Montana.
- Commitment
- Believing in ourselves as a powerful organization

10. One person in the room who deserves recognition today because...

- Molly for getting the newsletter together and mailed out quarterly
- Lora because of all her hard work this year – coming into someone else’s position when they resigned and finishing the presidential term; trying to take MPHA to another level; getting the process rolling for planning; helping us avoid the “slippery slope”.

Creating Discussion Context

Exploring the Operating Environment

Participants identified the following trends, influences and issues as important factors in today’s public health operating environment:

- We are influenced in our programs and our priorities by funding opportunities.
- We have moved to appropriate standards of practice.
- Public health is again being recognized.
- The new Governor is interested in and supports public health and wants to be educated about public health. The four themes that appear to be important from the Governor’s Office are prevention, economic self-sufficiency, input and collaboration from and through Advisory Councils, and functional policy.
- Some serious diseases are re-emerging.
- Funding remains an issue nationally and locally.

Organizational Successes

- Increase in membership
- Active participation in APHA
- Commitment during the transition

Stalls and Disappointments

- Lack of strategic direction and a Strategic Plan for the organization
- The website

General Condition of the Organization

Strengths

- Regional organizational structure
- Money in the bank
- The conference
- Communication tools like the newsletter and e-mail structure in place

Weaknesses

- Lack of membership involvement
- Lack of strategic direction or a Strategic Plan

Opportunities

- Increased visibility
- More ownership and involvement in MPHA
- New State leadership
- More involvement of sub-disciplines

Barriers

- Geographical distance
- Time
- Adequate workforce for those in organization's offices
- Organizational influence

Critical Issues and Challenges

- Defining our role
- Developing a Strategic Plan
- Reassessing the job description for paid "staff"
- Financial stability

Strategic Framework – 2005-2008

Mission

The Montana Public Health Association (MPHA) is a diverse membership of individuals and organizations advocating for optimal public health best practice standards for all Montanans. MPHA facilitates educational and professional growth opportunities, networking and mentoring, and collaborative relationships for members and partners.

Guiding Principles

- We believe the Montana Public Health Association (MPHA) has a responsibility to influence public health policy and practice and to do so, we must work to be an innovative and responsive organization.
- We believe that the strength of MPHA lies in the commitment of all its members including its leadership.
- We provide value to our members and partners through education programs, networking opportunities, and advocacy efforts.
- We strive for inclusion, bringing many voices and viewpoints to the table.
- We believe that collaboration with others is necessary for the advancement of public health practice and policy in Montana regardless of jurisdiction or funding boundaries.
- We preserve the integrity of the MPHA by living the mission.

Vision – 5 Years

The Montana Public Health Association (MPHA) serves as an active, influential voice promoting public health practice and programs in Montana. Members and partners support the organization's strong advocacy role and seek collaboration with MPHA on a variety of public health issues and initiatives. An expanded membership represents a wide set of public health disciplines and functions and value the educational and networking opportunities provided through their membership. MPHA maintains a prestigious reputation across the State, regionally, and for some rural and frontier issues, nationally. MPHA is recognized as the "go-to" organization in Montana on public health issues by other organizations, agencies, elected officials and State leadership.

Goals and Objectives

Goal A: Organizational Development and Commitment

MPHA operates within the governance of established policies and an up-to-date Strategic Plan. MPHA leadership is clear about its governance role and responsibilities.

Objectives

1. Finalize, adopt, and share the 2005-2008 Strategic Plan with membership by September 14, 2005.
2. Create a review process for the Strategic Plan to include:
 - Shared information and review at each Board meeting.
 - An annual review of progress with discussion to make appropriate adjustments and course corrections related to the goals.
 - An annual progress report to membership

Responsibility and timeline – Executive Secretary, Executive Board President; adoption by September 14, 2005; review process by December 2005; annually

3. Assure that MPHA has the finance and staff structure in place to achieve the Strategic Plan.
 - Sort out the relationship between a paid staff and MPHS and develop and adopt a “contract” policy for contractors working with MPHA.
 - Develop and approve a new job description for the “contract” position.
 - Include a financial review at each Board meeting.
 - Review and where appropriate, revamp the Board’s Committee structure.

Responsibility and timeline – Executive Board and President; by end of September 2005; at each Board meeting

4. Provide annual orientation for vice-presidents and officers to help them:
 - Understand and be committed to their roles and responsibilities in their regions and to the Executive Board;
 - Understand financial policy;
 - Be aware of MPHA positions on issues

Responsibility and timeline – Executive Secretary, Executive Board, Budget Committee; annually

Goal B: Partnership Development

To advance its mission and vision, MPHA seeks and maintains productive, collaborative internal and external relationship with individuals, members, agencies, and organizations.

Objectives

1. Develop a database of agencies and organizations relevant to public health. Define the kind of relationship MPHA wants with individual organizations and agencies in the database (these may differ depending on the organizations or agency).

Responsibility and timeline – Executive Secretary, Executive Board; by December 2005

2. Implement strategies to educate identified agencies and organizations about MPHA and seek their formal membership and/or desired association with MPHA.
 - Through September 2006, continue provision of the newsletter and correspondence to all members and provide gratis copies to identified prospective members.
 - By March 2006, develop and provide a package describing desirable benefits to current and prospective members, partners and disciplines.

Responsibility and timeline – Executive Secretary, Executive Board; particular emphasis during 2006; evaluate progress in July and December

Goal C: Communication and “Marketing”

MPHA is easily recognized by name as a credible, knowledgeable professional authority by policy makers, system partners, and the general public.

Objectives

1. Create a Promotion/Communication Committee (5-10 people composed of Board and general members) that will:
 - Assist and be accessible to the Board regarding promotion and communication activities.
 - Identify groups and/or occasions where promotion of MPHA is important and carry out strategies to do so.

Responsibility and timeline – Executive Board, Promotion/Communication Committee; December 2005; ongoing

2. Draft a plan for expanding membership and present to the Board for discussion and approval.

Responsibility and timeline – Membership Committee, Executive Board; June 2006

3. Create policy and a functional process that directs leadership in how to represent MPHA regarding public health issues and advocacy to include:
 - A mechanism for anticipating emerging and immediate public health issues;
 - A process for developing MPHA positions on public health issues and strategies for communicating those positions to membership;
 - Identification of who speaks for MPHA and when;
 - Strategies on if, how and when to involve non-member partners.

Responsibility and timeline – Executive Board, Executive Secretary; process developed between September 2005 and January 2006; ongoing issue management through the process

Where do we go from here?

- The facilitator will mail the summary to the Board President by August 5, 2005.
- The President will e-mail them to the Board, requesting their comments by August 26th with the communication that silence implies consent.
- Based on the comments, the Board will finalize and adopt September 12. The Strategic Plan will be presented as information to membership on September 14.

September 13, 2005 Meeting

Objectives

- Facilitate a focused conversation attendees regarding public health in Montana.
- Promote discussion about the importance of collaborative efforts regardless of jurisdictions or funding boundaries.
- Establish a role for MPHA.

Draft Agenda Items

- Welcome and why we're here
- Introductions – Name and who you represent; identify, from your perspective, the 2 most important public health issues in Montana today. (Record on flip chart)
- Using a small group process, draft an important overall message to the Governor regarding public health in Montana today. As the full group, come to agreement on an overall message to the Governor and 1-3 suggested public health goals in Montana for the next 2 years.
- Questions and Answers with the Governor's staff