



SOCIETY OF BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE

Advocacy Council Call Minutes

Date Tuesday, April 9, 2024
Time 12 p.m. ET

ATTENDEES	
Roger Figueroa, PhD (Chair)	Brian Gonzalez, PhD
Elizabeth Adams, PhD	Leslie R.M. Hausmann, PhD, FSBM (OPC Chair)
Melanie Bean, PhD	Lisa LaRowe, PhD
Pamela Behrman, PhD	Lindsay Bullock, CAE
Joanna Buscemi, PhD	Amy Myers, SCMM

(Staff does not count towards quorum)

Minutes approval

Dr. Bean made the motion to approve the February call minutes, seconded by Dr. Behrman. The motion carried.

Ambassador Tracking Link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11oPftU6S4k99kSt-tbJBkBXuVqqtHDjuANKc-pGHiXk/edit?usp=sharing>

Link to Advocacy Council Google Drive:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1w_bEe5u7Njh4GUR9EZLDjYfEgJFpmTzg?usp=sharing

Ambassador updates and collaborations

Policy Ambassador Listserv Opportunity

SBM staff suggested to the council that having a listserv for each of the policy priority groups may be easier for communication and engagement. The council agreed this would be a good opportunity. SBM staff will work on setting the listservs up so that they are ready by the next council meeting in May.

Review Touchpoint Log Discuss Opportunities to Re-engage.

Dr. Figueroa introduced the topic by emphasizing the need for increased engagement and outlined the current levels of interaction as depicted in his forthcoming slide presentation. He stressed that the lack of engagement was not due to insufficient reminders.



Dr. La Rowe highlighted the dual issue of ambassadors failing to log interactions and engaging with their assignments. She questioned how the council could ensure consistent logging and interaction. The suggestion was made to modify the data collection process to incorporate a form linked to a database, which might prove more efficient than the current spreadsheet system. Dr. Bean supported the use of a form but noted the spreadsheet's benefit in allowing visibility of others' activities. She expressed concerns about the overall lack of ambassador engagement and stressed the importance of ensuring volunteers have the necessary bandwidth.

Dr. Buscemi commented on the general decline in volunteerism and advocated for more explicit screening processes to eliminate inactive members.

Dr. Figueroa questioned whether setting a baseline for expected interactions could foster better engagement. He presented a draft of expected engagement metrics and requested feedback at the May meeting on the feasibility of these standards. The council proposed distributing responsibilities clearly via email, outlining who is responsible for which touchpoints each month, to enhance accountability and adherence to deadlines.

Another suggestion was to reduce the expected number of touchpoints from twelve to a more manageable five or six, noting that some tasks organically emerge and can be counted as touchpoints. Dr. Behrman mentioned that a minimum of two touchpoints per year could significantly lower the barrier to involvement.

Dr. La Rowe supported the idea of annual planning and shared her practice of sending monthly emails to keep volunteers informed and engaged. Dr. Buscemi endorsed the idea of a regular email at the start of each month that includes a spreadsheet to foster transparency and awareness among volunteers. Dr. Bean suggested adding updates on activities since the last quarter, ensuring confidentiality by omitting names on the Activity Log.

Dr. Buscemi raised a concern about the possible negative impact of having a lead ambassador, suggesting that this role might inadvertently deter others from fulfilling their duties. She advocated for assigning specific months to individuals to encourage responsibility.

Dr. Figueroa committed to drafting a more detailed engagement plan with the help of Dr. Buscemi, Ms. Myers and Ms. Bullock, aiming to implement it within the current year. Dr. Figueroa will collaborate with SBM staff to develop a formal procedure and reporting method to address the multiple issues discussed. He also emphasized the need for the next chair to continue addressing these challenges.

The council agreed to revisit the engagement strategies in the next meeting to assess progress and make necessary adjustments for a new procedure.

[Advocacy Council Research on States/Legislators Needing Representation](#)

The council discussed strategies to enhance representation of states and legislators through the engagement of volunteer ambassadors.



Dr. Figueroa proposed a review of the current ambassadors to identify states lacking adequate representation. Dr. Behrman recommended contacting Special Interest Group (SIG) chairs to identify potential volunteers who could represent under-covered states, suggesting that SBM staff could assist in this preliminary groundwork.

Ms. Bullock outlined a process for selecting appropriate legislative targets, which involves council members reviewing potential representatives within the three main policy areas. The ideal approach would start with identifying key legislators that advocate our topic areas, followed by SBM staff assessing who among the members is located in the relevant state and specialty. She raised the question of which legislators are currently under-targeted and the need to find suitable members in those areas.

Dr. Gonzalez emphasized the importance of clearly defining the responsibilities and expectations, including an order of operations and metrics for achievement, to be included in any outreach to prospective new ambassadors. Dr. Figueroa suggested that introducing a clear list of expectations for new ambassadors could be an effective trial in these areas.

Dr. Figueroa committed to facilitating this initiative by distributing resources to assist in identifying key representatives and states needing coverage. He requested that council members review these resources and provide feedback within the week. SBM staff will support this effort by coordinating with Roger and the council members.

The council agreed to continue this discussion at the next meeting, with updates on progress and further planning steps.

Child Nutrition Ambassadors

Dr. Figueroa provided an update on the activities within the childhood nutrition priority areas. He highlighted the collaborative efforts of Drs. Mandelbaum and Bean on a new brief regarding the alignment of school meals with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs). The brief emphasizes the importance of not permitting riders that could undermine these guidelines in any discussions, including those related to the Food Labeling Act.

Dr. Figueroa further noted that Dr. Mandelbaum is considering a run for public office as a policy leader. He mentioned that it would be Dr. Mandelbaum's decision to determine whether this poses a conflict of interest with her role as a policy ambassador. Dr. Bean will reach out to Dr. Mandelbaum to discuss her continued involvement.

Dr. Bean raised a question about whether to proceed with the existing talking points or to encourage another ambassador to take over this task to ensure the issue remains a priority.



Dr. Bean mentioned that the two policy briefs prepared by Sarah St. George are comprehensive, suggesting that it might not be necessary to table the existing talking points. Instead, Sarah's position statement could serve effectively as the talking point on its own.

Additionally, updates on new WIC and SNAP rules are expected in the spring, with the council noting that decisions are still pending on the Farm Bill. The council agreed to monitor these developments closely and adjust their strategies accordingly.

Opioid Pain Management Ambassadors and Climate Change and Health Ambassadors

Dr. La Rowe reported on the progress of developing a new set of talking points. She noted that Dr. White has met with the Climate Change group, alongside Brooke Bell, to expand upon these talking points.

Committee Chair Updates

Position Statements

Dr. Figueroa shared on behalf of Dr. Shen that there are a number of Position Statements in the pipeline in various stages. There will be more to share at the May meeting.

Organizational Partnerships

Dr. Figueroa extended a warm welcome to Dr. Leslie R.M. Hausmann, PhD, FSBM, the new chair of the Organizational Partnerships Committee. Dr. Hausmann, who recently commenced her term, expressed her eagerness to familiarize herself with the council's operations and procedures. She emphasized that her priority for the term would be to adopt a strategic and proactive approach in dealing with partners. Dr. Hausmann discussed her goals to maximize the effectiveness of the Organizational Partnerships Committee by leveraging strategic relationships with organizational partners to advance the council's objectives. The council expressed its support for Dr. Hausmann's initiatives and looked forward to her strategic leadership.

FABBS Journal (PIBBS) Co-Editing Opportunity

Dr. Figueroa updated the council on the progress of the upcoming FABBS Journal (PIBBS) publication. He confirmed that individuals who agreed to write articles have been contacted and are scheduled to submit their articles in October, with publication aimed for March 2025. He highlighted the enthusiastic participation of Julianne at the policy breakfast, noting her excitement about this partnership. Roger emphasized that this initiative represents a mutually beneficial commitment to disseminate scientific knowledge.

Dr. Bean clarified the submission guidelines provided by FABBS, noting that there are no restrictions on the number of authors per article, and that if a student is involved, they must have a mentor and must be a member of the SBM. She also mentioned that article length should not be a concern.

Commented [AM1]: Roger do you have her full name and title?



Dr. Adams shared Julianne has extensive connections with policymakers, suggesting that these could be leveraged to distribute the council's position statements. She also mentioned FABBS having resources available for training ambassadors, which could further enhance the council's outreach efforts.

Dr. Figueroa spoke about the collaborative aspect of the journal, mentioning that he is co-editing and is encouraging co-writing among members, including his students. He expressed a desire to include them as affiliate members to foster their involvement in the council's activities. SBM staff will work with Dr. Figueroa on making this happen.

Advocacy Council Chair succession plan

Dr. Figueroa discussed his plans for updating ambassador expectations and procedure before his departure as chair in April 2025. He outlined the proposed expectations, which include encouraging ambassadors to achieve 12 monthly touchpoints, develop 3-4 talking points (which may evolve into position statements), and conduct quarterly calls with policymakers. Dr. Figueroa stated his intention to formalize these expectations in a forthcoming proposal.

Dr. Buscemi suggested that a less intensive approach might be more effective. She proposed maintaining monthly contacts to ensure that the council remains memorable to policymakers and suggested the possibility of sending a standard monthly email to staffers as a consistent touchpoint.

Dr. Bean supported the idea of a monthly talking point and recommended including relevant articles in communications to enhance engagement, the new Listserv will complement this. She advocated for clearer and more explicit communication strategies to be outlined for ambassadors.

Dr. La Rowe acknowledged the rationale behind monthly touchpoints but voiced concerns about possibly overwhelming aides' mailboxes. She questioned the relevance of the information being sent and proposed conducting a survey with aides to determine the usefulness of the information provided. Dr. La Rowe emphasized that understanding what is most useful to aides could guide the council's communication strategy more effectively.

Dr. Figueroa agreed to consider these suggestions and refine the approach to ensure effective engagement without overwhelming stakeholders. The discussion highlighted the need for a balanced strategy that maintains visibility and impact while respecting the capacities and preferences of both ambassadors and their governmental contacts.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. ET.

Minutes respectfully submitted by A. Myers on April 12, 2024.