



SOCIETY OF BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE

Advocacy Council Call Minutes

Date Tuesday, June 11, 2024
Time 12 p.m. ET

ATTENDEES	
Roger Figueroa, PhD (Chair)	Lisa LaRowe, PhD
Elizabeth Adams, PhD	Kristin Schneider, PhD
Melanie Bean, PhD, FSBM	Kristi White, PhD
Pamela Behrman, PhD	Lindsay Bullock, CAE (SBM Staff)
Leslie R.M. Hausmann, PhD, FSBM (OPC Chair)	Amy Myers, SCMM (SBM Staff)

(Staff does not count towards quorum)

Approval of the Minutes

Dr. Adams made the motion to approve the May call minutes, seconded by Dr. White. The motion carried.

Ambassador Tracking Link:

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

Link to Advocacy Council Google Drive:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1w_bEe5u7NJh4GUR9EZLDjYfEgJFpmTzg?usp=sharing

Ambassador Updates

Update on Policy Ambassador Groups: Review Ambassador Assessment Responses

Dr. Figueroa reported on the responses the recent assessment distributed to policy ambassadors to gather their feedback. He noted that about one-third of the members responded. Approximately half of these respondents indicated they would contact their lawmaker this month, and one mentioned waiting for the new position statement to be published before making touchpoint. About 60% reported logging their touchpoints, while 40% did not. Dr. Figueroa emphasized the continued importance of recording touchpoints.

When asked how SBM could assist in their roles, 50% of the ambassadors requested more resources and guidance on where to find them. Dr. Figueroa shared that there was a suggestion



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for one-on-one meetings with chairs or leads, and/or monthly check-ins, noting to the council that previous quarterly calls were poorly attended. Challenges cited included politics surrounding lawmaking as well as state and university policy changes. Suggestions for improvement included more frequent meetings, rotating talking points among ambassadors monthly, and regular training sessions.

One ambassador expressed that they found the program valuable and sought to make their participation more meaningful by expanding their advocacy knowledge. Dr. Adams and Dr. LaRowe echoed this sentiment, noting that those who are engaged expressed a desire for more training and interaction with leads. Dr. LaRowe suggested that supporting active members should be a priority, and engagement should be a requirement for involvement.

Dr. White shared that her increased clinical load had impacted her ability to engage with her ambassadors over the past quarter but expected to have more time from July onwards. She stressed the importance of active involvement, especially if ambassadors are using this position on their CV. She proposed assessing whether the current ambassadors have the capacity to meet the minimum requirements or if others should be approached to volunteer.

Dr. Figueroa proposed reinstating a few initiatives based on the feedback. He plans to send out a poll to determine the best times for meetings and will distribute a link to resources that could enhance engagement. He highlighted that there had been an increase in logged touchpoints in recent months and declared that bolstering engagement would be a focal point for the following year.

Dr. Behrman suggested that sometimes people's expectations might not align with reality, indicating a need to clarify what involvement truly entails. Dr. Schneider took responsibility for adding resources to the advocacy council drive to aid ambassadors, and Dr. Bean suggested distributing monthly touchpoint responsibilities amongst the ambassadors to manage workload better and that clear benchmarks should be provided. Dr. Bean also recommended finding ways to promote SBM advocacy work and how it could be incorporated into CV's.

Dr. White highlighted there may be a gap in ambassador's understanding how to effectively make touchpoints, pointing out that while her clinical skills were strong, her advocacy skills needed polishing. She suggested that having easily accessible resources and training could help bridge this gap. Dr. LaRowe recommended reaching out individually to those who have not been engaged, to understand their barriers and encourage participation. The responsibility for sending these emails would fall to the leads.

Dr. Figueroa outlined several action steps following the assessment feedback discussion:

1. **Reinstitute Monthly Meetings and Revisit Training Materials:** Monthly meetings will be reinstated to enhance engagement and support for ambassadors. Additionally, existing training materials will be reviewed and updated on the Google drive as necessary to ensure they meet the current needs of the ambassadors.



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2. **Lead Ambassadors to Reach Out Individually:** Lead ambassadors will individually contact their ambassadors to provide gentle reminders of their roles and the minimum expectations associated with their positions. This personalized approach aims to reinforce the importance of active participation and accountability.
3. **Global Reminder About Expectations:** Dr. Figueroa will consult with Ms. Myers and Ms. Bullock to establish a system for sending a global reminder to all ambassadors about the expectations for each term. This reminder will also emphasize the importance of maintaining a certain level of engagement, outlining specific parameters to guide their activities and contributions.

Committee Chair Updates

Position Statements

Dr. Figueroa shared that on Wednesday, June 5 a new position statement was published stating that SBM supports mandatory front-of-package nutrition labeling (FOPNL) policies to improve nutrition literacy and healthier food purchasing behaviors to address diet-related chronic diseases and that a few of our ambassadors will be using this for their next touchpoint with their lawmakers.

Organizational Partnerships

Dr. Hausmann provided an update on the recent engagement with the American Telemedicine Association (ATA). She described a productive meeting where she learned more about ATA's mission and discussed potential partnership opportunities. Another meeting is scheduled for next week to further explore how and when a partnership might be feasible. ATA has demonstrated a strong focus on patient advocacy initiatives and is now seeking to enhance its research-oriented focus. Additionally, Dr. Hausmann noted that ATA has established a separate entity, ATA Action, a 501(c)(6) organization, specifically created for lobbying purposes. This entity conducts Hill days, offering a direct avenue to Capitol Hill, which could be beneficial for SBM's advocacy efforts.

Dr. Hausmann also provided an update on a meeting with the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD). She expressed optimism about the potential for a partnership with NIMHD, emphasizing the substantial opportunities for collaboration in health equity-focused research as well as sustaining health equity as a central funding priority.

Dr. Hausmann concluded by stating that several action items from these discussions are expected to be completed by August, moving forward with these promising organizational partnerships.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m. ET.

Minutes respectfully submitted by A. Myers on June 11, 2024.