

Attachment III. CHSP / KHSP Community Track Networking Meeting, Panel Discussion, Minutes, June 9, 2006

Panel discussion on Policy Component: incorporating new competencies into our program

Toby Citrin, facilitator

Stephanie Farquhar, Nick Freudenberg, Ella Greene-Moton, Roberta Downing, Barbara Israel, panelists

TC – This is inherent in the work we are doing. In the new program, we plan to be more conscious about making this connection between our research and policy, making connections with policy/advocacy groups and how our work can be used by one or more organizations at the state, local or national level. Gaining skills in policy such as writing that which those making policy might typically read. As a refresher, we have always had competency #6 which speaks to policy, and, in terms of the goals of the new program, from the proposal to Kellogg, develop a cadre of new scholars with these policy skills, and then, enhance the skills of community partners. It's clear that the Kellogg Foundation is interested in how our track can advance the skills of community to influence policy as much as academe. Al Yi pointed out that our track has particular responsibility of working out how community and academe can do this policy work together.

We developed two questions for our panel:

How can we effectively incorporate policy into the Community Track experience of scholars, relating their CBPR to the development and influence of policies reducing health disparities?

How can the Community Track program strengthen the capacity of our community partners to develop and influence policy?

Also, additionally, are there other activities that we know about that are having an impact on policy through our CBPR work.

Panelist's remarks:

Stephanie –

I was at a meeting last week at UCLA about infusing policy into MPH programs. It was agreed that we all know this is important, communities too. But not everyone is a big fan of policy and research because of bias and muddying the research results.

Nick –

At Hunter College, we host an informal workshop with our faculty and the local APHA affiliate. We have developed an agenda for improving the health of NYC which focuses on the social determinants of health and health disparities; we've developed work groups in the major health issues areas which include faculty, advocacy groups, CBOs, other public health leaders. The 2005 agenda included broad objectives such as reducing high school drop out. This agenda has become a tool for looking at city budgets, candidates, etc for seeing who is helping move this agenda forward and is an indicator that we are having an effect. This work has had a synergy of impact helping to understand who else is doing this work. We've developed internships for each of these committees. This was also a chance for researchers and advocates to inform each other. We're now developing a 2006 agenda for influencing state policy because there is a state election this year. This is a way to connect each other and with policy makers

Ella -

Two efforts: 1) CCPH work with impacting tenure and merit award, 2) CBPH Caucus in Policy Work Group, the policy statement on CBPR and more recently work with the Congressional Black Caucus. Yesterday, I learned that we also need to partner with the Senate side.

Barbara –

About 3 years ago with the end of our core funding, the URC Board engaged in a strategic planning process. Although policy was in our agenda, we had not done much with this. But by this time, we had some results in our projects that could inform policy – an Air Policy Work Group, for example

As a board, we decided that we had results particularly in air quality and food access. We agreed that we wanted to work on policy across our projects. Angela Glover Blackwell from PolicyLink came and talked with us and it clicked about how we can work together. We are now in the process of talking to foundations, we've developed a draft proposal, and we have involved doctoral students and will likely involve post-doctoral fellows in this work.

Toby - What ideas do you have specifically for the experience of scholars going through this program to better incorporate policy into their work?

Stephanie – I don't think this is such a stretch for this program, **but we need to be more thoughtful about learning a specific set of skills. How to create policy at all levels? As simple as writing testimony, op-ed pieces, talking to legislators. There are real resources, PolicyLink, etc, members of our own NAC. Including them in our trainings, workshops, for ALL of us.**

As we set up our research questions, we need to add, beside what does the community need, and we need to ask what data, what information will be needed for policy.

Nick –

There are a set of practical skills and there is an analytic framework. Any particular health issue is embedded in a web of policy. Maybe a starting point is in a systematic and formal way, the scholar should start by understanding how their issue is already connected in a web of policy, economic social, etc.

Ella –

We have to think about the internal policy, e.g. promotion and tenure, policies of the CBOs the scholars are in. This flows into the question of capacity building. What needs to exist and what is not there. What does the CBO need to do internally to make changes? Otherwise there can be a real disconnect. Also really promoting advocacy – many organizations don't know what this is or are afraid this will be a problem with their non-profit status.

Roberta –

There are specific skills needed at the federal level. There are simple things – people sometimes get intimidated. But for me, now having some experience in this world, it is as easy as asking what they are doing with health disparities, asking about bills. Health disparities would get put off to the side if we don't keep asking. I was negotiating a health disparities bill and the republican staffer said that we couldn't do this....

It is easy to schedule briefings, visits to the hill, present our work, present with congressional staffers.

Barbara –

**We need to figure out, how we are going to take advantage of the individuals who are part of the advocacy organizations that we have established a relationship with. Geographically, it is a challenge.** Can we spend a week and shadow them at a point that might be useful. Role modeling happens when you are around people who are doing this stuff. Another piece at our local sites is who is there at the local sites, what organizations at the local community where you might be useful and where they can share with scholars, this is how we do policy change. Hooking up with one partner to help with making this locally useful.

At the URC, we are looking for opportunities to expand civic engagement in these issues.

Toby – how can we make the community voice more effective because when communities get organized they are the most effective (academia doesn't count for much) in getting this work done?

Roberta – bringing our community partners together to Washington.

Ella – help the community mobilize. In our partnership, we have community leaders present and educate community members.

Nick – one of the critical tasks is framing the problem and identifying with the issues. This is a useful task for bringing different constituencies together, for example in the prison system policies, for some stakeholders, it is an economic issue, a health issue, and a social justice issue. This framing helps bring them together

Stephanie –

There are two languages here: the first is distilling the information. Research America does this well in their training. This is part of the framing piece. The second is the health economist; we have to be better at describing the costs – including broader costs to environment, to society.

Toby –

Several organizations, including CFAH, as well as Jen Martin from the UMSPH, are all resources and how can we best use these people and are there other sources of support. (He clarified that these organizations are not getting funded but see this as a benefit to them through getting answers to questions, relationships with researchers, etc. We may need to pay them for specific training and consultations)

Roberta –

They can be very helpful for identifying people on the inside of these issues. With regards to the CBPH Caucus, there are different health disparities bills. The bill presented by Donna Christiansen is probably a pie in the sky bill, while the Senate bill, presented by Caya Lewis, is more realistic. These organizations can help to inform us which things to spend our time on.

Stephanie –

We probably need to get a clear idea about their level of involvement. For example can we call them for a specific research question/project?

Large group discussion –

Lee Bone – at Hopkins, we also have the advantage of the government relations equivalent and I plan to ask this person to work with our scholars and look at local and state. There is a department; there is a course and training opportunities. As scholars identify gaps, we would schedule meeting. Roberta is a great resource. At mini-net, we could identify toolbox issues that we can cover at those meetings.

Mansoureh – can we expand our thinking? There are policies that have expiration tags on them. Are we providing positive feedback to keep these on the books? We should also look at small little incremental bills, maybe under the radar screen.

Larkin – I'm really excited that we are incorporating this into the program because we didn't get this in my doctoral training and want to do this during this post doc for later use

Alex – post docs are working in these projects for a year or two years. **So we need to think how the communities will be sustaining these efforts to support that advocacy and advocacy groups**

Lucille – following up with Alex, we might need to explore and reach out to groups that already do advocacy. For example alpha delta (?), I belong to this sorority and we come to Washington for 4 days every year. There are other such groups.

Shawn – **one of the best resources would be to put together a policy resource packet. An APHA contact list, etc.**

Wilma – **we should also be about making a listing of state and community legislators so we know what their interests are.**

Jim – Framing and reframing issues to focus on the positives. Reframing issues with regards to social justice. In talking with Gail Christopher, how do you frame issues for groups that haven't thought about social justice?

Roberta – Brian Smedley would be a good person to talk to about this.

Nick – this brings up deeper questions, what are the goals of this group for policy. Legislation is one goal; another is deeper changes where the goal is really to change social structure and the allocation of resources differently. Framing issues is really different depending on you goal. We need to have both of these goals so we focus on short run impacts and long term vision.

Barbara – language is really going to be important, you need to be sensitive to the community and if this is not their language it is important to spend time to find out what the issues and priorities are for your community.

Edith – praxis center stressed media. **We need media training about translating research into sound bites**

Renee – program plan has been revised to include some tracking and structure for the scholar and may be revised again based on this discussion. Co-presenting with community partners to policy makers is another skill our scholars need to gain, just like they practice new dissemination skills with community mentors. Also, what do internal policies in CBOs look like, give example. **Also how can we develop a comprehensive list of skills and resources that we all think we need to have.**

Ella – when we take people away from organizations, we leave all their work behind. It may not only be money, it may also be training needed so that people can do this work.

Shani – I went to media training and it is short and really great. They focus on your research area and are very effective

Sarena – we work with a group, Burnett's Communication and they might do it pro bono. On media advocacy. **Cassandra Ritas developed a tool-kit for CBPR researchers. We all need to look at this.** I kept trying to put myself in the place of a scholar; we should really flesh out the competencies and lay out the menu opportunities and making it clear that there is not one way to get that competency. I really want to encourage us that next time we come to DC we combine training with a visit to capital hill.

Dionne – as a new scholar, there are several things – consciousness, exposure, access, mentorship, responsibility. Regarding consciousness, when planning, be conscious of these policy issues, we need exposure to advocacy people and real access to them. We need real mentorship built into this. As new scholars, we need to take responsibility and take the torch forward!

Ella – capacity building piece. When we embraced Kevin, we have him working with us as part of this process in building capacity.

Kevin – My piece is around HIV/Aids and skills building. My focus is on grant writing and organizations ability to address HIV. A community that has a sense of loyalty and have embraced me. I'm working with churches, pastors and their wives who will be educating their community.

Isa – Roberta has been really helpful on this. Have policy on your minds when you plan your project. She's taking her youth to the state capital to tell them what's on their minds. She's talking about organizing a trip to the state capital with their community partners.

Alex – have we looked at how important is this? How much does this take up in time away from getting their projects done?

Toby – there is nothing explicit and it's not the main thing in our track, which is CBPR. Some will get more into policy than others. We need to determine a baseline of skills, fundamentals, but some of what we are talking about is not necessarily an add-on. It means that you are approaching research in a way that may be useful to policy makers.

This has been an enormously useful panel to give us direction. We will share this with the MD track to see how we can incorporate these ideas. It's reassuring that our incoming scholars see this as strength and not an add-on to our program.

Mansoureh – we can't have this diminish or forget about the community exposure that I received during this program and will never forget this.

Roberta – Toby, I need to say that I am totally moved with what you and Barbara Krimgold have done. I can have the kind of career I want to have and thank you!!