

# **NH VOICES FOR HEALTH OPERATING GUIDELINES & GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

## **NH VOICES FOR HEALTH OPERATING PRINCIPLE:**

New Hampshire Voices for Health is a network of advocacy organizations and individuals allied in their commitment to securing quality, affordable health care for all in New Hampshire. The network believes that no one in New Hampshire should go without adequate, accessible health care coverage. While the network does not now endorse one specific path to health care coverage for all, individual organizations within the network regularly work together and will continue to collaborate on specific policy reforms. The network meets frequently to share information and strategies and to seek ways to collaborate on policies and practices that will increase access to health care for New Hampshire residents.

## **NETWORK GOALS:**

Build and sustain a broad based network of advocacy organizations, including organizations representing consumers, patients, community and religious organizations, businesses, labor unions, doctors, hospitals, community health centers, and other health care providers and individuals; support public policy solutions that increase access to quality, affordable health care; and strengthen individual organizations' capacity to effect positive policy change on priority issues.

## **OPERATING ASSUMPTIONS:**

- Collaboration across constituencies will create a strong network.
- Effective networks require resources. Each participant commits to seeking the necessary resources, acknowledging that community-based organizations and consumer health organizations have the least financial resources. Fundraising strategies will not interfere with funding for core operations of collaborating partners.
- The network will focus on areas where coordination or economies of scale make sense, such as common research, message development, national or regional fundraising, and any other areas specifically identified by the Leadership Team.

## **ACTIVITIES OF THE VOICES NETWORK:**

- Policy analysis and research
- Budget/fundraising
- Coalition communications and maintenance
- Message and media relations
- Outreach to grassroots, including education & mobilization
- Political strategy and coordination
- Targeted policy work groups

## **NETWORK GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE:**

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NH Voices for Health priorities and activities are guided by a Leadership Team. The Leadership Team shall consist of a minimum of 8 and no more than 12 organizations at any given time. The Leadership Team is a self-selecting group and new membership in the Leadership Team is based on consensus of existing Leadership Team members. New members will be added through a nominating process that will be driven by existing Leadership Team member organizations. The Leadership Team will seek to achieve a balance of constituent voices and health stakeholders to ensure a strong network.

Leadership Team members shall:

- Commit to Voices' principles & to helping foster Voices' efficacy
- Participate in regularly scheduled Leadership Team meetings
  - (Currently scheduled first Monday of the month, 11:00am – 1:30pm)
  - Attendance is expected at no less than 75% of meetings
  - A non-voting alternate can attend in the event a Leadership Team member is unable to attend; however this should be an exception and not a habit
- Commit significant monetary and/or in-kind resources (in-kind resources can include regularly activating membership lists, turning out participants for public events, lending staff expertise to the network, donating in-house vendor services such as phone banks and printing, etc.)
- Regularly respond to action alerts, disseminate information on policy campaigns, and seek support of public officials
- Participate in policy work groups, large advocacy actions, advocacy trainings, etc.
- Serve as decision making body for policy prioritization process & establishment of policy work groups

The Leadership Team will:

- Establish clear public policy campaign goals and ground rules.
- Communicate these goals and principles broadly to network members, potential participants, policymakers, the media, and the broader public.
- Make all policy and strategy decisions through the Leadership Team (no individual deal-making).
- Commit to full information-sharing and disclosure on matters that materially affect the campaign.
- Respect and recognize the contributions of all partners as key elements of a successful campaign.
- Network members may resign at any time, while taking care to depart in the least harmful manner to the network.
- Develop a budget and written work plan with roles, responsibilities, and timelines laid out, addressing legal/policy work; media relations; outreach and public involvement; legislative strategy.
- Hold regular meetings to monitor, execute, and tailor the work plan.

- Establish a protocol for public statements and media relations, recognizing that media often operate on a deadline and want a consistent relationship with a limited number of spokespeople.

#### Decision Making on Leadership Team

- We seek to be transparent and inclusive in our decision making.
- All policy and strategy decisions are made as follows: Consensus preferred, 2/3's vote of members (phone and email votes accepted) with 2/3's quorum
- An executive committee is authorized to make critical decisions when action is required between Leadership Team meetings and time demands are tight.

#### Leadership Team Executive Committee

- Honor Membership Organization commitments
- Make day-to-day strategic decisions while seeking regular input from Leadership Team
- Serve as lead in fundraising, communication and policy
- The process for the formation of the executive committee is currently being developed

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#### **PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS & INDIVIDUAL NETWORK MEMBERS:**

Membership is open to Organizations and Individuals who:

- Commit to Voices' principles
- Respond to action alerts
- Disseminate information on policy priorities
- Seek support of public officials on given policy priorities
- Participate in policy work groups, quarterly community forums, annual partner meetings, large advocacy actions, etc.

Partner Benefits include:

- Access to Voices policy priority tracking sheets & notices
- Opportunity for input into Voices policy priorities
- Opportunity to network with other health care-related stakeholders
- Opportunity to engage in staffed policy work groups

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#### **POLICY PRIORITIZATION PROCESS:**

The following principles will be applied in Voices' annual policy prioritization process:

- The Leadership Team is ultimately responsible for choosing Voices' priorities
  - With each policy priority, at least one LT member is designated the lead
  - With each policy priority, and with given capacity, a policy work group will be formed
- The policy prioritization process should be collaborative, with the following:
  - At minimum one annual partner meeting to vet/develop policies
  - Research – both data-driven and meetings with key stakeholders
- Policy priorities will be made considering what is winnable, results in meaningful reform, creates new allies, what may not be winnable this session but needs the ground laid, and other strategic considerations