OPHA Health Policy and Advocacy Committee Chairperson

Position Description & Tasks

General Summary

The Health Policy and Advocacy Committee leads OPHA’s policy and advocacy work and is supported by staff. This committee is essential to advancing OPHA’s mission to

- Advocate for policies that protect and promote health and health equity for all people in Oregon and
- Provide learning, collaboration, and leadership opportunities for public health professionals and the broader community.

The Health Policy and Advocacy Committee receives endorsement requests for proposed state legislation and other types of policy from OPHA members and various groups. The Committee reviews the requests and makes recommendations to the board of directors on policy priorities and proposed legislation. The board of directors makes the final decision regarding OPHA’s position on legislation (endorse, neutral, oppose).

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

- Receive all endorsement requests from members and outside organizations
- Convene members of the Health Policy and Advocacy Committee to discuss and recommend to the board policy priorities and organizational position on legislation, primarily at the state level. The Committee may consider local or national policy as capacity allows.
- Convene Committee meetings in coordination with OPHA staff as needed to consider new endorsement requests, discuss updates to currently endorsed legislation, and other key activities taking place during the legislative session and in the lead up to session. Meeting notice may be short during busy session times, such as before a scheduled hearing.
- Follow the approved process for accepting and considering endorsement requests.
- Ensure that committee recommendations on legislation and policy priorities are presented to the board of directors.
- Attend board meetings as needed to present committee recommendations or to discuss committee business that requires board vote or that the board be informed.
- Lead, or identify a committee member to lead, the organization of an annual Public Health Advocacy Day at the state capitol. OPHA staff support the organization and execution of this event.
- Attend the annual Public Health Advocacy Day at the state capitol
- Work closely with the Executive Director to ensure coordination and communication with the board, members, and partners.
- Upon the close of each Oregon legislative session, provide a status report of the bills OPHA has considered and taken a position on. The Chairperson can alternatively identify a committee member to complete the report. Work with staff to present this to the board, committee
members, and general members. This can take place as an informal event or just as a written document.

Organizational Management

- Work with the committee and staff to improve processes as needed.
- Work with staff and committee to develop an annual committee budget, primarily for the Public Health Advocacy Day

Qualifications

- Must be a member of OPHA in good standing (dues paid)
- Good organizational skills
- Comfortable organizing and leading meetings
- Commitment to ensuring all voices in committee meetings have an opportunity to be heard
- Commitment to advancing equity and improving health outcomes through policy
- Knowledge of the Oregon legislative process desired.
- Strong understanding of public health via lived experience, job experience, education or combination

Time Commitment

This is a volunteer position. The time commitment varies throughout the year and depends on whether the Oregon Legislature is in a long or short session year. Minimum is 1-2 hours per month when the Legislature is not in session and OPHA is not preparing for session, about 2-3 months per year. Average is 4 hours/month with the busiest months being the two months before session and during session itself. Busy months are estimated at 2-3 hours per week. Public Health Advocacy Day in Salem is one full day, plus 2-3 hours per week in the month preceding it.

Learning and professional growth and development opportunities

The policy committee chairperson for OPHA is a leadership role for public health policy in Oregon. The committee chairperson has the opportunity to increase their knowledge of the technical systems used to organize each legislative session, meet and connect with legislators and their staff and advocacy leadership on many issues affecting health in Oregon. Additional opportunities include:

- Preparing or helping to review and edit drafts of policy position papers, letters to the editor or guest opinion pieces in support of OPHA approved policy positions. Helps place letters to the editor or guest opinion pieces.
- Supporting the education and training of OPHA members on the policy and legislative processes. Supporting OPHA members to engage with their elected and government officials on OPHA policy positions.
- Educating legislators and policy advisors on OPHA and public health issues, including racism as a public health threat, the health impacts of climate change and the social determinants of health.
• Building the reputation of OPHA as a credible source of expertise.
• Advancing public health practitioners as a profession, including legislative and policy efforts in support of public health education and practice.
• Collaborating with community-based organizations and grass roots leaders to advance equity and reduce health disparities.

Additional Skills and Knowledge that are helpful, but not required:
• Ability to prepare written position papers and other documents that are credible, and evidence based.
• Able to present complex information to non-technical audiences.
• Knowledge of racism as a public health threat, health disparities as a result of institutional racism.
• Knowledge of the health impacts of climate change
• Knowledge of the social determinants of health and able to connect them with legislative policies across the spectrum of governmental policies
• Experience with event planning