

**Citizens' Health Care Working Group
Public Meeting
Tuesday, November 15, 2005
Baltimore, MD**

Hearing Summary

Attendees

Members

Randy Johnson, Chair
Frank Baumeister
Dotty Bazos
Montye Conlan
Brent James
Joe Hansen
Therese Hughes
Pat Maryland
Catherine McLaughlin
Aaron Shirley
Chris Wright

Staff

George Grob, Executive Director
Carolyn Dell
Jessica Federer
Margretta Kennedy
Andy Rock
Connie Smith
Caroline Taplin
Jill Bernstein
Craig Caplan
Anne McGuire

Other Attendees

Mark Marich, PFI
Surjeet Ahluwalia, *AmericaSpeaks*
Jonathan Ortman, PFI
Tish Tanski, *AmericaSpeaks*
Mary Ella Payne
Susanna Haas, *AmericaSpeaks*
Carolyn Lukensmeyer, *AmericaSpeaks*

MEETING SUMMARY

Randy Johnson began the meeting at 2:30 p.m.; members listed above were present.

Community Meetings, Caroline Taplin

(See Power Point Slide Presentation)

Comments/Discussion

Jonathan Ortman, PFI, indicated that for the 2 Signature meetings and the 10 Standardized meetings, everyone (within reason) could have a hand held device but you could distinguish, should you choose to do so, between the selected individuals who were chosen for their representativeness.

George Grob said that data would be received from both representative and the non-representative groups present at the 12 primary meetings. The tool kit for use by others is a contract deliverable and we already have a rudimentary set of those.

Randy Johnson asked what the protocols would be so that balanced input was received from the meetings if the locations themselves were not necessarily “balanced?”

Caroline Taplin indicated that for the Staff-Assisted meetings, the contractor would provide a facilitator; PFI would also provide some assistance in driving the audience and will arrange for the physical set up of the meetings.

Jonathan Ortman, PFI

Provided background:

(See Power Point Slide Presentation)

Members, staff and contractors engaged in a discussion regarding issues around preparation for and implementation of the community meetings. The most difficult part of the task is audience building and outreach. The central issue is how to get a representative cross section of the community. The Signature and Standardized meetings would start in February. The communities being contacted were very enthusiastic but wanted their meetings to start later rather than earlier, so that they could prepare adequately.

The first meetings to be conducted, in January, would be Staff-Assisted meetings. The amount of preparation for the Signature and Standardized meetings is much greater. Before the meetings could be held, the discussion guide was needed and other preparation requiring greater up front costs. Subsequent meetings would not cost as much once the materials needed for all the meetings was complete.

PFI's role would be to provide a facilitator and an agenda. For the first five Staff-Assisted meetings, they agreed to assist with some promotional materials although it's not really their responsibility to get these meetings set up. The intent would be to identify leaders in the community who would step up to the plate and offer to assist with the audience, location, set up for running meetings. For the meetings that PFI runs, the Standardized meetings, they have a

“war room” with tracking of who signs up, they look for pockets of the community not yet represented; it’s a day to day real time effort to build an audience. They are able to complete the work for a meeting in a month, depending on the community. Communities like L.A. are harder. In smaller communities, there’s more enthusiasm and it’s easier to find the underserved communities. PFI goes out of its way to counsel the local hosts about putting together the audience, but it won’t have control over the Staff-Assisted meetings.

Staff-Assisted meetings were chosen as a way to increase the number of meetings that could be conducted by using staff efforts to assist in generating audiences and promoting the events. While PFI could do initial background work, very little could be done until they had specific dates for the meetings. Setting dates with specific cities early is crucial. Once the locations and dates are confirmed, having Members block out time for their attendance needs to occur.

AmericaSpeaks, in conjunction with Working Group staff, was working on the Discussion guide that would be used at all the meetings. The target set for completion of the discussion guide was December 30, 2005. Until new questions were prepared, the four questions on the Web and in the statute would serve as the basis for asking meeting participants for their views. There was also a discussion about the process for considering, vetting, testing, and approving both the questions and the discussion guide.

Carolyn Lukensmeyer, of *AmericaSpeaks*, indicated that there were four critical factors for success in gathering valuable comments from the public meetings:

1. Driving force is to assure there is a large enough group of representative individuals;
2. Get enough media attention at a critical point;
3. In each meeting, make sure decision makers are signed on early and are in the room; and
4. Bring an informed discussion to the group; health care may be one of the most difficult issues because of the complexity.

AmericaSpeaks is contracted to conduct two very large meetings and two webcasts. Carolyn Lukensmeyer indicated that the staff “has done a terrific job of operating in some very difficult parameters. I can’t be complimentary enough about George and Caroline and Andy about all this.”

She also indicated she believed that it would be possible to get an even larger reach, as a result of the work they have done with 4H volunteers who are interested in and willing to participate in promoting this project across a wider set of communities. The 4H volunteers are typically High School age; they would be running discussion groups with others in their local communities, including adults. *AmericaSpeaks* is the partner by providing the tool kit and video and discussion guide.

Caroline Taplin indicated that there were a number of issues to discuss about community meetings.

- Holding meetings during the comment period on interim report – the consensus was not to do so.
- Setting level of member attendance at meetings – all members should be able to attend the 2 Signature meetings and to schedule the Signature meetings with Working Group

meetings; each member would attend two other meetings, including at least one Standardized meeting. Randy told George to provide biweekly updates on dates and locations of meetings.

- Having Staff-Assisted Meetings with locally sponsored, unaffiliated, public entities, able to provide a facility where local partners were available – the members agreed that these should not be part of meetings of advocacy groups, business or labor groups or other special interest groups (rather, use libraries, schools, etc.)?
- Member Meetings – Pay for two per member and the member types up a summary and submits it to the Working Group. Could have a formal process for collecting the stories and enriching the process.
- Outsider Self-Initiated Meetings – Make our materials available on the web site; individuals/organizations could take the materials and run their own meetings; no direct Working Group member participation. We will promote use by others use of these materials.
- Travel Fund for Self-Initiated Meetings – Parameters needed.

George Grob

Discussion of Master Schedule

(See Power Point Slide Presentation)

Advice of the Working Group was not to extend the meetings into the comment period, target June 1 for issuing the interim recommendations, extend the public comment period until September 1, and issue final recommendations on September 27.

George indicated he'd look for more help to support the staff-assisted meetings to make sure the job gets done. The research staff would be working on recommendations; they wouldn't be the same ones working on the community meetings.

The chairperson adjourned the meeting at 5 p.m.