

## **Alliance Approach to Public Policy and Government Relations** *Approved by the Alliance Board of Directors, March 2009*

The Alliance is a public-private collaborative organization focused on rewarding evidence-based medicine to improve health care quality, efficiency and patient experience. In general, the overarching philosophy applied by the Alliance is a preference for incentives and innovative and effective approaches that move health care in a positive direction. Elected officials and other public policy makers play a key role by contributing to the discussion at the Alliance table, promoting efforts that reward improved performance in health care, and leading by example in purchasing activities that apply aligned incentives to the health care provided to public employees and their family members.

**Public Policy and Government Relations Goals:** Proactively increase awareness by promoting the purpose of the Alliance to elected officials and other policy makers while building the Alliance's credibility and reputation as a trusted resource.

- The Alliance's reputation is the foundation for successful implementation of its business plan. Contact with elected officials and policy makers is an important activity to communicate the Alliance's vision for improvement in health care delivery, unique collaborative structure, specific plans and accomplishments. The Alliance's primary public policy role is to serve as a trusted, objective expert and valued information resource. The Alliance relies on strong relationships and deep technical expertise as the basis for promoting Alliance goals and interests in the public policy arena.
- The Alliance focuses much of its communication in public arenas around the Alliance's mission and goals, alignment with other efforts, and broad areas where collaboration is needed. These include shared decision-making, health information technology infrastructure, data transparency and reducing unwarranted variation which causes overuse, misuse and under-use of health care.
- The Alliance provides information and perspectives on important health care policy issues. In general, Alliance communication with elected officials and other policy makers is to share insights from evidence-based best practices that lead to innovative, high quality health care, more affordable costs, and improved ability for consumers to make informed health care decisions.
- The Alliance rarely takes positions on legislation, initiatives or agency rulemaking unless the proposed measure would significantly affect the ability of the Alliance to carry out its mission and goals, and the proposed measure is being seriously considered for adoption.
- The Alliance relies on existing resources and the federal, state and local legislative tracking processes of our participating organizations to identify policy issues and proposals that may be of concern or interest to the Alliance.
- The Alliance may engage on public policy proposals that directly affect the Alliance's ability to complete the annual strategic work plan approved by the Board of Directors. Information about the issue and advocacy positions taken will be made available to Alliance participants via email, the Alliance website or other communication methods.

- When a state or local policy issue is identified by a participating organization as potentially suitable for Alliance involvement, information about the issue will be made available to Alliance participants via email and the Alliance website. Staff will also review the issue to determine whether the policy issue or measure satisfies both of the following criteria:
  1. The measure will significantly affect the ability of the Alliance to carry out its mission and goals, with focus on these areas:
    - a. Performance Reports to the Public
    - b. Evidence-Based Treatment Guidelines
    - c. Aligned Incentives to Encourage and Support Improvement in Health Care Value (Quality and Affordability)
    - d. Reducing Health Disparities and Unwarranted Variation in Care
    - e. Health Information Technology
    - f. Tools that Support Informed Decisions about Quality, Affordable Health Care
  2. The measure is being seriously considered for adoption.

If both criteria are satisfied, or if a Board member determines that an issue ought to be reviewed using this process, Alliance staff then convenes an ad hoc public policy group drawn from Alliance participating organizations to make a recommendation on whether the Alliance should take a position on the measure and what the position should be.

The recommendation is forwarded to the Board for final decision. When time is limited, the Board may be asked to send their comments to Alliance staff or Executive Committee members for consideration by the Executive Committee for a final decision.

Given the fast pace of some public policy processes, Alliance staff will email information and any recommendations to Alliance participants, and post it on the log-in section of the website. Written comments received from participants in a timely manner will be shared with the Board. The Board or Executive Committee will make the final decision regarding any recommended position.

- When a federal policy issue is identified by a participating organization or a national group with which the Alliance coordinates (e.g., National Business Coalition on Health, Network for Regional Healthcare Improvement) as potentially suitable for Alliance involvement, staff shall confer with the Executive Committee to define an appropriate course of action, including gathering input from Alliance participants if needed.
- Positions taken by the Alliance are not binding on any participating organization.
- The Alliance may arrange forums and other shared processes to encourage and facilitate discussion among participating organizations where there are differing views of the impact of certain policy proposals that might significantly affect the ability of the Alliance to achieve its mission and goals.
- In all public policy activity, the Alliance will adhere to the political involvement limitations imposed on 501(c)3 tax-exempt organizations.

Public Policy Activity Decision-Making Process

