



SOCIETY OF  
BEHAVIORAL  
MEDICINE

## HEALTH POLICY COUNCIL CALL MINUTES

Date Thursday, May 2  
Time 11 a.m. ET

IN ATTENDANCE	
Joanna Buscemi, PhD (Chair)	Amy Janke, PhD (SPLC Chair)
Akilah Dulin, PhD (Health Policy Committee Chair)	Judy Ockene, PhD, MEd, MA
Marian Fitzgibbon, PhD	
STAFF	
Lindsay Bullock	Robert Carroll
REGRETS	
Sara Knight, PhD	Monica Wang, ScD, MS (CPEC Chair)

### Health policy strategic plan

Dr. Buscemi outlined for the council the policy strategy report from policy consultant, Binta Beard. Dr. Buscemi highlighted the following items from the report:

- Focus on federal government. Do not focus on local government.
- Avoid “safe” or “saturated” issues, such as asking for NIH funding.
- Choose 1-3 policy topics for the society to focus on for the next 3-5 years. Become a trusted source on these issues in the eyes of policymakers and their staffs.
- Develop an ambassador program. Ambassadors will develop personal relationships with their state lawmakers and maintain regular contact with the lawmakers’ staff, relating to the 1-3 policy topics chosen by SBM.
- November is a terrible time for Hill visits due to election and budget cycles.

### SBM as a thought leader

The council discussed options for the 1-3 policy topics the society will focus on in the coming years. Topics discussed included: gun violence, opioids, pain management, vaccines, medical costs, and health insurance coverage. The council agreed that the topics should target the public more than SBM members. The 1-3 policy topics must ultimately be approved by the SBM Board of Directors before becoming official.

The council agreed that pain management can be tricky because many in the pain field do not believe that behavior alone can cure all sources of pain. However, the council believes the topic



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is worth exploring. The focus would be to train psychologists, nurses, and other healthcare providers on behavior-based pain management solutions. SBM members who work for the VA would most likely decline an invitation to become an SBM ambassador, but the council will work to identify SBM members with pain management expertise who are not employed by the government.

→**ACTION ITEM:** SBM staff will provide Dr. Buscemi with a percentage of SBM Pain SIG members who do not work for the VA or other government offices.

The council agreed that one of the key topics should center on medical costs or health insurance coverage (e.g. advocating for health insurance recommendations to reimburse behavioral medicine services).

→**ACTION ITEM:** Dr. Buscemi will create a draft write-up of the official topic areas.

### Adjourn

The call adjourned at 12 p.m. ET.

*Minutes submitted by R. Carroll on May 17, 2019.*