March 28, 2017

Filtering System for Taking Action on Public Issues

PREAMBLE: The Alberta Public Health Association (APHA), established 1943, is a non-profit association representing public health in Alberta. The mission is to promote and protect the health of the public through advocacy, partnerships and education. The vision is the improvement of health of all Albertans.

One of APHA’s key activities is to engage in advocacy on various issues across the breadth of public health (i.e., behavioral, social, environmental determinants of health). This tool is intended to help the APHA Board of Directors determine when to take action on an issue, especially in situations where the issue at hand is time-sensitive with imminent deadlines.

INSTRUCTIONS: The filter should be applied in the context of an APHA committee or board meeting, to prompt discussion. If there is disagreement that cannot be resolved via discussion, a simple majority vote will prevail. For a given issue, please think through each consideration below, and respond yes, which will allow you to progress to the next consideration, or no, which will allow you to elaborate to the left. Ideally at least two board members should do this independently. As a guideline, all of the considerations must have a judgment of ‘yes’ for the APHA to decide to take action on this issue.

-Adverse effects or unintended consequences

-Equity

-Non-discriminatory of: ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation/identification, race and ability.

**Yes, the consequences of affordable housing are outweighed by the health benefits created, from a public health perspective**

**Yes, ample evidence on the link between housing and health; acting on housing is non-discriminatory and avoids partisanship by advocating for health first**

-Contribution may be tangible or intangible

-Capacity in terms of time and resources

-Skills in terms of expertise

**Yes, the APHA has the potential to be additive re: health perspective**

**Yes, capacity and skills are within the APHA to act on housing, board members interested and connected to housing**

-Vision: Health for all Albertans

-Priority areas from member survey

**Yes, housing is part of the SDOH and aligned with improving Albertan health and membership interests**

No

Considerations

Elaborations

Figure 1. APHA Filtering System applied to the issue of housing.

Proportion

Figure 2. A bar chart depicting APHA membership areas of passion in public health as of March 2017.

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| Sector | Stakeholder | Role |
| Public | Municipal Government | -Calgary Housing Company (a city-owned corporation providing safe and affordable housing to residents)-Building affordable housing-Setting planning regulations and bylaws-Providing land-Approving permits-Incentivizing-Collaborating with non-profit organizations and the private sector-Leveraging provincial and federal funds-Managing property and operating housing |
| Provincial Government | -Funding -Legislation (e.g. AB Housing Act) |
| Federal Government | -Funding (e.g., transferring funds to provinces) -Federal policy direction (e.g., recent action towards a national housing strategy) |
| Private | Private Property Developers | -Improve properties to increase their value |
| Philanthropists | -Citizens who donate to housing initiatives (RESOLVE campaign) |
| Non-profit | CHAC | -Cross-sector collaboration-Community-based advocacy |
| Calgary Homeless Foundation | -Collective effort to end homelessness-Providing leadership, coordination and services |
| Homeless Hub | -Web-based research library and information centre -Seeking solutions for homelessness |
| Calgary Action Committee on Affordable Housing and Homelessness | -Address housing & homelessness issues with a focus on upstream activities  |
| Vibrant Communities Calgary | Enough For All Strategy: Poverty reduction  |

Table 1. Key stakeholders and their respective roles, specific to Calgary, AB.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Level of Government Responsible |  Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy | Enough For All Strategy | Homeless Hub | Calgary Homeless Foundation | National Housing Strategy |
| Municipal | -Recommend solutions to provincial and federal governments-Incentivize developers to build affordable housing-Identify and acquire land for affordable housing-Strategically incorporate affordable housing into infrastructure development and public facilities-Leverage provincial and federal funding to preserve existing (aging) affordable housing stock | -Mobilize local private capital (i.e., philanthropy) to meet basic needs-Central housing registry-Long term real estate strategy | -Focus on housing first-Promote systems integration when approaching homelessness rather than a fragmented approach-Prioritize education, training and employment for homeless individuals-Change from emergency response approach to focus on prevention, accommodation and supports | -Recognize homeless Calgarians’ choice in recovery services-Open communication within homelessness sector-Case management during transition to housing-Specialized responses for women and children |  |
| Provincial/Territorial | -Increase funding-Support for provincial advocacy supporting municipal interests | -“Inclusive business practices” (e.g. payment of living wages, providing key employment supports for vulnerable workers) | -Provincial investment -Increased support towards integrated systems approach to end homelessness | -Better access to health services on front lines | -Targeted support for northern housing in the territories |
| Federal | -Increase funding-Development of a national housing strategy-Partner with the Canadian housing industry | -Include basic needs are met, re: housing  | -Develop a National Housing Strategy | -Advance governance structure | -$11.2 billion over 11 years including:🡪focus on the Homelessness Partnering Strategy🡪development of a National Housing Fund🡪investment framework for affordable housing🡪improving data collection and analytics🡪prioritizing support for vulnerable citizens🡪make more federal lands available for affordable housing |
| Multiple  | -Proactively collaborate with other levels of government on agreements that are soon to expire | -Toolbox of incentives, policy and regulatory measures-Secondary suites-Inclusionary zoning-Density bonusing-Develop a land inventory-Controls on demolition and conversion-Fast-track permit process for both private and non-market rental developments | -Develop a comprehensive policy framework for a service delivery model | -Responsive approaches for indigenous population | -Renewing federal-provincial/territorial partnership with respect to housing |

Table 2. A comparison chart between solutions put forth by different organizations and the corresponding level(s) of government responsible for these solutions.

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| --- | --- |
| Level of Government | APHA Targeted Advocacy Actions |
| Municipal | -Support municipal government efforts to incentivize developers to build affordable housing;-Support city-acquisition of land for affordable housing;-Support the development of a central housing registry, to increase efficiency of allocation of publicly-funded housing |
| Provincial | -Increased provincial funding dedicated to affordable housing;-Support provincial legislation that will permit municipalities to act pro-actively on affordable housing, such as via land use acquisition and zoning;-Support progressive efforts in other areas of social policy, which falls under provincial legislation and are intimately related to housing, such as income (e.g., living wages), employment, and child care. |
| Federal | -Support the progress and sustainability of a national housing strategy-Advocate for transfer of funds to provinces that is earmarked for investment in affordable housing (versus other expenses).  |
| Intergovernmental | -In the lead-up to a policy decision, writing letters to decision-makers at the appropriate level of government to convey our position (support, oppose) on the issue; -Seeking out and actively participating in opportunities to provide feedback (a recent example is the recent review of the Alberta Municipal Government Act, for which the provincial government actively sought input from interested parties);-Informing APHA members about key issues and problems (e.g., via an evidence brief on our website), and opportunities to participate; drafting letter templates that they could adapt and send to their representative-Liaise with other public health associations across the country (provincial /territorial associations, and the CPHA), towards a collective voice on housing from the point of view of health.-Passing a resolution on housing at the APHA’s upcoming AGM will set a foundation for these activities.  |

Table 3. Potential APHA actions towards housing advocacy at different levels of government.