

ACT!! COALITION OPERATING GUIDELINES & GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

COALITION PRINCIPLES:

The ACT!! Coalition is committed to implementing comprehensive health reform that honors the following five principles: MassHealth restoration and expansion; cost relief to low to moderate-income, working families including sliding-scale subsidies for private insurance; fair payment rates for doctors, hospitals, and other providers of MassHealth services; meaningful employer responsibility; and fair and sustainable funding.

COALITION GOALS:

Build and sustain a broad based coalition including consumers, patients, community and religious organizations, businesses, labor unions, doctors and other health care providers, hospitals, community health centers, and health care advocacy organizations; and support implementation of Chapter 58 in a way that honors the coalition's five principles. Chapter 58 is a landmark Massachusetts law expanding access to affordable, quality health coverage for the uninsured by growing enrollment in public and private insurance options; and it begins to develop state government's leadership role in controlling costs and enhancing quality.

OPERATING ASSUMPTIONS:

- Collaboration across constituencies will create a strong coalition.
- Effective coalitions require resources. Each participant commits to seeking the necessary resources, acknowledging that community-based organizations and consumer health organizations have the least financial resources. Fundraising strategies will not interfere with funding for core operations of collaborating partners.
- The coalition will focus on areas where coordination or economies of scale make sense, such as common research, message development, national or regional fundraising, and any other needs specifically identified by the steering committee.

ELEMENTS OF IMPLEMENTATION CAMPAIGN:

- Grassroots outreach and mobilization
- Coalition communications and maintenance
- Policy analysis and research
- Political strategy and coordination
- Message and media relations
- Budget/fundraising
- Targeted implementation working groups

COALITION GROUND RULES:

The coalition will:

- Establish clear campaign goals and ground rules.
- Communicate these goals and principles broadly to coalition members, potential participants, policymakers, the media, and the broader public.
- Establish clear decision-making protocols with a relatively small "executive" group from the steering committee, which is authorized to make key decisions and move promptly when time demands are tight.

- Make all policy and strategy decisions through the steering committee (no individual deal-making).
- Commit to full information-sharing and disclosure on matters that materially affect the campaign.
- Respect and recognize the contributions of all partners as key elements of a successful campaign.
- Coalition members may resign at any time, while taking care to depart in the least harmful manner to the coalition.
- Develop a budget and written work plan with roles, responsibilities, and timelines laid out, addressing legal/policy work; media relations; outreach and public involvement; legislative strategy.
- Hold regular meetings to monitor, execute, and tailor the work plan.
- Establish a protocol for public statements and media relations, recognizing that media often operate on a deadline and want a consistent relationship with a limited number of spokespeople.

COALITION GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE:

Member Organizations and Individuals

Membership is open to organizations and individuals who:

- Commit to coalition's reform principles
- Respond to action alerts
- Disseminate information on the campaign
- Seek support of public officials
- Participate in large advocacy actions

Steering Committee

- Honor Membership Organization Commitments
- Members: organizations who have committed significant monetary and/or in-kind resources (in-kind resources can include regularly activating membership lists, turning out participants for public events, lending staff expertise to the coalition, donating in-house vendor services such as phone banks and printing, etc.)
- Makes all policy and strategy decisions (consensus preferred, 2/3's vote of members present (phone and email votes accepted) with 2/3's quorum)
- Meets first Friday of the month at 9:30 a.m.
- Steering Committee structure includes issue related working groups

Executive Committee

- Honor Membership Organization and Steering Committee Commitments
- Members: Steering Committee members who hold a Coalition leadership role (working group chairs, etc.)
- Executive Committee members, when time demands are tight, make key decisions (consensus preferred, majority vote of members present (phone and email votes accepted) with 2/3's quorum)
- Meets two weeks off Steering Committee meeting