

Joint AAHSL/MLA Legislative Task Force 2007 Annual Report

The Joint Legislative Task Force supports advocacy efforts of AAHSL and MLA and consists of membership from both organizations including ex-officio members. The position of chair rotates between the two organizations every two years. Currently, J. Michael Homan from AAHSL serves as chair (2006-2008) and Marianne Comegys representing MLA serves as vice-chair. Key support for this joint program is provided by Health and Medicine Council of Washington (HMCW) funded by both organizations and by MLA Legislative Staff Liaison, Mary Langman.

The task force meets biannually in Washington, DC to conduct business including substantive updates from important national stakeholders such as the National Library of Medicine, Association of American Medical Colleges, Association of Academic Health Centers and others. An important part of the biannual meetings is arranged meetings with members of Congress coordinated by HMCW. The arranged meetings to brief congressional staff on issues of importance to AAHSL and MLA attempt to match congressional staff with the state affiliations of the members of the Joint Legislative Task Force. A fall 2006 meeting was not held because Congress adjourned early to campaign for the midterm elections. The spring meeting was held March 28-29, 2007 in Washington, DC. A fall meeting is planned for November 6-7, 2007 at the conclusion of the AAHSL and AAMC annual meetings and will include new Task Force members from MLA and AAHSL.

The task force has addressed issues related to NLM and NIH Fiscal Year 2007 funding, NIH reauthorization, the Policy on Enhancing Public Access to Archives Publications Resulting from NIH-Funded Research, and closing of the Environmental Protection Agency libraries.

In November 2006, MLA and AAHSL Presidents Jean Shipman and Elaine Russo Martin wrote to the leadership of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and House Energy and Commerce Committee regarding H.R. 6164, the NIH Reform Act of 2006. Concerns were expressed for the following provisions that would restructure the NIH, specifically, establishment of an NIH Director's Common Fund, limiting the number of institutes and centers, the process for reconfiguring the institutes and centers, setting a 5% authorization cap, and providing an overarching funding authority for the NIH. MLA and AAHSL also recommended including a definitive statutory section on public access to NIH-funded research in the legislation.

In July, MLA and AAHSL Presidents Jean Shipman and Logan Ludwig wrote to the leadership of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies expressing concern for the \$2 million cut to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Library Network that resulted in closing of several libraries and a significant reduction in public access to agency publications. The associations requested restoration of the \$2 million in the FY07 Interior Appropriations bill and asked the subcommittees to request clarification and justification from the EPA on how the Agency will ensure that the information services and resources provided by the EPA libraries are preserved and continue to be made accessible by all who need them during the time of transition and change. A follow statement reiterating these points was submitted for the record in February to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for its hearing on oversight of recent EPA decisions.

During 2006 and 2007, AAHSL and MLA attempted to monitor and address the following legislative priorities:

I. National Health Information Policy

NLM Funding

Fiscal Year 2007 and 2008 Appropriation

NIH Reauthorization

IMLS Funding

Fiscal Year 2007 and 2008 Appropriation

Intellectual Property and Copyright Law

Library of Congress Section 108 Study Group

Orphan Works Reform

H.R. 1201, "The Freedom and Innovation Revitalizing U.S. Entrepreneurship Act of 2007" (FAIR USE Act)

II. Health Care and Public Health Information Resources

Telemedicine and Telehealth

Fiscal Year 2007 and 2008 Labor, HHS Appropriation

Patient Privacy

Personal Health Records

H.R. 1368, "Personalized Health Information Act of 2007"

Public Access to Government Information

Fiscal Year 2007 and 2008 Interior, Environment, & Related Agencies Appropriations

Environmental Protection Agency Libraries

CURES Bill

Policy on Enhancing Public Access to Archived Publications Resulting from NIH-Funded Research

Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPPA)

Consumer and Patient Health Information

Fiscal Year 2007 and 2008 Labor, HHS Appropriation

S. 467, "Fair Access to Clinical Trials Act of 2007" (FACT Act)

III. Health Research Information Resources

IV. Health Education Information Resources

V. Health Information Technologies and Bioinformatics

NIH Roadmap Initiative, including:

NIH Roadmap for Medical/Research Common Fund

Multi-disciplinary Collaborative Research Clinical Research Translation

Training New Clinical Researchers and Bioinformatics Professionals

Fiscal Year 2007 Labor, HHS Appropriation

Interoperable Health Information Technology Infrastructure

Fiscal Year 2007 and 2008 Labor, HHS Appropriation

Committee Personnel

MLA Members

Marianne Comegys (6/04-5/08), Vice-Chair
(11/06-5/08), and GRC Chair (6/05-5/07)

Carla J. Funk, MLA Executive Director

Jean P. Shipman, AHIP, MLA President (6/06-5/07)

Patricia L. Thibodeau, AHIP (6/04-5/07)

Hope Barton (6/06-5/10)

Mary M. Langman, Staff Liaison

AAHSL Members

J. Michael Homan (11/06-11/10),
Chair (11/06-11/08)

Sandra Franklin, AHIP (11/05-11/09)

Elaine Martin, AAHSL president (11/06-11/07)

Virginia G. Saha (11/03-11/07)

Clinton Marty Thompson, AHIP (11/04-11/08)

Karen Butter, ex officio (11/06-11/10)

Washington Representative

Dale Dirks, President

Roxanne Yaghoubi, Legislative Assistant

Health and Medicine Counsel of Washington, Washington, DC