



Conference Call Summary

'Planning a National Nursing Quality and Safety Alliance' National Nursing Convener Organizations

August 19, 2009

A conference call involving the members of the Nursing Quality and Safety Alliance was held on Wednesday, August 19, 2009 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time).

Nursing Quality and Safety Alliance members present: Geraldine (Polly) Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN, Linda Everett, PhD, RN, CNAA, BC, FAAN, Pat Ford-Roegner, MSW, RN, FAAN, Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN, Pamela H. Mitchell, RN, PhD, FAAN, FAHA, Isis Montalvo, RN, MS, MBA, Mary Naylor, PhD, FAAN, RN Joanne M. Pohl, PhD, ANP-BC, FAAN, Laura Rhodes, MSN, RN, Mary Jean Schumann, MSN, MBA, RN, CPNP, Diane Swanson, MSN, NP-C, FAANP, Jan Towers, PhD, NP-C, CRNP, FAANP, FAAN, Pamela A. Thompson, MS, RN, FAAN, Kitty Werner, and Marla Weston, PhD, RN.

GW staff present: Jean E. Johnson, PhD, RN, FAAN, Ellen M. Dawson, PhD, ANP, Ellen T. Kurtzman, RN, MPH, and Brenda Sheingold, PhD, RN, and Debra Churos.

Others present: Cleve Corlett, PhD (Brand Planning, LLC), Peter Hahn (Widmeyer Communications), Chad Hyett (Widmeyer Communications), and Laura Thornhill (AAN).

Welcome

Dr. Ellen Dawson welcomed everyone to the conference call. She also noted that in order to brief the group on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) funding decision and to continue working toward NQSA's launch, an additional conference call had been scheduled on October 22, 2009 from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (Eastern).

Overview of Agenda and Conference Call Objectives

Ellen Kurtzman outlined the agenda for the conference call. Specifically, the group was charged with:

- discussing NQSA's governing structures;
- contemplating activities to mark NQSA's 2010 launch; and
- responding to and discuss brand identity elements.

Project staff also noted that Cleve Corlett of Brand Planning, LLC and others from Widmeyer Communications would be joining the conference call at the midway mark to discuss the brand identify.

Establishing NQSA's Governing Structures

Ms. Kurtzman provided an overview of key governance issues and highlighted the short survey that had been conducted with the non-convenor nursing organizations to gauge interest in NQSA and their plans to both join as members and serve on the Steering Committee. Although project staff only received a handful of responses, the general feedback was positive in response to NQSA (e.g., an interest in joining as a member and participating) but much more neutral/negative about serving on the Steering Committee (i.e., only one nursing organization indicated it wanted to serve on the Committee). The group discussed these data in the context of the Steering Committee's composition and agreed that access to the Committee among the non-convenor nursing organizations would not be sufficiently limited to warrant modifications to its composition.

Ms. Kurtzman proceeded to review each of the key governance issues and solicit feedback from the group. On nearly all issues, the group agreed with and affirmed project staff's recommendations on:

- membership eligibility, categories, points of contact, dues obligations;
- Steering Committee duties, characteristics of its Principals;
- Principals' appointments, assignment of terms;
- Chair and vice chair duties, appointments, terms of office; and
- Procedures related to voting, quorum, resignations, and vacancies.

The group shared comments and/or requested adjustments on the following issues:

- The group reminded staff that it had agreed to waive dues based on need on a case-by-case basis which was not reflected in the categories of membership. In response, project staff agreed to outline a policy regarding members' ability to petition for a waiver or reduction of dues.
- The group asked for clarification regarding the schedule for dues payments. In response, project staff indicated that invoices would be sent sometime near the beginning of the year.
- As it related to Principals' characteristics, a request was made to adjust the policy to recognize that although each convenor would be identifying and appointing a representative, that this representative must also be able to fulfill their obligations to the Committee and the Alliance.
- With respect to the non-convenor Principals, the group asked that explicit language be added to ensure that priority be given to representatives with diverse opinions.
- The issue of consumer representatives generated significant discussion. Some convenors preferred that only consumers representing organizations be appointed to the Steering Committee while others supported the idea of appointing individual patients, family members, or community representatives. The group recognized that some individuals, who are unaffiliated with organizations, are likely to be very articulate and passionate about health care quality and safety. As a compromise position, the group agreed that

seats would be prioritized for consumers or patients representing organizations without the strict prohibition of appointing individual consumers.

- An issue was raised with respect to the proposed chair and vice chair terms of office (i.e., 2 years each) relative to terms of office for all Principals (i.e., 3 years). Specifically, if the intent is for the vice chair to succeed the chair, the 2-year terms for chair and vice chair would effectively result in the vice chair serving a total of 4 years (i.e., 2 years as vice chair + 2 years as chair), which would exceed Principals' term limits (i.e., 3 years). One proposed solution for this was to extend the terms to 4 years. Another solution was to allow 2 consecutive 3-year terms for all Principals.
- Finally, the group asked for clarification regarding resignations/replacements on the Steering Committee as well as substitutes at meetings of the Committee. Project staff noted that a number of governance issues – including these issues – would be discussed during its October conference call.

Project staff agreed to review these points of concern and propose alternative language during the group's next call in October. It was noted that Dr. Sheingold would be picking up the governance and leadership issues for the remainder of the year and resolving any outstanding concerns. Ultimately, the goal is to have the Steering Committee in place by early 2010.

Contemplating NQSA's Official Launch

Project staff have begun to plan a launch event at which NQSA will be officially introduced to stakeholders including press. Ms. Kurtzman shared some general thoughts about this event (e.g., held at GW in early 2010, participation from the conveners/Steering Committee, attended by dignitaries in nursing and medicine, health care quality, policy, and consumer/patient advocacy). Ms. Kurtzman queried the conveners regarding their interest and support for such an event and possible timeframes. Based on response, there was widespread support, interest in February as the target month, and agreement that each organization's communications staff would be helpful in the planning. It was also suggested that a communications "teaser" might be helpful in engaging stakeholders interest as well as assuring adequate attendance. Finally, it was suggested that the conveners advertise amongst their memberships the decision to launch NQSA and the anticipated event. Talking points developed by project staff and shared with conveners for this purpose were viewed as helpful.

Developing NQSA's Brand Identity

Cleve Corlett of Brand Planning and Chad Hyett and Peter Hahn of Widmeyer Communications joined the conference call. Mr. Corlett began with an overview of the conveners' discussion about NQSA's messaging during the July meeting and the brand strategy that emerged from it. Following his presentation of the suggested strategy, conveners shared the following suggestions and feedback:

- Concerns that the tone was too "fluffy" and emotional. The group agreed that the current strategy perpetuated the portrayal of nurses as victims and promoted the stereotype of the "caring, hand-holding little nurse." Participants recommended more powerful language that conveys the image of nurses as competent, scientifically oriented practitioners managing complicated scenarios.

- Negative reactions to portraying nurses as “guardians.” Instead, conveners suggested nurses be described as more “warrior-like.”
- Greater emphasis on the fact that this is specifically a *nursing* alliance.
- Stronger focus on NQSA’s role in the provision of quality care.
- Emphasis on the patient/nursing relationship with nurses as advocates and NQSA as an advocacy outlet for and with patients.
- Consideration of the role NQSA will have in guiding the process of care and working with families of patients.
- More proactive language throughout including the choice of active, rather than passive, verbs.
- Concentration on the notion that NQSA empowers its member organizations, that it is not simply a single voice but a symphony of many voices, and that it activates and derives energy from that power.
- Emphasis on the significant nature of this undertaking, the notion that it is not “business as usual,” and the enormity and breadth of what must be accomplished.
- Stronger message that the full engagement of nursing is essential and intrinsic to both health care delivery and the improvement of health care quality – that health care policy cannot be well formulated without nursing at the table.
- Clarification of the fact that NQSA represents professional organizations that, in turn, represent more than 2 million individual nurses.

A brief discussion regarding NQSA’s name was also facilitated by Mr. Corlett and Widmeyer Communications staff. Although the conveners recognized the rationale behind each of the alternatives proposed, none appeared to fully represent the Alliance or its promise. Because there was not consensus among the group on any of the names proposed, everyone agreed that they would individually put more thought into possibilities and contemplate alternatives.

In response to this discussion, Cleve Corlett and the Widmeyer Communications team agreed to revise the brand strategy and contemplate alternative names based on the group’s feedback. Project staff committed to soliciting additional convener feedback in the near-term and conveyed the necessity of bringing these issues to closure rapidly because of the timelines under which the group was working.

Adjournment

In her closing comments, Ms. Kurtzman thanked the Widmeyer Communications team, with a special thanks to Cleve Corlett, for their work on this project. She also thanked the conveners and reminded them of the next conference call on Thursday, October 22, 2009 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Eastern).