

Evolution Of HPS Influence In Public Policy

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Introduction

Objectives:

- Develop public policy program.
- Sound science; good radiation safety practice.

Evolution of Government Relations Program:

- HPS volunteers.
- Development of Formal Position Statements.
- Scientific & Public Issues Committee.
- Government Liaison.
- Congressional Liaison (plus Washington Representative) & Agency Liaison.

Pre - HPS

- Profession slow to develop*
 - Radiation injuries observed late 1800s
 - Rollins & other pioneers early 1900s
 - ICRP 1928 - standards
 - NCRP 1929 - standards
 - AIHA 1939 – radiation safety subcategory
 - Manhattan District (health physics)
 - Birth of HPS - 1955

*Boerner & Kathren; *Health Phys* 88 198; 2005

Birth of Public Policy

- Early “health physics” science shared through annual meetings and journal
- 1966 – first stand on political issue: opposed to creation of AEC centralized dosimetry repository. Repository never created.
- 1969 - President Newell Stannard advocated taking an active public position on scientific issues.

Early Public Policy

- 1971 – HPS publicly rebuked Sternglass.
- 1971 – HPS President Moeller letter to Senators Kennedy and Muskie requesting reconsideration of cuts in education and training funds for individuals in the nuclear field.
- 1970s: HPS participated in development of international and national (ANSI) standards

Coming of Age

- 1980s: HPS: numerous public policy positions
 - 1981 – Meinhold letter to AAAS objecting to presentations that were in conflict with BEIR report. AAAS apologized.
 - 1982 – S&PIC wrote Nevada Governor List supporting retention Beatty radioactive waste site
 - 1985 – HPS became secretariat for ANSI radiation safety committee

Coming of Age

- 1989 – series of positive articles about HPS in Denver Post.
 - “Reporter was deeply impressed by the commitment of the Society and those members with whom he spoke to its stated purpose of protection of people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation, while at the same time promoting its use for the benefit of mankind. “

Taking a Stand

- 1990s: HPS became more proactive by taking positions on controversial issues in the form of position papers.
- Prior to 1990, only one official HPS position paper, “Food Irradiation,” 1988.
- 1990: second position paper, “Perspectives and Recommendations on Indoor Radon.”

Taking a Stand

- 1992: Compatibility in Radiation protection Regulations.
- 1993: “Radiation in Perspective,” “Deadly Plutonium,” and “Risk Assessment.”
- Position papers began serving as important mechanism for HPS to become more assertive and positive in dealing with Congress, regulators and public media.

Development of Government Relations Program

- Early 1990s: development of public affairs program to facilitate HPS influence in Washington DC and communications with the public. Full-time publicist hired.
- 1997: public affairs split into agency and congressional relations; agency to be staffed by a health physicist (Mills, Dinger, Vetter), congressional liaison assisted by Capitol Associates.

Development of Government Relations Program

- Presidents began visiting DC regularly to communicate HPS positions.
- Presidents invited by NRC to participate in public workshops, e.g. Maher to RIC.
- HPS sends experts to select public workshops, e.g. Till to Radioactivity in Groundwater Workshop.

Advancing Health Physics

1996: “Radiation Risk in Perspective,”

“since radiogenic health effects have not been observed below 10 rem, estimation of adverse effects below this level is “speculative”

Advancing Health Physics

- 1997: Vetter one of 43 Presidents of scientific organizations to sign a “Joint Statement on Scientific Research,” urging additional funding support for federal agencies charged with scientific research and educational responsibilities.

Getting Political

2000: “Compensation for Diseases Caused by Radiation Must Consider the Dose.”

Compensation for radiation injury should not be made to persons with lifetime doses below about 10 rem.

Presence in Washington, DC

- 2000s: Agency & Congressional Relations
-multi-tiered approach advances HPS
credibility & visibility:
 - President's regular visits to critical government and congressional offices provide clear focus and visibility on Capitol Hill.
 - President's testimony to NRC & others.
 - Congressional briefings on key radiation safety issues.

Training Funding

- 2004: HPS supported Rep. Biggert's bill to provide \$15 million for health physics research and more than \$27 million for undergraduate and graduate fellowships in health physics and nuclear science and engineering.

Training Funding

- 2010: Funding language removed by Appropriations Com. During President Dickson's visit to DC, Appropriations staff agreed to restore funding language.
- 2011: Despite lobbying, funding likely to be cut to ~\$8M for fellowships and \$10M for Low Dose Research.

Distinguished Public Service Award

2008: Senator Pete Domenici:

“champion of safe use of nuclear materials and technology for benefit of the nation:”

- Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP).
- Low dose research program.
- Communicated with HPS leadership on legislative radiation safety issues.
- Sponsored or co-sponsored legislation that authorized funding of university programs in health physics

Typical President Visit to DC*

- One full day at NRC.
- Partial day at EPA or other agency.
- Two hours at NEI to compare notes.
- Two+ days at House and Senate offices.
- Focus of meetings: HPS positions and activities.

*Maher, "Congressional & Agency Visits in May 2011" HPNews p 10, June 2011.

Typical President Visit to DC



Sample Talking Points

-- Safety Culture --

- Compliment NRC on what they have done.
- HPS very pleased to support NRC Special Session on Safety Culture at HPS 2010.
- HPS is interested in feedback from NRC on whether the Special Session was helpful.
- HPS interested in providing feedback on the NRC Draft Safety Culture Policy Statement.
- HPS would be happy to schedule Special Sessions on topics of mutual interest at future meetings of HPS

Results Contained in Reports

- HP News President's column
- HP News Inside the Beltway
- HP News - other articles
- HP News – new “column:” The HPS Effect
- Monthly Report to President from Agency and Congressional Liaison(s)

Inside the Beltway

- Contact your Senator or Representative* to express your opinions on issues of interest to health physicists:
 - Fund research through DOE
 - Fund fellowships and training grants

*<https://hps.org/membersonly/govrelations/>

The HPS Effect

- Charles Miller: Chair,
Webcast: NRC Task Force to
Examine U.S. Reactors Post
Fukushima, May 12, 2011



“We’re concerned about some
Information in the media about KI.”

The HPS Effect

Commissioner William Magwood:

“HPS has some good information about KI in one of their fact sheets on their Website.”



The HPS Effect

How did Commissioner Magwood know that?

The HPS Fact Sheet on KI was one of President Ed Maher's talking points during his visit to NRC on May 3, 2011.

Conclusion

- Presidents and officers work hard to make Government Relations Program work.
- Washington Representative (Capitol Associates) opens doors.
- NRC & other agencies very cooperative.
- Government Relations Program increases credibility and visibility of HPS at national level (<http://hps.org/govtrelations/>)

The End

