

Rotation of Working Party Hosting: Exploration of History and Rationale
Report from ADFM Exec Director to ADFM Executive Committee
1/3/17

Background

In November 2016, the ADFM Board asked the ADFM Executive Committee to explore the rationale and history of rotating the cost and role of hosting the Working Party meetings. This request came after the ADFM Board's review of the final hosting cost for ADFM in 2016 (\$41,830) and how this represents a large expenditure for ADFM. In conjunction with this review, the ADFM Board also accepted the recommendation of the ADFM Finance Committee to proactively save on an annual basis for future hosting of the Working Party so as to avoid a big chunk being periodically taken out of our reserves. To calculate the anticipated annual cost of hosting the Working Party meetings, we referred to the attached rotation schedule – and calculated that ADFM would be in the rotation for hosting again in seven years, or in 2023. Anticipating some inflation in hosting costs, we based our annual cost for hosting in 2023 on a total of \$50,000 divided by seven years, or \$7150 to be budgeted into our annual operations beginning 2017.

Methods

To undertake this exploration, the ADFM Executive Committee first discussed this briefly with the STFM Executive Director (Stacy Brungardt) in conjunction with the annual meeting of the ADFM Executive Committee and STFM ED for purposes of reviewing our annual management agreement. At this time, Ms Brungardt suggested that other executive staff would likely be open to conversations about ADFM's concerns of the hosting being a financial hardship. Following this meeting, Ardis Davis, Executive Director of ADFM, arranged individual phone calls with the lead executive staff member of each of the other (N=6) organizations of the Working Party. The purpose of the calls was to share ADFM's concern about the financial hardship and to find out what the executive staff understood about the rationale behind the hosting rotation and other issues which arose in the conversations about hosting. Additionally, by way of background information, Ms Davis obtained the attached document produced by the *Center for the History of Family Medicine* which documents the history of the Working Party meeting, including some information on the evolution of the rotation.

Results

Below is a summary of the key issues discussed on 7 phone calls conducted between Nov 22 – Dec 23, 2016 (phone conversations held were with Craig Doane (AAFP Foundation), Doug Henley (AAFP), Vickie Greenwood (AFMRD), Jim Puffer (ABFM), Pete Schmelzer (ACOF), and Tom Vansaghi (NAPCRG). Additionally, a call was held with Dan Ostergaard, now retired from the AAFP, who had a long-standing relationship to the Working Party in his role with the AAFP.)

- Rationale behind decision to rotate hosting?
 - As noted in the historical document, the Family Health Foundation of America (now the AAFP Foundation) bore the hosting costs for several years until 1989, with the decision to begin a hosting rotation. The rationale for moving to a hosting rotation was related to shared control and leadership – providing equal leadership among the organizations, being equal partners at the table, with equal input into the conversations/decisions and equal control over agenda setting.
 - Understood in 1989, with the decision to rotate, was that each hosting organization would need to meet minimum hosting requirements but that not all organizations had the same financial resources (e.g. not all organizations had Foundations) to draw upon for hosting purposes – and that degrees of upscaling or downscaling would be inevitable and acceptable.

- Why not all 8 Organizations in the Rotation?
 - In 1989, with five organizations participating (AAFP Foundation, AAFP, ABFM, STFM, ADFM) the decision was made to begin the hosting rotation and therefore, rotation of which organization chaired the meetings in a given year. As other organizations came on later (AFMRD being the first in 1990), they were placed at the end of the rotation schedule to allow for time to plan for the budgetary implications of hosting. It is not clear why the rotation has evolved with 7 of the current 8 organizations in the rotation other than the recognition that NAPCRG is a bi-national organization.
- Past Discussions about cost?
 - After the 2008 recession, the AAFP raised the cost of the Working Party meetings, suggesting one meeting per year. The Working Party did not agree to this but did agree to consider costs. At that time, it was agreed to consider meeting in Kansas City once annually to reduce costs for the participating organizations in terms of travel. Following this, ADFM hosted the August 2010 meeting in Kansas City – after this, no other Working Party meetings were held in Kansas City.
 - One idea discussed within the context of these earlier discussions about cost was attaching the Working Party meetings to other standing meetings of our organizations. This idea never got traction.
- Other issues raised on the phone calls?
 - This is an opportunity to re-examine the cost of the Working Party meetings. This cost includes not only the annual hosting cost to one organization, but the cost to all organizations of sending their representatives. All of the executive staff I spoke with felt this would be a worthwhile conversation.
 - This is also an opportunity to examine the number of people who attend the Working Party meeting from each organization (and the added cost this means for the hosting organization) as well as the number of individuals involved in planning. The original intent was to provide for equal voice into planning with one lead executive staff per organization involved in the planning with the Host organization driving that process.
 - Costs have been added as we have taken on entertainment and even though there is the tacit understanding that each organization can host according to its own budgetary allowances, there can be felt a kind of “peer pressure”. It would be helpful to reexamine added costs due to entertainment etc.
 - There may be an opportunity to “pool” opportunities for hosting venues as some of our organizations have negotiating power with meeting venues.

Recommendations

- ADFM provide this report to the Working Party at the January meeting
- ADFM offer to convene executive staff to discuss how to lower costs of holding the Working Party meetings which will include lowering costs for the hosting organizations.



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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FAMILY MEDICINE WORKING PARTY

The earliest evidence of an attempt to convene a group of family practice organizations took place in 1975. Edward W. Ciriacy, MD, then President of STFM, sent an invitation to the Presidents of the AAFP, ABFP (the American Board of Family Practice, now the ABFM), and the FHFA (Family Health Foundation of America; now known as the AAFP Foundation), and the Chairman of the Section Council on Family and General Practice of the AMA. He suggested the creation of a new organization, “a Council of Family Practice Societies.” Its stated purpose was to serve as a “useful means of exchanging information” and to help organizations “achieve more efficient utilization of our resources.” The FHFA and AAFP ultimately did not agree to create an organization; interestingly however, this effort was never given credit as being the initial impetus behind the creation of the Working Party.

The beginnings of the Working Party itself can be traced back to the creation of an “Ad Hoc Planning Committee for Liaison Conference of Family Practice Organizations” by the FHFA in December of 1977. This committee was appointed by then-FHFA President Julius Michaelson, MD, pursuant to an action taken by the Foundation’s Board of Trustees on October 11, 1977, which directed that a conference be held “to cement relations among the four family practice organizations: The Family Health Foundation of America, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Board of Family Practice] and the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine.”

On December 29, 1977, the Ad Hoc Planning Committee met in Phoenix and agreed on the importance of holding such a conference of representatives from the four organizations, to be sponsored by the FHFA. This conference, subsequently known as the “Family Practice Retreat,” was held from March 31-April 2, 1978 in Scottsdale, Arizona, and was the first formal meeting of representatives between the major Family Medicine organizations. A total of sixteen participants from the four organizations attended. The stated objectives of the conference were “(1) to improve communication, (2) to delineate areas of responsibility—both those common and those unique to each organization, (3) to enhance cooperation and (4) to avoid duplication of effort.”

During the course of that first meeting, the participants identified five broad areas of special concern:

- (1) On-site survey and evaluation mechanism of family practice residency programs;
- (2) In-training Assessment;
- (3) Faculty Development;
- (4) Undergraduate Curriculum; and
- (5) Funding Base for Residency Programs.

The four organizations agreed that these areas deserved further study, and that a “joint planning committee” be established to accomplish this. On September 26, 1978, a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the FHFA was held to discuss the results of the retreat. At that meeting, FHFA Trustee Dr. Edward J. Kowalewski successfully moved that the FHFA sponsor “a joint working party” to follow up on the results of the retreat on an annual basis, and from this, the “Working Party” was born.

On March 24-25, 1979, the FHFA convened and coordinated the first meeting of the “Family Practice Working Party” in Kansas City. Attendees were as follows:

AAFP:	W. Jack Stelmach, MD and Willis J. Irvine, MD
ABFP:	James G. Price, MD and Nicholas J. Pisacano, MD
STFM:	William J. Kane, MD and L. Robert Martin, MD
FHFA:	B. Leslie Huffman, Jr., MD and Herbert A. Holden, MD
Convener & Coordinator:	Julius Michaelson, MD, FHFA President
Special Resources & Liaison Counsel:	Thomas A. Nicholas, MD (standing in for Thomas L. Stern, MD who was ill)
Staff Assistance:	Charlotte Neilan, FHFA Secretary Judy Christopher, AAFP Administrative Assistant
Observer:	Ann Hyde, STFM Executive Director

One of the earliest tangible outcomes of the Working Party meetings was a position paper entitled “The Medical Education Accreditation System: A Working Paper,” distributed in 1980. Developed by Thomas L. Stern, MD, at the request of the Working Party, this document was utilized as background for a position paper that Dr. Stern wrote with a subcommittee of the CMSS.

Today, the Family Medicine Working Party continues to pursue the same four goals which its founders first set forth back in 1978, according to former AAFP Vice President for Professional Activities Dr. Daniel J. Ostergaard. Dr. Ostergaard, then one of only two physicians on staff at the Academy, was frequently drawn into the early discussions of the Working Party, and attended many of its early meetings. As Dr. Ostergaard recalls, the early meetings of the Working Party served to “give a ‘heads up’ to each organization in an informal setting, with the understanding that organizational consideration would follow.” The initial meetings of the group were very informal in nature, with participants preferring to engage in conversation while seated in easy chairs in hotel suites instead of holding more formal sessions in conference rooms.

Since 1981, the Working Party has met biannually and has also expanded its membership to include four other organizations within the specialty: the Association of Departments of Family Medicine (ADFM), which joined in 1981; the Association of Family Practice [now Family Medicine] Residency Directors (AFMRD), which joined in 1990; the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG), which joined in 1995; and most recently, the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP), which joined the Working Party in January of 2015.

Although the early meetings were chaired by the FHFA, beginning in 1989 the members of the Working Party established a rotational system for chairing and hosting the meetings, and this system has continued in place ever since.

Working Party Hosting Rotation	
2014	AAFP
2015	STFM
2016	ADFM
2017	AFMRD
2018	AAFP/F
2019	ABFM
2020	ACOFP
2021	AAFP
2022	STFM
2023	ADFM
2024	AFMRD
2025	AAFP/F
2026	ABFM
2027	ACOFP

Executive Staff Follow up Call Concerning Working Party Rotation and Cost 2/7/17

On February 7, 2017, Ardis Davis convened the eight executive staff of the working party organizations by teleconference to follow up on the January 2017 ADFM report to Working Party. All were present.

The group reflected on the early goals of the Working Party and agreed that they remain relevant today especially in light of transition of work with FMAHealth:

- To improve communication regarding our individual and collaborative activity
- To build trust and relationships among leaders across the family medicine organizations
- To enhance cooperation and collaboration broadly across all of the organizations but also between organizations such as the opportunity for the academic family medicine organizations (CAFM) to meet in conjunction with the Working Party, and even smaller groupings as in 1:1 organizational meetings

We agreed to that current rotation and meeting schedule (January, August timeframe) has worked well. Changing the timing of the Working Party meetings on an annual basis to coincide with other organizational national meetings would hurt attendance due to the many meetings already on respective organizational leaders' annual calendars.

We also agreed that:

- Tom Vansaghi will talk to NAPCRG leadership about joining the rotation schedule (following the ACOFP in the order)
- We will continue with the same number of representatives from each of the organizations. If "voice" should ever become an issue, we will address it with each other as a group.
- Each host organization has permission to reduce costs for the meeting as they deem appropriate (e.g. cash bar, less expensive venue with breakfast included (e.g. Embassy Suites near a central airport) efforts to reduce meal and AV costs.
- If FMAHealth brings their full board to attend the WP meeting (as opposed to only their exec leaders), they will be asked to pay a per person nominal fee to cover costs for those extra attendees.

EXPLORATION OF BIG TICKET ITEMS TO CONTROL COSTS IN THE FUTURE

Following the February 7th call, I examined with Priscilla Noland how much we spent on categories in 2016 which could be reduced if not cut altogether in the future. Categories of Working Party Hosting Costs which fall in to this category and need to be carefully considered in the future are:

1. HOSTING AT A PROPERTY WHERE BREAKFAST COMES WITH THE ROOM
Breakfast costs for 2016: TOTAL POTENTIAL SAVINGS FROM BREAKFAST: \$9560
(January -- \$3,760; August -- \$5,800)

2. INSTITUTING A CASH BAR

Alcohol costs for 2016: TOTAL potential savings: \$3105 (a cash bar would incur costs for bartender)

1/16 - \$1550; 8/16 - \$1555

3. CHARGING FOOD AND BEVERAGE FEES ADDED ORGANIZATIONAL REPS

Added FMAHealth Guests: TOTAL: \$1565

1/16: \$565; 8/16: \$1000