

**Brookline Advisory Council for Public Health
Guidance for Warrant Article Petitioners**

Approved: 2/25/2020

In keeping with its mission to preserve, protect, and promote the health of the Brookline community, the Brookline Advisory Council for Public Health provides this set of questions to give guidance to petitioners seeking to address health issues in Brookline through Warrant Articles. While recognizing that a petitioner might not be able to answer each and every question posed, we think this list provides the petitioner with a framework to understand what guides the Council, and public health practitioners in general, in making determinations about the advisability of any local governmental action taken for the purpose of affecting population health. We encourage you to contact the health department early in your process of developing a warrant article particularly if you have questions or need help with this guidance. If the primary purpose of the warrant article is public health, please come to ACPH before asking other government agencies.

- I. Statement of the Problem
 - a. What public health issue does this article seek to address?
 - b. What specific populations in Brookline are affected by this problem?
 - c. How big is this problem for Brookline overall and for specific risk groups?
 - d. What is known about the determinants of this health problem?

- II. Proposed Warrant Article Mechanism/ Benefits
 - a. How does the policy work to reduce the burden of this health problem on Brookline or on specific populations within the town?
 - b. Is there evidence of this or a similar policy be adopted by another local government? If so, what effects did it have?
 - c. How would you quantify the impact of this policy? What proportion of the problem would be reduced or eliminated by the policy?
 - d. Which specific populations or groups would benefit?
 - e. What is the timeframe of the benefit (when would the town see tangible results)?
 - f. How would the town measure such benefit?

- III. Risks/Unintended Consequences
 - a. What population(s) if any will be negatively impacted?
 - b. How will these populations be negatively affected? In what way? How much? When?
 - c. What unintended consequences might you anticipate as a result of this policy?
 - d. How would the town measure and monitor such consequences?
 - e. How might such negative consequences be addressed or ameliorated?

- IV. Jurisdictional Considerations
 - a. Why is this issue best addressed by local government policy versus other means of public health action?

- b. Is this issue better addressed as a state issue? Why or why not?
- c. Is this issue better addressed as a federal issue? Why or why not?
- d. Are there boundary issues associated with enacting this policy locally?
 - i. Does the effect of the policy require adoption by adjoining towns?
 - ii. Would the absence of similar policies in adjoining towns weaken or otherwise affect implementation, outcomes, or unintended consequences of the policy?
 - iii. Would the absence of similar policies in adjoining towns put undue burdens on any persons or groups within the town?
- e. Is the effect of the policy at the local level partly or wholly intended as a symbolic action to eventually affect other localities, the state and/or the federal government?

V. Equity Analysis

- a. How will the policy impact health disparities and health equity? When, where, and how?
- b. How might the town mitigate equity issues identified?

VI. Feasibility

- a. What current political forces may influence the likelihood of this policy being passed?
- b. Which stakeholders would you expect to support this policy?
- c. Which stakeholders would you expect to oppose this policy?
- d. How effective do you think your evidence will be in influencing policymakers in the town?

VII. Costs

- a. Does the policy require specific regulatory or on-going oversight activities by the town?
- b. Is this policy likely to draw legal challenge?
- c. What would be the financial costs to the town and to others if this policy is implemented?
- d. Which specific town agencies would be burdened with costs?
- e. Does the policy provide for any revenue to cover costs incurred by the town?