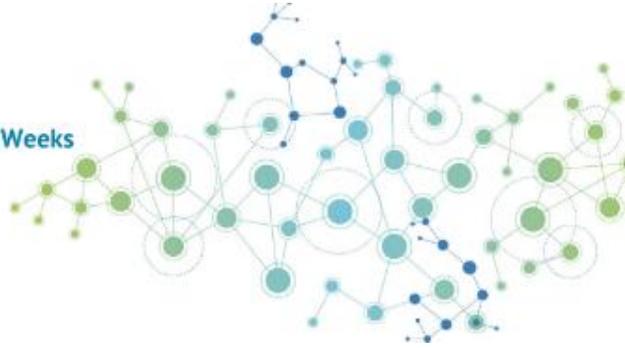


INTEGRATIVE UPDATE with John Weeks



Major Collaborations of Integrative Health Organizations Toward Changing Policy and Practice: 2002-Present

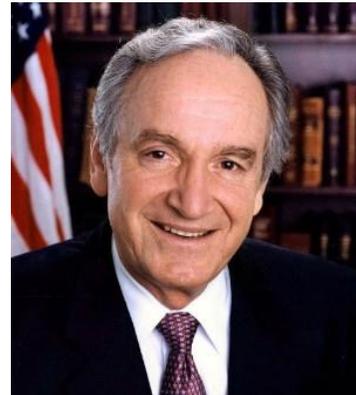
Note to AIHM Readers: I am excited to re-join with longtime AIHM colleagues to begin this twice-monthly column on policy and organizational activity in integrative health for AIHM. I was honored to be invited by Scott Shannon and Mimi Guarneri to AIHM's planning meeting in 2013, then to serve on the founding Board. I am excited to have a chance to offer a plenary on the movement's history at the September conference. My specialty as a writer is chronicling, celebrating and cajoling relative to the action of the organizations, institutions, professions, and individuals involved in the field. My perch is at the convergence with the dominant school of medicine. AIHM's interprofessional vision and mission is one such convergent point, a benchmark in advancing collaboration. I thought I would start with a review of collaborative advances in the past 15 years. Many thanks to John Scaringe and [Southern California University of Health Sciences](#) for the grant that makes this column possible. More about my work [is here](#). I rely on tips from readers for the best stories: johnweeks@theintegratorblog.com – John Weeks

In a [recent interview](#), AIHM’s acting executive director Tabatha Parker urged an era of expanding collaboration for the field. Rick Hecht, MD, incoming chair of the [Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine and Health \(the Consortium\)](#), similar urged such a direction: “Each organization has its own work – but when it comes to policy we can have much more influence finding ways to collaborate more closely with each other.”



Their calls echo integrative health and medicine’s former Congressional champion [US Senator Tom Harkin](#).

Twenty years ago, Harkin told a group of activists, in what was then “complementary and alternative medicine,” that if they wanted to have an impact in Congress or in policy, they needed to act as one voice. *What is your shared agenda? Develop it and push it together!*



At the May 8-11, 2018 [International Congress on Integrative Medicine and Health \(ICIMH\)](#), with its 950 attendees from 25 countries for what is increasingly a global movement, Hecht and Parker’s call for advancement through collaborative action was on the lips of many. Influencing the nation’s chronic pain treatment crisis (a.k.a. the opioid crisis) is one ascendant opportunity. This resurgent strategizing suggested that this review of principal collaborations among organizations to date might be useful.

2001 – National Policy Dialogue to Advance Integrated Care: *Finding Common Ground* The meeting at Georgetown University pre-dated the formation of any of the formal collaborations. Its steering community seeded many organizations. Here is that meeting’s [seminal report, calling for some of the leading education and policy collaborations noted below](#).

2002 – Academic Collaborative for Integrative Medicine and Health (the “Consortium”)

While not an interprofessional collaboration, the [decision of 8 academic medical centers](#) to work together was huge, at the time, and spawned what is now a 70-institution strong platform for change in US healthcare. The new chair is Hecht, who suggests an increase in collaborations is coming.

ACADEMIC COLLABORATIVE FOR INTEGRATIVE HEALTH The Collaborative

2002 - Bravewell Collaborative a tremendously powerful influencer in the integrative health movement was the foundation of this collaborative of philanthropists in integrative medicine. Their predilections titles their investment strategy toward the Consortium. Their 15 years before sunsetting leveraged many remarkable advances. [Details here](#)

Integrative Health Care Policy Consortium (IHPC) the influential organization- presently has [26 Partners for Health organizations](#) from multiple licensed professions ranging from those with principally medical doctors as members to holistic nurses, pain practitioners, acupuncturists, chiropractors, naturopathic doctors, midwives, nutritionists, and more. Its founders took their lead from Senator Harkin's call to create strength. It is the principal organizer of the new Congressional Caucus on Integrative Health and Wellness. See [accomplishments here](#).



2005 – Academic Collaborative for Integrative Health (ACIH – the Collaborative)

Core membership in this IHPC-birthed initiative is [13 academic, accreditation and certification organizations](#) for chiropractic, acupuncture and Oriental medicine, naturopathic medicine, massage therapy and direct entry midwifery. Some traditional medicines and emerging professions are also members (yoga, Ayurveda, homeopath,

nutrition). It has been involved in multiple policy-related actions. See [accomplishments here](#).



2005 -- National Education Dialogue to Advance Integrated Care: *Creating Common*

Ground The planning team for this IHPC-birthing initiative was held at Georgetown University. It included leaders of organizations from 12 professions, including those that are core to the Collaborative. With the Consortium was not comfortable endorsing the meeting, Collaborative and Consortium leaders worked together on many pre-conference projects. [See report here](#).

2006 – First formal meeting of leaders of the Consortium and the Collaborative At the [founding research conference of the Consortium in Edmonton](#), the North American predecessor of the ICIMH, the leaders of the two organizations first formally meet in an evening reception.

2007 – Holistic Medical Doctors Link to Nurses, Naturopaths, Others The American Holistic Medical Association (AHMA), founded in 1978, had previously limited membership to MDs, DOs and DDSs. It [opened its membership](#) and began to reach out to holistic nurses, naturopathic doctors and others, leading to a [joint 2008 conference of over 900](#).

2007 – Integrative Medicine Consortium This alliance – not a formal organization – was established to get [the multiple physician-level integrative medicine organizations](#) (ACAM, AHMA, AANP, AAEM, ICIM, IOICP) working together. A notable present effort has related to protecting access to certain ingredients for compounding pharmacies.

2009 – Joint Working Group Meetings: Consortium and Collaborative At the subsequent [major conference of the Consortium in Minneapolis](#), members of the executive committees and the working groups of the two organizations met concurrently and began discussing collaborating on specific projects.

2009-2010 – IHPC helps shape sections of the Affordable Care Act Presenting itself as an organization linked to over 400,000 licensed practitioners, IHPC had a hand in shaping inclusion of complementary and integrative concepts and practitioners in multiple sections of the Affordable Care Act, including the provision for [Non-Discrimination in Healthcare provision Section 2706](#).



2010 – Stakeholder Conference on the Affordable Care Act The organizations leading this IHPC-led meeting at Georgetown University included two academic organizations, Palmer College and Bastyr University, plus the Institute for Integrative Health. The purpose was to set strategy to respond to the new opportunities in the Affordable Care Act. Participation spanned the range of integrative practice disciplines. The [report is here](#).

2011 – Integrative Medicine for the Underserved (IM4US) Though begun inside of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, [IM4US](#) has branched out into a broadly interprofessional organization with links and partnerships throughout the integrative health and medicine community to support what has been called “[the imperative for health justice](#)” for the field.



2012 – International Congress for Educators in Complementary and Integrative Medicine and Health This [meeting of over 300 educators, researchers, and clinicians](#), was the first time the logos for the Collaborative and Consortium hung side-by-side. Once again it was held at Georgetown University. The organizing and planning committees were equitably split between each organization.

2013 – Founding of the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine (AIHM) While just one organization, the founding of AIHM was a watershed moment. Its founding board, mission, conference, and [Fellowship](#) are each fundamentally interprofessional. Early work included collaborations with both the Collaborative and IHPC, each of which it joined as a formal or supporting member.

2014 – Policy Symposium and Action Plan in Honor of US Senator Harkin Perhaps appropriately, the first time all the leading organizations in the field all stepped formally into shared sponsorship – AIHM, IHPC, Consortium, Collaborative – was an event that brought together 125 people for a [daylong symposium and reception to honor the retiring Senator Harkin](#), once again at Georgetown University. Samueli Institute, Life University, Georgetown, and the Institute for Integrative Health were among the chief sponsors.

2016 -- AIHM, IHPC and Collaborative Help Shape Consortium's Biennial Conference The Consortium declared that its [2016 conference in Las Vegas](#) would not be just research but also education, clinical care, and policy. The organizers invited the Collaborative, AIHM and IHPC, respectively, to name representatives to their teams and to collaborate on content in these areas. While the Consortium moved away from the model in 2018, present leadership is considering re-engaging the model.

2017 – Global endorsements of the Berlin Agreement Fostering Integrative Health The four organizations (AIHM, IHPC, Collaborative, Consortium) were among the dozen original endorsing organizations of the global [Berlin Agreement: Self-Responsibility and Social Action in Practicing and Fostering Integrative Medicine and Health Globally](#).

2017 – Changing the Joint Commission’s Pain Guidelines In its first major, direct and successful engagement in policy, the Consortium mounted a campaign to [highlight non-pharmacologic approaches](#) in the pain standard of the Joint Commission. They later [reached out to their colleagues](#) in the other organizations in a successful letter-writing effort to require scoring on the new standard.

2017 – Co-Creation of *Moving Beyond Medications* fact sheet. In a project conceived and sponsored in a collaboration involving the 4 leading organizations, a concise two page fact-sheet was developed to support conventional practitioners’ using integrative approaches: [Moving Beyond Medications: Non-Pharmacologic Approaches to Pain Management and Well-Being](#).

2017 -- Integrative Pain Policy Summit Led by the interprofessional Academy of Integrative Pain Management (AIPM) and involving IHPC and others, [this founding Summit](#) included leaders of 50 organizations kicked off ongoing, multi-organizational collaboration to engage and influence the nation’s turmoil-filled debate. One take home is a reframe: the crisis is in chronic pain treatment, not an opioid crisis.

2018 – Congressional Caucus on Integrative Health and Wellness IHPC [led this effort](#) to organize the Caucus and brought in representatives from the integrative medical, naturopathic and acupuncture fields to a kick-off [Congressional Briefing on opioids](#).

If the desire expressed by Parker and Hecht – and urged by former US Senator Harkin - can blossom into further concerted, united action, what might these integrative health organizations together accomplish? These entities are linked to roughly a half-million licensed practitioners, tens of millions of citizens who use their services, dozens of national organizations, and scores of grateful patients who are potential philanthropic partners. Pulling together, the dream of transforming the medical industry into a system of health creation could have powerful muscle and multiple minds to press for change. What organizations are in the next rings of collaborators?

(For those interested, many of these are part of a booklet on [120 milestones for integrative health and medicine](#) and also this [presentation for the 2016 AIHM conference](#).)