

# ADVOCACY 101

**Be the Change You Want to See...**

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# What you need to know!

- What is advocacy?
- Why is it necessary?
- Who makes the most effective advocate?
- How to develop an advocacy strategy?
  - Determining your issue
  - Evaluating the key players
  - Messaging & tactics
- Was it effective?
  - Evaluation & follow-up

# What is advocacy?

Advocacy involves activities undertaken in support of a cause, proposal or legislative action; it is a common term without any legal meaning.

# Why is advocacy necessary?

- To protect a self-interest
  - Equity in access to health care and clinical outcomes
  - Inadequate funding for health disparities intervention
- To educate and provide public awareness
  - PA 653'06
  - Social determinants to health
- To promote a cause via public/private events
  - Prostate cancer screenings
  - HIV/AIDS research

# Who makes the most effective advocate?

- Those who share a personal connection with the issue
- Those who could be impacted by the issue
- Anyone who wants to make a difference

# How to develop an advocacy strategy...

- An advocacy strategy is an approach aimed at getting someone in power, typically government or corporate, to do something in the public interest that he wouldn't otherwise do
  - Appropriate funding for health disparities reduction
  - Enact community engagement initiatives

# Determining Your Issue

An issue is a solution or partial solution to an identified problem

- You must analyze the problem and decide what kind of solution is obtainable; this could be either short or long term
- You must frame the issue in a way that will gain the most support; practice positive spin

# Effective Issues...

- Are easy to understand
- Have a clear target
- Are non-divisive
- Result in meaningful life improvements
- Instill a sense of power to the powerless
- Are broadly and deeply felt
- Are winnable

# YOU MUST KNOW YOUR ISSUE!!!

In order to effectively present your issue, you must have knowledge of both sides of the discussion; if there wasn't an opposing view, there wouldn't be a problem

- Obtain credible information from:
  - The internet, library, and news outlets
- Obtain public perceptions from:
  - Commentary on social networking sites, blogs, and editorials

# Establish Your Goal

- Without a clear, obtainable goal your advocacy will lack purpose, direction, and the intended outcome
- Long-term vs. Short-term Goal
  - A long-term goal is one you eventually hope to obtain and usually has many factors to address
  - A short-term goal has a more immediate resolution and may be one step in advancing a longer-termed goal

# Identifying Your Targets

- Identifying the key players is crucial in determining the potential success of your advocacy efforts
  - Determine which individuals, political figures, community leaders, religious, civic and trade organizations would have an interest, to advance or protect, that is related to your issue; these would be natural allies or constituents
  - Determine and research those in opposition to your issue; underestimation of this group could sabotage your efforts

# Targets should include...

- Elected officials
  - Federal, state, and local government
- Organizations
  - Religious, civic, Greek, public and private
- Media outlets
  - Television, radio, print, internet
- Anyone who'll listen
  - Family, friends, co-workers

# Messaging & Tactics

- Messaging or “talking points” outline your issue, its current impact, and your recommended resolution
- Messengers are the individuals or organizations that will publicly carry the message to identified targets
- Tactics are the short-term activities used to positively influence targets to produce the intended resolution

# Messaging should be...

- Easy to understand
  - Plain English
- Accurate and factual
  - Reliable, primary sources
- Consistent
  - Among all messengers
- Tailored to the interest of your intended target
  - Creates common ground and confirms their values
- Concise and to the point
  - Makes it easy to remember and repeat

# Tactics may include...

- Face-to-face meetings
  - Appointments with officials
  - Rallies and townhall
  - PTA, board meetings, and organization days
- Internet
  - Emails
  - Blogs/Twitter
  - Facebook, MySpace & YouTube
- Phone calls
- Writing campaigns
  - Letters and postcards
  - Petitions
  - Editorials
- Media coverage

# Evaluation & Follow-up

- It is critical that you review responses received from your targets in order to evaluate the effectiveness of your messaging and tactics
- It is also important to provide post-advocacy follow-up with messengers and allies

# Evaluation should ask...

- How effective were the messaging and tactics?
  - Were you able to explain the issue in simple terms?
  - Were you able to provide a factual counter arguments?
  - Were unanswered questions investigated and followed-up promptly?
  - Did tactics provide consistent and impactful visibility?
- What responses were received?
  - Were responses mostly supportive or confrontational; objective or subjective?
  - Could a change in strategy produce more positive results?
- Did messaging and tactics produce the intended resolution?
  - Were opponents persuaded and allies empowered?
  - Was short-term or long-term goal achieved?
  - Have networks of future supporters been established?

# Post-advocacy follow-up should always include...

- Thank you letters, emails, and phone calls
- A debriefing with participants to discuss successes and failures for future reference; what worked/what didn't and why
- Establishment of new networks of legislative and advocacy supporters
- A vehicle or platform that keeps you and your supporters connected to the issue and future developments

# Advocacy Work is a Marathon, Not a Race!

- When you become frustrated or discouraged, always ask yourself...

If not you, then who?

If not now, then when?

You are the change you want to see!

# THANK YOU!

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