Advocacy 101
Welcome!
We are SO Glad You Are Here?

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What Is Advocacy?

• Latin for “voice”
• The *process* of *influencing* the *public’s attitude* toward a specific issue or group

• Remember – people make decisions, not institutions
Why Do Advocacy?

“I have come to the conclusion that politics are too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.”

-Chaśles de Gaulle
Why Do Advocacy?

We are the experts!
All politics are local!

Endless access points to exert influence:
• Any member of Congress can introduce a bill
• Subcommittee hearings and mark-ups
• Full committee hearings and mark ups
• Any Senator can “hold” a bill
• House leadership has great power to stop progress
• Very weak party loyalty
Power in Numbers

- AARP
- Pink Ribbons = ______________
- Mental Health Parity

- Those who are the most *committed and organized* can outmaneuver groups that are larger or have more money!
“Many forms of Government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

- Winston Churchill

This is the only system of government we have. If we’re going to create change, we need to work through it.

YOU can do this!
You’ll be surprised how easy it is!
Advocacy is Like Baseball

• Legislative change happens s-l-o-w-l-y. It’s supposed to!
• Most of the time when a batter steps up to the plate, nothing happens.
• VERY successful baseball players hit around .300
• Wayne Gretzky: “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.”
You May Be The Straw

- On most issues, a certain number of calls or letters will convince a legislator to take action
- YOUR call or letter may not be THE contact that convinces a legislator to take action, but it makes THE contact possible!
You're listened to MUCH more than lobbyists

“If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy strategies directed to the Washington office have on his/her decision?”

Source: “Communicating With Congress,” Congressional Management Foundation, 2005
The BIG Picture of NAADAC Priorities

- Refer to “Guide to Addiction Policy”
  - **Priority Issue 1:** Affordable Care Act (ACA) & Wellstone-Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (Parity) are fairly and effectively implemented
  - **Priority Issue 2:** Growing and developing the addiction professional workforce in the 21st century
  - **Priority Issue 3:** Increasing federal and state funding levels for addiction treatment

- Treatment Works! People Recover!
Success Story

- Oct ‘08 - Paul Wellstone MH Parity & Addiction Equity Act signed by President Bush into law
- History
  - 1996 law
  - Introduced throughout 2000s
- 2007 “The Stars Aligned!
  - Democrats take control of the House & Senate
  - Senate seeks insurance & business groups’ support
  - Reps. Kennedy and Ramstad hold 14 informal hearings across the country
  - Navigating the legislative process: 3 separate committees in House, unanimous consent in the Senate
  - Informal negotiations
  - Remaining issue: funding “offsets”
So... Who Represents Me?

National Representatives/Legislation

- www.naadac.org - “Advocacy” Tab
  - Find “E-Advocacy Center” in middle of page & select “Sign Up”
    - Select “Elected Officials” tab
    - Enter Zip Code to find your Congressmen

- Select “Issues & Legislation” tab to check on status of House & Senate bills
Now Let’s Get to Those Visits!

- Do you have appointment(s) scheduled?
  - Call/email/fax ahead of time to set up appointment
    - Firstnamelastname.house.gov (ex: lamarsmith.house.gov)
  - Call now if you don’t
  - Can’t get an appointment? Just drop in.

- What to say –
  - “… I am from ________, a constituent of the Congressman’s, and am in town and would like an appointment to speak with him or his legislative aide in charge of HC about issues relative to addiction prevention, treatment and recovery.” Let them know you only need 10 – 15 minutes.
But wait ... do your homework first!

- Find out about your legislators
  - Background
  - What do you hear/read about them at home?
  - Caucus Membership
    - Congressional Addiction Treatment & Recovery Caucus
      - 73 of 337 Representatives (22%)
    - Youth Drug Prevention Caucus
  - Bills they have sponsored?
  - What committee appointments do they have?
The Basics of Making a Lobbying Visit

1. Arrive early/on time; sign in with address
2. Introduce yourself to receptionist; who your appointment is with
3. Introduce yourself to staff person; follow their lead on where you’ll be meeting, make small talk; introduce/describe NAADAC
4. Talk about our 3 issues — Be brief, be smart, be gone!
5. Provide handouts
6. Thank them for their time & help; exchange business cards
Be positive, Be passionate, Be brief
Tell your story relevant to the issues - you are the expert
Ask for something specific
Remember what you communicate may be shared
DON’T make up an answer! Always a good reason to get back to them.
DON’T be partisan: NAADAC is a tax-exempt organization
Practice your presentation, know who will say what
DON’T expect an immediate answer but ask to hear back
Give-and-Take Discussion

- Short anecdotes are good; Long ones are bad
- Policy discussion: our 3 issues
- Be interactive
  - Ask questions
    - What does Rep. X think about bill Y?
    - What are Rep. X’s legislative priorities right now?
    - Why did Sen. Z vote the way he did on that bill?
Our Top 3 Issues – or “Asks”

1. Maintain the current structure of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant as authorized in statute and increase funding in FY 2013 by $50 million

2. Improve access to addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery services for current service members, veterans & their families by qualified substance abuse counselors

3. Encourage Representatives to join the bipartisan Addiction, Treatment, and Recovery Caucus

Refer to the Issue Brief/Talking Points in your packets.
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant

- Cornerstone of the States’ substance abuse prevention and treatment systems
- Serves our nation’s most vulnerable, low-income populations
- Funding has been stagnant for the last several years (approx. $1.8 billion) while demand for services rise
- SAMHSA’s FY 2013 budget request proposes funding process, through a 1-yr waiver, that would create a new Substance Abuse State Prevention Grant that would be based on high need
- Congress opposed the proposal last year & kept the SAPT Block Grant whole
- New proposal would result in significant reduction to prevention funding
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant

Ask:
- Maintain the current structure of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant as authorized in statute
- Increase funding in FY 2013 by $50 million
Substance Use Treatment for Service Members & Veterans

- All veterans - FT servicemen/women, National Guard, Reservists, and their families - deserve the highest quality of health care possible – including access to addiction prevention, treatment, & recovery services from highly qualified substance abuse counselors
- Current DoD & VA policies prevent hiring qualified SA counselors to treat current service members under Tricare & vets through VA system
- Tricare does not have an OP treatment benefit
Substance Use Treatment for Service Members & Veterans

Ask:

◦ Support increasing access to addiction prevention, treatment, & recovery services from highly qualified substance abuse counselors
◦ Urge the DoD & VA to stop discriminating against substance abuse counselors in their hiring practices
◦ Require Tricare to fund outpatient treatment
Congressional Addiction, Treatment & Recovery Caucus

- Members of the U.S. Congress that meet to pursue common legislative objectives
- Bipartisan
- Founded 2004 by Reps. Patrick Kennedy & Jim Ramstad
- Inform, educate & raise awareness about addiction & recovery; increase legislative support for expanding access to care for people with addiction
Ask:
- Please join the Congressional Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus
- If your Rep is already a member, thank him/her!
So What’s Next?

- Top 3 Rules for Advocacy Success
  - Follow-Up
  - Follow-Up
  - Follow-Up
- The contact is not the goal.
- Remember, it’s the relationship we are after!
Writing/Faxing/E-mailing

- Short & to the point
- **Always include your name and mailing address**
- **Ask for something specific**
- Keep a copy for future reference
- Fax your letter
Communications to Capitol Hill
1995-2006

Source: Congressional Management Foundation, 2008
Content Matters!

“One hundred form letters have less direct value than a single thoughtful letter generated by a constituent of the Member’s district.”

“Form letters are a waste of everyone’s time. What we care about is that a constituent not only took the time to write a communication to us, but that he/she understands the fundamentals of the issue at hand and makes a rational, well-conceived argument for the position.”

CMF report: “Quality is more persuasive than quantity.... The content matters. The operating assumption of many congressional staff is that the more time and effort constituents take to communicate, the more passionately they care about the issue.”

Source: “Communicating With Congress,” Congressional Management Foundation, 2005
When You Are Back at Home

- Phone call
- E-mail
- Letter
- Lobbying visit
- Volunteer on a political campaign
- Contribute money
- Stage a protest
- Participate in a march
- Hold a press conference
-Invite them to speak at a conference

- Write a letter to the editor
- Speak before a committee
- Join a community group
- Run for office
- Post a yard sign
- Get a bumper sticker
- Speak about politics to your friends/family/neighbors
- Send legislator your newsletter
- VOTE!
Resources to Stay Informed

• Advocacy section of NAADAC’s website
  • E-Advocacy Center - sign-up for e-alerts & track federal legislation
  • Chris Campbell – Director of Government Relations
    • chris@naadac.org

• Articles in Addiction Professional & NAADAC News
What Else Can You Do?

- State Public Policy Conferences
- NAADAC’s Advocacy in Action Conferences
- Contribute to NAADAC’s PAC
  - The only addiction-specific PAC
  - Make contributions on behalf of our industry
- Sign up for your state’s Legislative Committee