Advocacy 201
Introductions

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Welcome to Washington!

• This is the 25th anniversary of NAADAC’s first Advocacy in Action Conference!
The 4 goals of this presentation are to:

1. Show how important (and easy) legislative advocacy is (but you already know that!)
2. Update you on current status of addiction-focused issues and legislation
3. Prepare you for your visits to Capitol Hill
4. Have a good time doing all this!
But first... I’m just a “bill”
What is Advocacy?

• From Latin for “voice”

• Working definition: Advocacy is the process of influencing the public’s attitude towards a specific issue or group
What is Advocacy?

Individual-Driven

- Builds on the advocate’s individual strengths
- Keeps in mind that individuals are always the target—ultimately people make decisions, not institutions
What is Advocacy?

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

-Charles de Gaulle
Why Do Advocacy?

First and foremost: The American System demands it (the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees your right to petition the government).

- Legislators cannot be experts in everything, but they want to understand their constituents
- You have expert power...no one else can give policymakers the front-line information you have! – You are an expert on you!
- You give back to your profession, community, clients, and country
- Finally…. No one else will do this for us!
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Why **YOU** Matter!

*Without grassroots activity, advocacy is ineffective!*

NAADAC

state affiliate

individual counselors
Don’t Just Sit on the Sidelines - Be an Advocate

A few more reasons to be an advocate..

Churchill

Data
Sir Winston Churchill once said: “[I]t has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

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

And that takes \textit{ALL} of us working together.
The Data: 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
Many times, a one-on-one contact with a legislator or his/her staff does the job.

Like other humans, legislators’ decisions are often based on personal experiences with other individuals.
The Issues

• NAADAC advocates at the federal level for sound policies that will reduce the number of Americans who suffer from addiction
• Currently, there are a multitude of addictions or addictions-related issues that are active in Congress
• Each issue is in varying stages of the legislative process, but requires the same amount of constant attention and support
Priority policy issues that NAADAC is working on for our members:
(Refer to “Guide to Addiction Policy” in your packets)

Priority Issue 1: Ensuring that both the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Wellstone-Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity (Parity) Act 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

The Issues (Macro Level)
Advocacy in Action Issues (Micro Level)

The NAADAC Public Policy Committee (PPC) has chosen to focus on the following three priority issues, or “asks” for this year’s Advocacy in Action Hill visits (also refer to Issue Brief Handout in your packets):

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 Servicemembers, Veterans and 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)
The Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant is the cornerstone of the States’ substance abuse prevention and treatment systems.

The SAPT Block Grant serves our nation’s most vulnerable, low-income populations.

Funding for the SAPT Block Grant has been stagnant for the last several years (approx. $1.8 billion), yet the demand for services continues to rise!
SAMHSA’s FY 2013 budget request proposes again to separate the 20 percent set-aside of the SAPT Block Grant required by statute through a one-year waiver, and combine the 20 percent set-aside with $60 million from the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG)/Partnerships for Success Program.

This would create a new $404.5 million Substance Abuse-State Prevention Grant that would be awarded to States and Territories by a formula to be developed by SAMHSA based on high need.

Congress opposed the proposal last year and kept the SAPT Block Grant whole.

The new proposal would result in a significant reduction to substance abuse prevention funding.
• **Ask:** Please 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
Issue 2: Improve Access to Addiction Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services for Current Servicemembers, Veterans and Their Families by Highly Qualified Substance Abuse Counselors

- NAADAC believes that all veterans—including full-time servicemen and women, National Guard, Reservists, and their families—deserve the highest quality of health care possible.
- This includes access to addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery services from highly qualified substance abuse counselors.
• Current DoD and VA policies prevent the hiring of qualified substance abuse counselors to treat current Servicemembers under Tricare and veterans through the VA system

• Since 1994, the only eligible counselors are: psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, licensed professional mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists, with substance abuse certification
• Licensed or certified substance abuse counselors are highly trained professionals who possess specialized skills through competency-based training, including treating combat trauma.
• **Ask: Urge your Members of Congress to support increasing access to addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery services from highly qualified substance abuse counselors, by urging the DoD and VA to stop discriminating against substance abuse counselors in their hiring practices**
Q: What is a Congressional Caucus?
A: A congressional caucus is a group of members of the U.S. Congress that meets to pursue common legislative objectives.

The Congressional Caucuses of particular importance to the substance use and addiction treatment profession is the Congressional Addiction, Treatment, and Recovery Caucus.
Congressional Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus

- Bipartisan
- Founded in 2004 by Reps. Patrick Kennedy and Jim Ramstad
- Brings members of the House and their staffs together to inform, educate and raise awareness about addiction and recovery, and to increase legislative support for expanding access to care for people with addiction
• Ask: Please join the Congressional Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus
• If your Representative is already a member(s) of the caucus, thank him/her!
Remember: There’s almost always something specific your legislator can do to help on an issue

- Offer an amendment during floor consideration or a committee mark-up
- Send a “Dear Colleague” letter on your issue
- Speak in favor of your position in public
- Find a colleague on the other side of the aisle to work with
- Talk/write to committee chair about your bill
- Talk/write to Administration office about your issue
- Introduce a bill
- Cosponsor a bill
- Cosign a letter on your issue
Going to Capitol Hill –
Wednesday March 21st

- Breakfast Briefing on the Hill (9:00 a.m. – 10:30am. Location: Johnny’s Half Shell, 400 North Capitol Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. at the corner of North Capitol Street & Louisiana Avenue, one block from Union Station (Red Line Metro) Leave plenty of time!
- Speakers:
  - Rep, John Sullivan
  - Rep. Tim Ryan
  - Rep. Mary Bono Mack
  - Dr. Westley Clark, SAMHSA
- Visits on Capitol Hill (11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)
- (Optional) Hill Visit De-briefing (3:00 p.m - 5:00 p.m.) – Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Alexandria
Going to Capitol Hill

What to check before your visit:

• Time of visit—be prompt, please!
• Location of office (see map)
• Appointment with … ?
• On which committees does the member of Congress serve?
  • House: Energy & Commerce; Education & Labor; Ways & Means; Appropriations; Veterans Affairs; Budget
  • Senate: HELP; Appropriations; Budget, Veterans Affairs
Going to Capitol Hill
How to conduct a lobbying visit: the basics

1. Walk into the office and introduce yourself to the receptionist, and say who you have an appointment with
2. When the staff person comes out, introduce yourself, follow their lead on where exactly you’ll be meeting, make small talk, etc.
3. Talk about the three issues
4. Provide handouts to staffer
5. Thank the legislator/staffer for their time and help, and exchange business cards
6. Follow up!
What will you talk about?

- Greetings and introductions: where do you live, where do you work, what local civic/business/etc. groups are you part of?
- You’re here in Washington representing NAADAC
  - Describe NAADAC and why you’re a member
What will you talk about?

- THE “Big Picture” message: “Treatment works. Recovery is possible”
- Educating your contact is the #1 priority, especially if they disagree with you on policy
- All other policy points flow from this initial message—if your contact doesn’t believe that people recover through treatment, they will not be convinced by any cost-savings data, arguments about fairness, etc.
- If you say those words, your visit is a success!
Give-and-take

- Short, memorable anecdotes are good
  - Long, rambling, distracting ones are bad
- Policy discussion: the 3 issues from this training
- 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?
The closing

- Briefly go through items in leave-behind packet
- Specific “asks:”
  - SAPT Block Grant
  - VA/DoD
  - Join ATR Caucus
- Offer to be a resource on addiction issues
Things to keep in mind

- Be positive
- Be passionate, but reasonable
- Be brief: you may only get 15 minutes
- Share your experiences: you are an expert on you
- Ask for something specific
- Remember what you communicate may be shared
- **DON’T** make up an answer. If you’re asked a question you can’t answer, just say “I’m not sure about that…let me get back to you.”
- **DON’T** be partisan: NAADAC is a tax-exempt organization (i.e., limited politicking), and staff are loyal to their boss/political party
- Practice your presentation, and know who will say what
- **DON’T** expect an immediate answer…the staff person will have to run your request up the food chain
What are you leaving behind?

- Packet with:
  - NAADAC Guide to Addiction Policy
  - Congressional Handout on SAPT Block Grant
  - Congressional Handout on DoD/VA Substance Abuse healthcare programs
  - ATR Caucus sign-on letter
  - NAADAC brochures, magazines
  - Your business card/contact information
Drop Offs

• If you were unable to make an appointment with a particular staffer in an office, you can still stop by and drop off the packet of information
• Better yet, when you arrive in the office, introduce yourself to the front desk person as a constituent and ask if there is someone available to meet with you for a few minutes
• Chances are the front desk person will find someone for you to meet with!
• You are a constituent standing in the office—they will want to make you happy!
The lobbying visit, (or phone call, letter, or e-mail) in itself is **NOT** the end point of engaging in advocacy. The end point is getting a concrete, specific answer from the legislator/bureaucrat on your particular request.
What’s next?

• Please fill out and return Hill Meeting follow up form. This form can be returned to the registration desk or during the optional debrief session on Wednesday, March 21st 9\textsuperscript{th} from 3:00 – 5:00 pm. It can also be faxed to 703.741.7698 or mailed to 1001 N. Fairfax St., Ste. 201, Alexandria, VA 22314, attention Chris Campbell.

• Be sure to follow up
  • Thank you messages
  • Check in occasionally
  • Get in touch with home district offices
  • Stay informed
    • www.naadac.org
    • www.capwiz.com/naadac
Questions and Discussion

• What can you tell us from your past experiences going to Capitol Hill?
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever does.”

~Margaret Meade