Advocacy at the State Level
A Voice for Change in All 50 States

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NAADAC Code of Ethics
IV. Professional Responsibility
Standard 1: Counselor Attributes
The addiction professional, as an advocate for his or her clients, understands that he/she has an obligation to support legislation and public policy that recognizes treatment as the first intervention of choice for non-violent substance-related offenses.

X. Policy and Political Involvement
Standard 1: Societal Obligations
The addiction professional is strongly encouraged to the best of his/her ability, actively engage the legislative processes, educational institutions and the general public to change public policy and legislation to make possible opportunities and choice of service for all human beings of any ethnic or social background whose lives are impaired by alcoholism and drug abuse.
The goal of advocacy through the West Virginia Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors is to promote and advocate for legislation that enhances, develops and supports statewide services for the prevention, education and treatment of all types of addiction. Members are encouraged and supported through the efforts of the Association to engage in direct local and statewide efforts directed at these areas. In addition to this, members are urged to make local contacts, provide information and support to their representatives on a local community level, state level and nationally where needed.
Legislative Advocacy: Our highest priority is advocacy for the prevention, intervention, and treatment of addiction. This goal is accomplished through prudent execution of personal and corporate advocacy efforts at local, state and national levels. The expertise, integrity, and commitment of our association management firm and the staff of our national affiliate lead advocacy efforts. Advocacy includes monitoring regulatory agencies at state and federal levels.
The responsibility of the many rather than just the few.

So, first start with your State Association!
- Form a Legislative Committee
- Passionate, committed chairperson!
- Budget
- Lobbyist???
What Issues Get Addressed at the State Level?

- Budget
- Funding Sources
- Licensing of Counselors
- Regulation of Treatment Facilities
- Criminal Justice & Treatment
Who Focuses on Addiction Issues in Your State?

- What agencies?
- What associations?
- Who can you collaborate with?
- Who is already working on the issues?

Combining our voices increases the volume!
State vs Federal Legislators

Similarities & Differences

- Availability
- Access
- Contact
- Relationship

Know who has jurisdiction over what issues!
Who Represents Me?

Following are instructions on how to locate your Texas U.S. Representative, Texas State Senator, and Texas Representative:

1. Go to [http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/)

2. Click on “Who Represents Me?” located in the left hand margin.

3. Fill in the form as requested and click the Submit button.

   - Street Address: 
   - City: 
   - ZIP Code: 
   - District Type: All Districts

4. From here you will be able to print your Texas U.S. Representative, Texas State Senator, and Texas Representative.
**Texas U.S. Senators**
U.S. Senators represent the entire state. Texas' current U.S. Senators are [Senator John Cornyn](https://www.johncornyn.com) and [Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison](https://www.kaybathutchison.com). See their websites for current contact information.

**Texas U.S. Representative**
Congressional District 21--Congressman Lamar Smith
[Texas Congressional Member Websites](https://www.house.gov)

**Texas State Senator**
Senate District 25--[Senator Jeff Wentworth](https://www.jeffwentworth.com)
Capitol Office: CAP 1E.9
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0125
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711
District Address: 925 North Frost Center, 1250 N.E. Loop 410
San Antonio TX 78209
Phone: (210) 826-7800

**Texas State Representative**
House District 73--[Representative Doug Miller](https://www.douglmiller.com)
Capitol Office: EXT E1.314
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0325
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768
District Address: 387 W. Mill Street
New Braunfels TX 78130
Phone: (830) 625-1313
Who Represents Me?

- Each state has a similar website to find who represents you.
- Google
  “Find State Legislators in __________”

Great starting place to engage new people!
Know Your Legislators

- What is their voting history?
- What is their position on our issues?
- Where are they in the election cycle?
- Who are their challengers?
- What else can you learn about them?
Can You Get Their Attention?

- Are there treatment providers in their district?
  - Invite them to an event
  - Will they sit on a board?
- Can your state association engage them?
  - Ask them to speak at a conference
  - Give them an award (if they’re worthy!)
- Attend THEIR events
- Make a contribution!

- And, of course, VOTE
Developing/Growing the Relationship

- Make use of their presence in your district
- Work your connections – Who do you know that knows them?
- Visit/Send emails/Make phone calls
- Respect their time – be selective
- Follow-up, Follow-up, Follow-up
- Stay in touch
- Do what you said you’d do!
State Advocacy Conference

- Collaboration with other associations is very useful
- Seek out states who will share their model
- Timing is important
- Expect this to take time to catch on
  - TAAP Advocacy Conference Attendees
    - 2005 – 61
    - 2007 – 112
    - 2009 – 122
    - 2011 – 250
- Invite speakers who can address current issues
- Invite a legislator to speak!!
- Give awards!
Develop a State-Wide Network

- Will vary based on dynamics of your state
  - TX: 30 Senators; 150 House members
  - WV: 33 Senators; 101 Delegates

- Engaging members in your association
  - Recruitment
  - Activating the members
  - Representation throughout state

- Develop legislative calling tree

- Who “pulls the trigger”?
State Successes

Texas – 2011

- HB 3145 – funded peer assistance; removed oral exam requirement; lessened wait period for licensing of those with criminal convictions
- SB 331 – outlawed K2
- HB 3146 – removed requirement for MD to obtain informed consent for SUD treatment; reduced annual training requirement for intake personnel
- SB 1449 – allows JC & CARF accreditation to substitute for state audits
State Successes

W. Virginia – 2012

Governor’s Bill on Substance Abuse Treatment – more closely monitor methadone programs; formed Substance Abuse Advisory Board; increased restrictions on purchase of cold meds; updated & added medications to drug schedule

DUI Law – upgraded & expanded DUI law & associated treatment program; tightened restrictions & penalties on repeat offenders; increased fees, options for treatment, fee structure for indigent care & increased access to in-car monitoring
Political Action Committee

- Legalities of a PAC
- Raising money
- Deciding how/when to contribute funds
- Using the PAC to get attention of legislators
Involve Special Groups

- Texas Youth for Legislative Change
- Prevention groups
- Criminal Justice success stories
- What other groups have a heartfelt story to tell?
Advocacy – It’s More than Just at the Capitol

- Speak Up
- Treatment Works! People Recover!
- Share Your Story
- Offer Your Expertise
Organize Your Workplace

- Be Careful – limitations on state employees; grantees need to not jeopardize funding
- Match your efforts to your workplace to keep administrative support
- Blog, Facebook, Websites
- Make it easy for your fellow employees
- Calculate the impact of your employees in a district
Gather with others from your state/region
Brainstorm ideas to get started or further legislative advocacy in your state
Elect a spokesperson who will share ideas from your group with the rest of us
Your involvement makes a **BIG** impact!

One Phone Call = 50 Voters
One Email = 100 Voters
One Personal Visit = 500 voters
Thank You & Good Luck!
Let us know how we can help!

- Gerry Schmidt – gschmidt@valleyhealthcare.org
- Robert Miles – robertmiles@sbcglobal.net
- Sherri Layton – slayton@lahacienda.com
- Chris Campbell – NAADAC Director of Government Relations – chris@naadac.org