

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY FOR POLICY CHANGE – MAKING THE ASK!

KENTUCKY PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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If YOU don't speak up and ask... Who will do it?

- Who understands the issues and need for policy change better than YOU do?
- Whose voice will be heard if not yours?



Your Voice as a Public Health Advocate

YOU...Are a passionate educator! YOU...

- Understand it's about policy, not politics.
- See problems or unmet needs & want to fix them
- Are knowledgeable about the issues.
- Provide accurate information.
- Can access “free” media.
- Can rally grassroots support.
- Can gather allies to work in coalition.

Policies will be made

- Whether YOU are there or not...
- Public policies affect YOU, your family, community and the people you serve!
- YOU can stay on the sidelines or YOU can work for policy change in the system.



Target Your Ask

- Your ask can be targeted to the individual, community, state or national level
- What is the policy that needs to be changed or instituted...and why?
- Who has the power to change it?
- Who do those policy-makers listen to?
- How can you be one of those people?

What Do You Need to be Effective ?

- *Understand the process, context and timeframe for action on policy change
- *Identify the policy-makers
- *Specify your goals – short and long-term
- *Engage others in the policy fight
- *Prepare for defense, as well as offense
- *Remember...it's all about relationships!

What Are Your Decision-Points?

- *Are you certain that state action – law or reg – is the avenue for policy change around your issue?
- *Does the issue have a history of policy action?
- *Have you identified your champion(s)?
- *Is your goal to introduce an idea for later action or to try to pass something in the next session?
- *Who else is engaged with you in this fight?
- *How strong is the opposition likely to be?
- *Is it going to cost money?

Inside Politics

- Our issues are neither partisan nor political, but the process is!
- The party who holds the majority holds the power
- Those in leadership have great influence, as do committee chairs...but every legislator has a vote and a voice



How Are You Making Connections?

- What legislators know you, your agency, your issue?
- How many of those legislators are in key positions to help?
- How can you increase your outreach?
- Have you already run your idea “up the flagpole” with some key policy-makers?
- What is your history of connections... personal, organizational and on this issue?

Issue Education

What data do you have to make your case?

- Who is the target of your policy change – how will they be affected?
- Could you put together a single sheet of “Talking Points” to make your case?
- What is the consistent message you want legislators to hear about the issue?
- Who can you list as supporting the issue?

Issue Education

How do you make your case?

- Policy Briefs – lay out the research
- Talking Points – use bullets, lots of white space, illustrations
- Scripts – helps keep the message consistent across speakers
- Fact Sheets – good as “leave-behinds”, make sure they have your contact info

Lifting Up Voices

- Besides the Data – the numbers – to support your issue – who are the people?
- Your Goal: Put a Face on the Problem
- What kinds of personal stories can you gather and put in front of legislators? Are some of those constituents & influencers?
- How will you make and keep connections? How will you grab their attention?

Shifting the Narrative – Making the Case for Change

- It is helpful to lay out a description of what is happening now...why it needs to change ...and what the desired outcome looks like.
- “How” the change is made may need to be left to policy-makers.
- Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor – especially to smaller, weekly community papers – can help paint the narrative and build support for the issue and policy change

Building Support

- Engage in Coalition-Building:
Formal/Informal/One-Issue/Multiple Issues
- Educate and include unlikely allies
- Focus on the ultimate decision-makers and on those who can connect with and influence them
- Build a “buzz” of events, media and general public support

YOUR voice is magnified in coalitions
and working partnerships...

When all are aiming for the same target!



Engaging the Community

- Rallies / Press Conferences / Media
- Calls to Action / Action Alerts
- Social Media – lots of Twitter!
- Phone-Calling and/or Personal Visits
- Well-planned testimony
- An identifying color, slogan is helpful
- Utilize the media to keep your story alive
- Work to keep your supporters engaged

Words to the Wise...

- ❖ Legislating public policy is not always a logical and rational process
- ❖ Those who love sausage and the law should watch neither being made!
- ❖ Remember to say “Thank You!” even if you only got a toe inside the door
- ❖ Be polite but always be persistent... be the Energizer Bunny on your issue!

How Will YOUR Voice Be Heard?

- Identify YOUR Senator and Representative
- Go to www.legislature.ky.gov and put in your home address under “Find Your Legislator”
- Contact them at home and identify yourself as a **constituent** or as **working** in their district
- Contact them in Frankfort by Message Line, phone, email, letter, social media or visit
- **CALL THE MESSAGE LINE: 1-800-372-7181**
- Follow the action at www.legislature.ky.gov

All politics are local, even if the focus is at the state level



Words to Remember...

“Never forget that a small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed, that’s all that ever has.”

--Margaret Mead

Questions??

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