GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY—
strategies for participation and engagement

Health Center Board Member Training | May 12, 2015
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www.m pca.net
Why did you join the Board of your Health Center?

"You describe yourself as a ‘free thinker’. That’s good, because we can’t afford to pay you."

Cartoon by Randy Glasbergen. Used with permission.
What is your role as a Board Member?
Photo obtained from
“Society now reveals itself as something unfinished, not as something inexorably given; it has become a challenge rather than a hopeless limitation...”

…This new, critical optimism requires a strong sense of social responsibility and of engagement in the task of transforming society; it cannot mean simply letting things run on.”

Advocacy vs. Lobbying

**ADVOCACY**
- Educating policymakers to increase their awareness of what you do and how policy influences your organization

**LOBBYING**
- Asking legislators to take a position on specific legislation

**ACTING** in support of a belief, policy or cause | **GIVING** your voice on behalf of another | **SUPPORTING/RECOMMENDING** a policy
Advocacy is about one thing...

Building Power

Power is **NOT** measured by:

- Number of advocates on a list
- Number of small (or even large) victories we win every now and then
Advocacy is about one thing…

Building Power

Power **IS** measured by our ability to successfully advance our own agenda and make it unthinkable that any other political or special interest would ever want to take us on.
Goals of Advocacy

1. Build relationships with your elected officials and their staff
2. Build power to influence your elected officials
Keys to Successful Advocacy

Elevate advocacy to an organizational/strategic priority
Keys to Successful Advocacy

RELATIONSHIPS
Keys to Successful Advocacy
Keys to Successful Advocacy

NUMBERS

www.m pca.net

www.saveourchcs.org
Keys to Successful Advocacy

Advocacy is a competitive sport
Keys to Successful Advocacy

MEGAPHONE
Medicaid expansion ‘smart’

By Leader Staff

Published 2:30pm Friday, March 22, 2013

The Michigan Legislature has a rare opportunity to pass legislation that will save the state budget more than $1 billion over a decade while expanding health insurance to nearly 450,000 low-income adults who are uninsured today. Most of the Michigan adults who will be covered under the “Medicaid expansion” are employed, but their low-paying jobs don’t come with insurance.

They earn too much to qualify for Medicaid under current rules, but they can’t afford private insurance.

Expanding Medicaid coverage to 450,000 Michigan adults who are uninsured today is smart because it will save money and save lives.

• It will reduce cost shifting that happens when uninsured citizens use emergency rooms instead of doctors’ offices for basic care.
• It will allow the state to reduce state tax dollars that fund low-income health care, saving the state budget about $1 billion over a decade.
• It will improve the health of hundreds of thousands of residents, making it easier for them to find jobs, or get better jobs.
• It is supported by Gov. Rick Snyder, hospitals, doctors and key business organizations.

Please visit www.ExpandMedicaid.com and join us in urging the state Legislature to expand Medicaid now.

Or you may call our Michigan Senator and House Representatives to voice your support:

Ask them to support Gov. Snyder’s plan to expand Medicaid coverage.

Most of us have a family member, a friend, a neighbor or an acquaintance who needs a hand up, not a hand out. Give them your hand. Let’s give them our hands collectively.

Make your opinions heard.
Write a letter.
Make the phone calls.
Be the voice for someone you care about.

Mary Geegan Middleton
Executive Director
Cassopolis Family Clinic
Keys to Successful Advocacy

VOTES

Advocacy requires civic engagement
Things That Work

- Keep advocates up-to-date
- Make advocacy a standing item on agenda at every board and staff meeting
- Recognize advocates for their action
- Establish an ongoing schedule of hosting and meeting with local, state, federal elected officials at your Health Center
- Involve patients in advocacy
Two Types of Lobbying

DIRECT

Attempt to influence specific legislation by communicating your views about the legislation with a legislator, employee of the legislator, or a government official.

GRASSROOTS

Attempt to influence legislation by trying to affect the opinions of the general public related to specific legislation.
Prepare

- What are the facts and background about the issue?
- Who else has interest in the legislation?
- Why should your elected official support or oppose the legislation?
- Why is it important to your Health Center?
- What facts and merit can you produce to make your case?

What to Tell Elected Officials

Who I am
What my issue is
Why I care
Why the legislator should care
What the legislator should do
Visits

- Most effective
- Call elected official’s office and ask for the scheduler
- Tell the scheduler you are a constituent and would like an appointment to discuss issue xyz
- Invite the elected official to visit your Health Center
Phone Calls

- Before you call, prepare – write a brief script of what you plan to say
- Identify yourself and say you are a constituent
- Ask if the elected official is available to discuss issue xyz (you will likely be directed to a staff person)
Phone Calls

- Give brief education about your Health Center
- Keep your message simple – less than four minutes
- Politely ask how the message will be delivered to the elected official
- Ask for a commitment
- Ask for a response in writing
Emails

- Be concise and keep it short
- If using a template, personalize it
- Address the elected official by name
- Include a self-explanatory subject line (e.g. SB 68)
- Mention that you are a constituent
- State your opinion and request
- Request a response
- Include your first and last name, mailing address, phone number, and organization
The Fringe Benefits of Lobbying

- Helps develop true constituencies
- Helps develop new leadership
- Helps educate the public
- Upholds democracy
- Those without a voice get heard
Take Action

- Sign up to be a Health Care Defender at www.mpca.net

- Begin building relationships with your state legislators. Contact them to let them know that Healthy Michigan is important to you and must be maintained regardless of whether CMS approves the second waiver!
THREE SIMPLE RULES IN LIFE

1. IF YOU DO NOT **GO** AFTER WHAT YOU WANT, YOU’LL NEVER HAVE IT.

2. IF YOU DO NOT **ASK**, THE ANSWER WILL ALWAYS BE **NO**.

3. IF YOU DO NOT **STEP FORWARD**, YOU WILL ALWAYS BE IN THE SAME PLACE.
Questions or assistance

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