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Increasing Brand Visibility: Effective Advocacy for the Professions

Barbara Jacobson, Ph.D. CCC-SLP

VP for Standards & Ethics in Speech-
Language Pathology

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Disclosures

- Financial
 - ◆ Salary (VUMC)
- Non-financial
 - ◆ VP for Standards & Ethics in Speech-Language Pathology - ASHA



Agenda

- Background
 - ◆ My experience
 - ◆ Define advocacy
 - ◆ Understand why it's important
 - ◆ Recognize the benefits of being an advocate
- Game Plan
 - ◆ Develop a plan of action
 - ◆ Establish a grassroots advocacy network
 - ◆ Work with the legislature
 - ◆ Leverage the media
 - ◆ Utilize ASHA resources





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Background



My experience

- Response to endoscopy regulation
- Stakeholder engagement
- Develop strategy
- Legislator alliances
- Negotiation
- Success!
- Other examples:
 - ◆ Telepractice, commercial insurance coverage



What is Advocacy?

- **Advocacy** is a political process by an individual or a large group which normally aims to influence public-policy
- An **advocate is a person** who works effectively to bring about positive change
- **Grassroots advocacy** is an organized way to achieve change that benefits a group (professionals, consumers)
- Grassroots advocacy involves:
 - ◆ Organizing groups of individuals with common interests
 - ◆ Providing information to decision makers to help them make informed decisions



Why is Advocacy Important?


- It empowers you and can help you accomplish goals
- It provides you with the opportunity to participate in government and local decision making
- It is part of the ASHA Code of Ethics
- It is your right...

You have the right to Advocate!



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Why is Advocacy Important?

- It is part of the ASHA Code of Ethics
 - ◆ Principle of Ethics III
 - ◆ Individuals shall honor their responsibility to the public when advocating for the unmet communication and swallowing needs of the public and shall provide accurate information involving any aspect of the professions.
- Role of a professional  Advocacy



What are the Benefits of Being an Advocate?

- Advocates are in a unique position to:
 - ◆ Educate decision makers about issues of concern
 - ◆ Share knowledge on an issue's impact in the local area
 - ◆ Help legislators, regulators, and other decision makers understand how audiology and speech-language pathology services improve the quality of life for their constituents





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Game Plan



Develop a Plan of Action

1) Identify issues and set priorities

- ◆ Survey the group
- ◆ Set advocacy goals
- ◆ Develop timeframes for achieving the goals



Develop a Plan of Action

2) Identify the factors necessary for change

- ◆ Is your issue a priority for the leadership?
- ◆ Are there sufficient financial resources available to achieve the goal?
- ◆ Is there significant opposition to your plan?



Develop a Plan of Action

3) Identify the key decision makers

- Legislators on committees of jurisdiction
- State or local Department of Health or Education officials
- Regulators or insurers
- School officials, superintendents, special education directors, school unions
- ◆ Determine their level of support or opposition
- ◆ Evaluate the political climate for change
- ◆ Determine the activities/actions needed to garner support





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Establish a Grassroots Advocacy Network



Establish a Grassroots Advocacy Network

- Recruit advocates: Like-minded members, key contacts in legislative districts
- Establish a database to keep track of your contacts
- Develop a system to communicate with network members





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Work with the Legislature



Work with the Legislature

- Understand the your audience
 - ◆ Know the political views and policy interests
 - ◆ Learn about the legislator's constituent base
 - ◆ Identify his/her committee assignments
 - ◆ Read their biographies and identify personal interests
 - ◆ Determine their political agenda



Work with the Legislature

- Learn the best way to “influence” decision makers
 - ◆ Face-to-face conversations are best
 - ◆ Letters need to be original
 - ◆ Telephone calls and e-mail also work

“What works best is personal thoughtful communication.”

—*Blackwell, 2001*



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Work with the Legislature

- Plan a Visit
 - ◆ Prepare a fact sheet and talking points that provide background information, data, and facts to support your position
 - ◆ Invite a consumer or plan to share a personal story during your visit
 - ◆ Create a handout or other “leave behind” with contact information to provide them (ONE PAGE)



Work with the Legislature

- Deliver the Message
 - ◆ "What is your experience with communication/swallowing disorders?"
 - ◆ Make an appointment and be on time
 - ◆ When delivering your message, be sure to:
 - Be accurate and concise; don't get off message
 - Use facts and data to support your position
 - Eliminate jargon
 - Ask for support and wait for a reply
 - Share a personal story
 - Be positive and courteous even if your positions differ
 - Promise to follow-up with answers to questions you don't know
 - Don't overstay your welcome



Work with the Legislature

- After the meeting
 - ◆ Write a personal thank you note
 - ◆ Inform your group of the results
 - ◆ Remember to get back to the legislature with answers to questions you didn't know
- Consider inviting your legislator to your workplace (school, private practice, health care setting)





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Leverage the Media



Leverage the Media

- Locate a reporter that covers your issues, (e.g., health care, education)
- Determine what reporters want
- Become a valuable resource
- Develop a tip sheet
- Facilitate a long-term relationship



Leverage the Media

- Contact the media to gain or maintain visibility
- Develop a media plan
 - ◆ Develop a calendar of events
 - ◆ Create a list of potential sources and contacts
 - ◆ Develop a “newsworthy” story
 - Key factors
 - The “angle”
 - Timing
 - Uniqueness
 - Broad audience appeal





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Utilize ASHA Resources



Utilize ASHA Resources

Contact your ASHA State Liaison for assistance with advocacy issues:

- **Central Region:** IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OK, SD, TX, WI
 - ◆ Janet Deppe; e-mail: jdeppe@asha.org
- **Western Region:** AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY
 - ◆ Eileen Crowe; e-mail: ecrowe@asha.org
- **Northeast Region:** CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, OH, VT
 - ◆ Susan Adams; sadams@asha.org
- **Southern Region:** AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, TN, SC, VA, WV
 - ◆ Vacant



Utilize ASHA Resources

ATION | PUBLICATIONS | EVENTS | ADVOCACY | CONTINUING EDUCATION | PRACT

- Visit ASHA's website to find state contact information as well as licensing and regulatory information

www.asha.org/advocacy/state

Utilize ASHA Resources

ASHA State-Based Networks can assist you with information and serve as a resource:

- **State Education Advocacy Leaders (SEALs)** can assist with education issues
ASHA staff liaison: Eileen Crowe; ecrowe@asha.org
- **State Advocates for Medicare Policy (StAMPS)** can assist with Medicare issues
ASHA staff liaison: Sarah Warren; swarren@asha.org
- **State Advocates for Reimbursement (STARs)** can assist with public and private insurance reimbursement issues
ASHA staff liaison: Laurie Alban Havens; lalbanhavens@asha.org



Utilize ASHA Resources

- Use of ASHA's e-advocacy tool
 - ◆ Develop advocacy messages and send an e-mail blast
 - ◆ Get assistance from ASHA state liaisons to create legislative and regulatory messages to member advocates
- Apply for a grant: state grant applications for are available to state associations in first quarter of each year. For further information go to:
<https://www.asha.org/Advocacy/stateleaders/ASHA-State-Grants--Procedures-and-Guidelines/>



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takeaction.asha.org



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Utilize ASHA Resources

- Board of Directors Feedback Form
 - ◆ ASHA's Board of Directors welcome your feedback and encourage you to submit any professional issues, concerns, or recommendations. All submissions will receive a timely response.
 - ◆ Members can complete the In Touch Form online at:

www.asha.org/about/governance/membersintouch.htm



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