Grassroots Advocacy: A Necessary Skill in Nursing

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Objectives

Define nurse advocacy
Define the legislative process from concept to law
  - State
  - Federal
Describe factors that influence legislation and support effective advocacy
Review Legislation affecting pediatric patients and nursing
Role Playing...
What is advocacy?

The act or process of advocating or supporting a cause or proposal


What is nurse advocacy?

Code of Ethics for Nurses

- Provision 7.3: Contributions through Nursing and Health Policy Development.
  - Nurses must lead, sponsor, and mentor an institutional or agency policy committee within the practice setting.
- Provision 9.4: Professional nursing organizations must actively engage in the political process, particularly in addressing legislative and regulatory concerns.

[Extracted from Nurse education Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements, 2015]

Where does nurse advocacy start?

With the patient!
- Nurses advocate at the bedside
- Nurse advocate for patients at the institution level
- Nurse advocate for patients through insurance
- Nurse advocate for patients at the governmental level

Nurse truly are professional advocates

Why Advocate?

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's up to you!"

- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax
Why should I get involved?

- Federal Law
- State Law
- Institutional Policy
- Insurance Policy

Nursing Impact

American Nurses Association
- "...advocacy is a pillar of nursing. Nurses instinctively advocate for their patients, in their workplaces, and in their communities; but legislative and political advocacy is no less important to advancing the profession and patient care."

- "Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other health care professionals, in redesigning health care in the United States"
How do I get involved?
Learn about the policymaking process
Learn about our government

The Legislative Process: Other things to consider...

Leadership
- Who are the current leaders?
- What are their interests?

Resources and support

Relationships

Timing
- Is the climate right to ask for a policy change?
- Is the time right to introduce new legislation?

The Legislative Process: Problem Identified- Now what?
Formulating Policy Proposals
- Proposals can come from
  - policy-planning organizations
  - interest groups
  - government bureaucracies
  - state legislatures
  - President
  - Congress
The Legislative Process: Legitimizing Public Policy

- Public statements
- Actions of government officials
  - Budget
  - Law and appropriations
  - Rules and Regulations
  - Etc.

The Legislative Process: Implementing Policy

After the law is passed
Rule making process
- Who should "own" the rule making process
- Continuation of opposition can also exist

The Legislative Process: Where does it start?

Identification of a problem
Agenda Setting influenced by
- Public demands for policy changes
- Political ideology
- Special Interest Groups (SIG)
- Media
- Must be important enough to make the "agenda"
How do I get involved?

Call
Write letters
Visit with Legislators
Volunteer
Join Professional Organizations
Nurse in Washington Internship
Nurse Day at the State House

Building a Relationship

Call your legislator
Offer to be a member of his/her “kitchen cabinet”
Visit the home town office
Attend a town hall meeting
Follow the legislator on Facebook/Twitter
Post!
Building a Relationship

Know the legislators staff
- Chief of Staff
- Legislative Director
- Legislative Assistant
- Legislative Correspondent

Building a Relationship

Know your legislators bills
- What has he/she sponsored/ co-sponsored

Know your legislators committees

Learn some commonalities
- Break the ice!!
- Does he/she have any links to healthcare?

Writing The Letter

Form letters
- Personalize them
  - First paragraph
  - Conclusion
  - More a story

Email

Mail
- Verify the address

Fax
Getting the Meeting

Who you think you will meet with...  Who you actually meet with...

Call the office
Request on-line
Prepare
- Be persistent
- Confirm date/time a day or 2 in advance
- Dress professionally
- Carry business cards
- Bring resources for the legislator/staff
- 1 page handout, etc.

Preparing for the Meeting
Work on your “elevator speech”
- Who you are
- What your objective is
- What is your call to action
- Create a hook
Practice. Practice. Practice.
During the Meeting

Introduce yourself
- Name, position, title, city/neighborhood
- Who are you representing
- Break the ice
- Try not to get off on a tangent

Cover your “asks”
- The Head
- The Heart
- The Health

During the Meeting

Do
- Be respectful
- Use active listening
- Clarify, rephrase and repeat

Don’t
- Be late
- Interrupt
- Be overly assertive

Ending the Meeting

Ask if he/she has questions you can answer
Offer to be a resource
Leave your business card and resources
Ask when you can follow-up
- Especially if no commitment
Thank him/her for his/her time
After the Meeting

Send a letter to the LEGISLATOR
- Thank him/her for time/consideration
- Highlight the staffer by name
- Send letter via email/snail mail or fax
- Follow up when you said you would!

Send a “debriefing” to your organization

After the Meeting

Debrief with your organization
- Who did you meet with?
- What is the legislators tie to healthcare?
- What is the legislators position/commitment/comments on the issue?
- Unanswered questions?

Current Federal Legislation

H.R. 255 - Family First Prevention Services Act of 2017
S. 1268 - Child Protection and Family Support Act of 2017
S. 1827 - KIDS Act of 2017
H.R. 767/ S. 256 - SOAR to Health and Wellness Act of 2017
H.R. 1825/S. 445 - Home Healthcare Planning Improvement Act
S. 1693 Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act of 2017 - passed
"When Florence Nightingale defined the role of the nurse, she saw patient advocacy in its broadest sense and considered influencing and educating policymakers as foundational to the role. As we follow her example, it is imperative to advocate on behalf of our patients with one strong voice."

- Eileen O’Grady and Loretta Ford

2012
## References


