ADVOCACY, POLICY CHANGE, AND THE HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY

Aubrey Hill
Director of Health Systems Change
Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved

Matt Warfield, MSW, MUP
Health Policy Organizer
National Health Care for the Homeless Council

Lyn Gullette, PhD
Executive Director
Co-operate Colorado

Joseph Benson
Community Health Worker
Health Care for the Homeless Houston

TR Reid
Author, Lecturer, Documentary Film Maker
Workshop Schedule

1:00pm-2:30pm
Policy Change Through Legislative Advocacy
Aubrey Hill, MPP; Matt Warfield, MSW, MUP

2:30pm-3:00pm
Break

3:00pm-3:45pm
ColoradoCare: Universal Health Care in Colorado
TR Reid; Lyn Gullette, PhD

3:45pm-4:30pm
Voter Registration and the HCH Community
Joseph Benson; Matt Warfield, MSW, MUP
POLICY CHANGE THROUGH LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

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Contemporary homelessness is the product of conscious social and economic policy decisions that have retreated from a commitment to ensuring basic life necessities for all people.
Be an Advocate for Change!

• Acting in support of a cause, person or policy

• Speaking on behalf of, or helping to empower, others to have their voice heard

• Standing up for what you believe in
Advocacy Tactics

• Protests and mass movements v. legislative advocacy

• Sweeping systematic changes v. incremental change

• Raising awareness v. calls to action

• Can/should work together
Individual ➔ Legislative Advocacy

• Individual Advocacy is:
  → Helping a client to gain access to care
  → Helping a client navigate systems, overcome barriers and injustices

• Legislative Advocacy is:
  → Changing policies, laws, or rules that impact many people
  → Increased funding, support of bills, testifying for more affordable housing
Education v. Lobbying

• Education
  ➔ Explaining the importance of HCH; Raising awareness

• Lobbying
  ➔ Advocating the enactment or defeat of pending or proposed federal, state, or local legislation
  ➔ Direct/Grassroots
But we are a Non-Profit, is this Legal?

• Yes! You may engage in as much education as you like, however there are restrictions on lobbying:
  → Federal grant funds cannot be used for lobbying
  → Lobbying cannot constitute a ‘substantial part’ of your center’s activities
  → You cannot intervene in a political campaign or support one candidate over another
Why Be an Advocate?

• If not you, then who else?
• You are the expert
• Failed policies have led to homelessness
• Hold your elected officials accountable
• Work together to meet the needs of the community
Why Legislative Advocacy?

• Congress shapes national priorities
• Congress appropriates all federal spending
• Congress sets parameters for programs, even those administered at the State level
• Congress is accountable to the people
• An engaged constituent can have a huge impact
Your Voice Matters

If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy strategies directed to the Washington office have on his/her decision?

- In-Person Issue Visits from Constituents: 46% A Lot of Positive Influence, 51% Some Influence
- Contact from a Constituent Who Represents Other Constituents: 36% A Lot of Positive Influence, 60% Some Influence
- Individualized Postal Letters: 20% A Lot of Positive Influence, 70% Some Influence
- Individualized Email Messages: 19% A Lot of Positive Influence, 69% Some Influence
- Phone Calls: 14% A Lot of Positive Influence, 72% Some Influence
- Comments During a Telephone Town Hall: 17% A Lot of Positive Influence, 68% Some Influence
- Visit From a Lobbyist: 8% A Lot of Positive Influence, 74% Some Influence
- News Editorial Endorsement of an Issue: 10% A Lot of Positive Influence, 65% Some Influence
- Individualized Faxes: 8% A Lot of Positive Influence, 62% Some Influence
- Form Postal Letters: 1% A Lot of Positive Influence, 53% Some Influence
- Form Email Messages: 1% A Lot of Positive Influence, 50% Some Influence
- Postcards: 1% A Lot of Positive Influence, 44% Some Influence
- Comments on Social Media Sites: 1% A Lot of Positive Influence, 41% Some Influence
- Form Faxes: 0% A Lot of Positive Influence, 30% Some Influence

*Question was asked only of senior managers and mail staffs. Their responses are aggregated (n=194).
THE US LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

SENATE

A bill is introduced by a member of the Senate and assigned to a committee for review.

The committee meets to discuss, amend, and vote on the bill.

If approved, the bill proceeds to the full Senate for further discussion, amendments, and voting.

Both chambers vote on the final bill.

If approved, the President signs the bill and it becomes a law.

House of Representatives

A bill is introduced by a member of the House and assigned to a committee for review.

The committee meets to discuss, amend, and vote on the bill.

If approved, the bill proceeds to the full House for further discussion, amendments, and voting.

Both chambers vote on the final bill.

If approved, the President vetoes the bill and sends it back to Congress.

The veto can be overridden by Congress with a 2/3 vote.

It starts with an idea...
Committees and Subcommittees

• Most work on a Bill occurs in Committee
• Committees have a lot of power
• Chair and Ranking Member have a lot power within committees
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How to be an Effective Advocate

• Build relationships/Get to know your legislators
  → Share your story
  → Be a source of knowledge
• Become part of coalitions
  → Coordinate efforts/tactics to accomplish similar goals
• Be in it for the long haul/Be active
  → Advocacy is an ongoing effort – change isn’t immediate.
• Know what you want and who can give it to you
Build Relationships: Engage your Legislators

- In-person meeting at home or in DC
- Contact via telephone, email, letters (faxed), twitter and other social media
- Invite your legislator to tour your HCH program
Contacting your Legislator

- Many online resources
- Capitol Switchboard: 1(877) 210-5351
- Ask to speak to staffer who works on subject
- In-person meeting
  - District or DC Office?
  - Think about timing:
    - When is Congress in session?
    - Where in the process is the bill you want to support?
    - What is it you are asking for, does now make sense?
Plan Ahead

- Meeting is generally 15 to 30 minutes
- Think about who should attend, who should say what, and in what order
- Have a clear ASK
- Bring printed materials to leave behind
- Consider likely counter-arguments to your position and prepare responses
Do’s and Don’ts of Legislative Advocacy

Do:
• Know what you are asking for
• Know your audience
• Know your opponents
• Know the rules
• Make a commitment
• Be polite
• Say THANK YOU
• Keep it simple

Don’t:
• Offer answers you don’t have
• Assume knowledge of HCH
• Believe someone else will advocate
• Burn bridges
• Be intimidated
• Express partisanship
• Forget to make your ASK
What Administrators Can Do

- Allow time for advocacy in job description
- Create tangible advocacy opportunities and encourage participation
- Recognize staff and consumers for their advocacy work
- Include advocacy in staff and Board orientations and trainings
- Encourage participation in external coalitions
What the Board Can Do

• Include advocacy in your Mission Statement
• Develop an annual advocacy agenda
• Make time to discuss advocacy at meetings
• Use external contacts and professional experience to advocate for HCH projects and patients
What Clinicians and Staff Can Do

- Correspond with public officials
- Use real life stories from your work
- Participate in internal advocacy committees
- Participate in external coalitions
- Discuss advocacy with consumers and support their involvement
- Get involved! It’s not just the CEO’s job
What Consumers Can Do

• Join Consumer Advisory Board or Board of Directors
• Participate with the National Consumer Advisory Board
• Discuss advocacy and organizing at meetings
• Voter registration and education
• Use staff support for advocacy activities
• Share your story
Where Do You Go From Here?

- Get to know your legislators
- Know what policy issues you want to address and build stories around them
- Join Coalitions – Build Power
- Look to the NHCHC for support
  - www.nhchc.org
  - Contact Matt Warfield, Health Policy Organizer, mwarfield@nhchc.org
Becoming a Health Care Advocate

March 31, 2016
Structure of Presentation

- Medicaid expansion
- Child Health Plan Plus program financing
- Implementation advocacy
- Key considerations
2010
ACA becomes law

2013
Colorado passes SB 13-200, formalizing decision to expand

2014
Colorado expands Medicaid

2015
1.3 million Coloradans enrolled in Medicaid
*Enrollment in Medicaid for AwDC, or Adults without Dependent Children, is currently capped at 10,000.
2014 Medicaid Eligibility

Family Income as a Percent of Federal Poverty Level

- **Pregnant Women**
  - 185% FPL
  - $94,200

- **Children 0-18**
  - 133% FPL
  - $58,875

- **Parents**
  - $43,568

- **AwDC**
  - $31,322

Legend:
- Medicaid
- Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+)
- Health Insurance Subsidies Available

*Adults without Dependent Children
IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

**FISCAL YEARS** 2015-16  2034-35

**IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY**

- The number of jobs will increase.
  - 2015-16: 31,074 MORE JOBS
  - 2034-35: 43,018 MORE JOBS

- Additional state economic activity, as measured by gross domestic product, will increase.
  - 2015-16: $3.8 BILLION 1.14% INCREASE
  - 2034-35: $8.5 BILLION 1.38% INCREASE

- Average annual household earnings will be higher.
  - 2015-16: $643 HIGHER
  - 2034-35: $1,033 HIGHER

**IMPACT ON THE STATE BUDGET**

- The state’s General Fund revenue will increase.
  - 2015-16: $102 MILLION
  - 2034-35: $248 MILLION
1997
CHIP becomes law, and states begin programs

2007, 2009, 2010
CHIP reauthorized

2014
CHIP Campaigns begin

2015
CHIP reauthorized until 2019, but only 2 years of funding
Implementation Advocacy

Medicaid Expansion
Different types of policy advocacy

- Legislative advocacy
- Implementation advocacy
How to advocate?

• Determine what issues are most important to you
• Determine your comfort level in sharing your story – anonymous is okay, too!
• If you work for a health care organization, you can advocate on your own behalf or on behalf of others (or empower others to advocate)
• Also, find organizations who are working on the issues at different levels
• Find ways to get engaged at different parts of the process
• Stay informed!
• Stay in touch with your elected officials!
Questions? Thoughts?
QUESTIONS?
CONTACT US

Aubrey Hill
720.583.1760
Aubrey.Hill@ccmu.org
ccmu.org
@aubreykhill
Why Register Clients to Vote?

- Empower Clients
- Help Clients to Reconnect with Community
- Public Policy Decisions Impact All of Us
- Integrate Service and Advocacy
- It’s Our Mission

Health Care & Housing Are Human Rights
But Voting Doesn’t Matter…

Figure 1. Voter Turnout, by Household Income, 2008 - 2012

Source: Census Data, Supplemented by SESA 2013

Health Care & Housing Are Human Rights
...and Politicians Don’t Care, So Why Should I?

- In 2014...
  - Social Security kept 25.9 million people out of poverty
  - Food Stamps (SNAP) kept 4.7 million people out of poverty
  - Medicaid Expansion has provided health care to 7 million people who were previously uninsured
We Are A 501c3, Is This Legal?

- The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 **encourages** nonprofits to register historically underrepresented groups

- So long as you…
  - Remain non-partisan
  - Use proper sources of funding
  - Follow local and state laws

Health Care & Housing Are Human Rights
Options for Integrating Voter Registration

- Provide registration materials in lobby
- Register during intake
- Include in case management/clinical work
- Voter registration drives
- Consumer Advisory Board sponsorship
Voter Registration at HCH Baltimore

We Can Help You Register to Vote!

We will be registering people to vote on Tuesday and Thursday mornings in the HCH 1st floor Lobby

Brought to you by Baltimore Housing For All Advocacy Group
(Group Meets Tuesdays from 11:45-1 in the first floor middle group room)
Voter Registration at Houston HCH

- Consumer Driven
- Every Monday year-round
- Extensive work with local election board
- Get out the vote campaign
Voter Suppression

- Voter ID Laws
- Misinformation Campaigns
- Restricting ex-offenders
- Reducing or Relocating Polling Places
- Voter Caging (challenging registration status at the polls)

Health Care & Housing Are Human Rights
Overcome Common Barriers

- I do not have time
- My vote does not matter
- I am homeless
- I do not have an ID
- I have a criminal record
- I am already registered
Restricting the Right to Vote for Ex-Offenders

Health Care & Housing Are Human Rights
Get Out the Vote!

- Leading Up to the Election
  - Early voting opportunities
  - Absentee ballots
  - Locating polling places
  - Sample ballots, voting machines
  - Nonpartisan issue education

- On Election Day
  - Provide transportation to polls
  - Go to polls together
  - Have a get out the vote rally
  - Have volunteers at polling places
Other Election Year Activities

- Host a candidate forum
- Attend town hall meetings
- Invite candidates to tour or volunteer at your project
- Write letters to the editors and/or op-eds
Many Resources Available Online

- National Coalition for the Homeless, You Don’t Need a Home to Vote Registration Manual: [http://tinyurl.com/hx5zq56](http://tinyurl.com/hx5zq56)

- Community Health Vote (NACHC): [http://communityhealthvote.net/](http://communityhealthvote.net/)


- Nonprofit Vote: [www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org)

- NHCHC, Voter Registration: [https://www.nhchc.org/voter-registration/](https://www.nhchc.org/voter-registration/)
Questions?

Joseph Benson  
Community Health Worker  
Health Care for the Homeless Houston:  www.homeless-healthcare.org  
josephjr.benson@bcm.edu  
713-739-7752  x148

Matt Warfield MSW, MUP  
Health Policy Organizer  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council:  www.nhchc.org  
mwarfield@nhchc.org  
443-703-1337