

Viewing Time

The program will take up to one hour to complete.

Target Audience

This program is designed for primary care physicians.

Other health care professionals working with patients and their families may also find this program of interest.

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Legislative Advocacy 101

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Legislative Advocacy 101

A lecture about the advocacy of pediatric issues.

Program Objectives

Upon completion of this program, participants should be able to:

- Define advocacy and know the relevant advocacy issues at the state legislature this year
- Know how to effectively engage your legislators about children's issues
- Know the resources and contacts for pediatricians in Minnesota

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Receiving CME Credit

To receive CME credit you must view the entire program and complete the evaluation form at the end.

Legislative Advocacy 101

Children's Hospitals and Clinics
Grand Rounds

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Today

- Advocacy: What is it? *and* Why Bother?
- MN-AAP Chapter Policy Positions
- Legislative Activity: Looking Back and Looking to the Future
- How to Use Your Political Voice



What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the application of **PRESSURE** on the people and institutions that have the **POWER** to give you what you want.

What is important to you?

- For your personal interests
- On behalf of your patients
- In your community
- On behalf of your practice environment (clinic, hospital)
- To preserve and advance profession
- Influence legislative/political decisions (local, state, federal)

Advocacy Comes in Many Forms

- Policy Development
- Political/Legislative
- Communications
- Legal
- State Agencies and Regulatory Monitoring
- MN-AAP Foundation
- Personal Relationships
- Health Plan Issues

Legislative Advocacy is Important

*Legislative action influences
health care delivery*

The state legislature decides:

- Who has access to care - eligibility for public programs
- Public health policy – immunizations, tobacco, obesity, minor consent, etc.
- Funding for early childhood education / public schools
- What our health care system will look like in the future

... But the Health Care Perspective is Lacking at the Capitol

- Minnesota has 67 Legislative Districts, 201 Legislators

- 67 Members of the Senate
 - 46 DFLers, 21 Republicans
 - 40 men, 27 women
- 134 Members of the House of Representatives
 - 87 DFLers, 47 Republicans
 - 91 men, 43 women

Primary Occupation

Legislators (39)
Educators (35)
Lawyers (24)
Farmers (12)

Health Care Field

Nurses (7)
Chiropractor (1)
Psychologist (1)
Veterinarian (1)
MD Spouses (4)

MN-AAP Can Be Your Guide

- State Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- 902 members statewide
- Advocate for your colleagues and most importantly, your patients
- Dedicated to the health of all children
- Legislative and non-legislative advocacy efforts

MN-AAP Advocacy Efforts

- Policy positions and legislative agenda developed by the Policy Committee and approved by the Board
- MN-AAP drives state pediatric policy
 - Medical Home Learning Collaborative partnership with MDH
 - Reach Out and Read
 - Universal newborn hearing screening

2009 Policy Priorities

- **Access:** Ensure children have access to quality health care, defending cuts at a minimum
- **Booster Seats:** Expand Minnesota's child passenger safety law requiring children be in booster seats until age 8
- **Medical Home:** Retain medical home as part of health care reform
- **Newborn Screening:** Preserve an infant's right to be screened for treatable diseases



More Legislative Policy Positions

- Support initiatives that support access to early childhood education and quality childcare
- Support measures to reduce smoking among children
- Oppose efforts to repeal the minor consent law
- Oppose efforts to deter parents from immunizing children
- Support efforts to prevent childhood obesity
- Support efforts to increase access to children's mental health services
- Support efforts to develop interoperable electronic medical records



Action = Results

- An estimated 36,000 more children will have access to health coverage
- Defeated legislation that would have led to fewer Minnesota children receiving immunizations
- Passed increased safety restrictions on teen drivers



Action = Results

- Helped pass the Freedom to Breathe Act to reduce youth smoking, effective October 1, 2007 in all bars and restaurants
- Defeated late-night efforts to change newborn screening to an opt-in
- Helped obtain funding to restore cuts to early childhood education programs



But There's Still Lots of Work to Do

- Countless uninsured children
- Newborn Screening (2008 veto)
- Update child restraint law (booster seats)
- Reduce childhood obesity
- Access to immunizations and administration fee increase
- Many, many others



Health Care Reform Goes On

- **The bill that passed last session included five primary areas of reform**
 - Public Health Investment: \$47 Million for Statewide Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)
 - Delivery Reform: Health Care Homes
 - Quality: Measurement, Transparency and Improvements
 - Access Expansions: Insurance Coverage and Affordability
 - E-Health



Challenges Ahead

- Session began January 6th
- Odd year sessions are budget years
- \$4.8 Billion budget deficit must be resolved – everything is “on the table”
- Day at the Capitol is February 24th

What if You Don't Engage?

- Many other groups are very active
 - Natural Health Legal Reform Project on vaccine legislation
 - Personal privacy rights groups on newborn screening opt-in
 - Minnesota Family Council on minor consent repeal
 - Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association on Freedom to Breathe
- Legislators make decisions based on the information they are given: Who's giving them information?

Legislators Are Listening to Someone – Is it You?

- 📄 3,435 bills introduced
- 📄 408 bills passed
- ☎ 8,000 telephone calls
- 😊 1,280 drop-in visitors
- ✉ 6,400 letters and endless email
- ✉ 800 invitations

Don't Leave it to “Someone Else”

Misconception that “someone else” is doing it so you don't have to participate in organized medicine or politically

...But what happens when that “someone else” doesn't engage either?

For results, we need many voices!

What is a Lobbyist?

- Eyes, ears and voice for members of the MN-AAP at the state capitol
- Educate lawmakers on issues of importance to the health of children and the practice of medicine
- Help build coalitions on issues
- Inform members on Chapter advocacy efforts
- Coordinate grassroots activity

You Have a Unique Voice

As advocates for your patients you have advantages:

- Credibility and expertise
- Motivated by profession ethics, not financial interest
- Compelling personal experience with patients
- Access to other resources

Every Personal Relationship Cuts Through the Static

Legislators are influenced by:

- Personal experience
- Inner circle
- Personal relationships with voters in their district
- Colleagues/party leaders
- Desire to do the right thing
- Other: media, data, polls, & testimony



Getting Engaged Is Not Rocket Science (or Residency!)

Building relationships with elected officials is as simple as:

- Emailing or calling your elected officials
- Meeting your elected officials locally or at the capitol
- Attending public hearings
- Providing testimony at public hearings
- Writing letters to the editor (influencing the opinion of the greater-public)
- Invite them to your clinic for a tour



Tips for Talking to Elected Officials

- Keep it positive
- Keep it simple, avoid medical terminology
- Tell personal story
- Tell the legislator what you want
- It's okay if you disagree, but be respectful
- Leave behind concise information
- Form a relationship – become a resource



Tips for an Effective Meeting

- Address your state legislator properly
- Introduce yourself
- Focus your effort on limited issues
- Engage your legislator in dialogue, invite comments and questions
- Don't worry if they ask you something you don't know the answer to – simply tell them you don't know but will look into it and follow up
- Be respectful and polite if they disagree with you
- Ask for a commitment
- Thank them for their time and efforts



The Perfect Opportunity

- Peds Day at the Capitol is Tuesday, February 24th
- Watch your email for details

*Come, and make a difference
in the life of a child!*



Closing Thought

There are no children in the legislature.

“The reason that advocacy is so much embedded in the work of pediatrics is that children have little political voice of their own and rely on the proxy voice of others including pediatricians to speak out on their behalf”

Charles Oberg, M.D.
Pediatrics 2003; 112:406-409



An Invitation

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Comments and Questions

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this presentation!*



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