



CHW Advocacy: Build your Skills & Promote the CHW Profession

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Disclaimers

This presentation is for educational purposes only and is not intended as legal advice.

Rules of the Road:

- Check with your supervisor before engaging in advocacy or education of elected officials during work hours.
- Your employer may have its own billing/coding requirements.

Agenda

12:30 – 12:35 p.m. Welcome & Introductions

12:35 – 1:00 p.m. Build your Skills & Promote the CHW Profession

1:00 – 1:30 p.m. Questions



Bi-State Primary Care Association

- Primary Care Associations
 - Funded by HRSA and the same statutes as FQHCs
 - Training and Technical Assistance
 - Emergency Preparedness
 - Community Development
 - Public Policy

Summary of Federal and State Guidelines and Restrictions

- Health center staff can lobby with limitations:
 - Health centers cannot use federal or state grant funds (contracts) to lobby.
 - Any lobbying activities cannot constitute a “substantial part” of the health center’s total activities.
 - Communications must “refer to and reflect” a particular view on the legislation.
- Health center staff can educate.

Regulations on Lobbying that Affect Health Centers

- State and federal contracts often include restrictions on lobbying
- Federal statutes including:
 - 26 U.S.C. §501
 - 26 U.S.C. §4911
 - 31 U.S.C. §1352
- Federal rule including:
 - 45 CFR Part 93
- State statutes including:
 - NH RSA §15:1 (the general lobbying requirements).

Direct Lobbying

- Direct lobbying is defined as:
 - “Any attempt to influence legislation through communication with a member or employee of a legislative body; or
 - With any other government official or employee who may participate in the formulation of legislation.”

Grassroots Lobbying

- Grassroots lobbying is defined as:
 - “Any attempt to influence legislation through an attempt to affect the opinions of the general public or any segment thereof.”
- Grassroots lobbying includes “urg[ing] the public to contact legislators, provid[ing] the public with contact information for a legislator, or identify[ing] a legislator’s position on a pending legislative matter.”

Permissible Advocacy

- Typically, board members of health centers (and other non-profits) can lobby because they are not paid employees of the non-profit.
- Health center staff can lobby if no federal or state grant dollars are used to pay for this work, including staff salaries and overhead.
Remember that this activity must pass the non-existent “substantial part” test.
- Health center CEOs/EDs/staff can educate.

Key Exception: Education

- Exceptions to the definition of lobbying:
 - Providing analysis;
 - Providing technical advice or assistance;
 - Appearing before or communicating to a legislative body whose decision may affect the existence of the organization, its non-profit status, or deductions of contributions to the organization; and
 - Any communication with a government official or employee other than a communication with a member or employee of a legislative body that would constitute influencing legislation or a communication designed to influence legislation.



Remember: You are the Experts

- Your organizations are unique small non-profits.
- Your organizations cater to the needs of your communities.
- Your organizations have diverse patient populations.
- Your organizations work to address the social determinants of health.

The Critical Role of CHWs in the Advocacy Process

- Connection to the local civic community
- Validators
- Story Tellers
- What to Expect When Testifying
 - Interest in Local Impacts
 - Questions
 - A citizens' legislature
- Translating local leadership to State Policy and Legislation
- Early outreach and soft contacts
- Testimony at public hearings
- Direct, informal outreach
- Communications
- Op – Eds
- Local news media voice
- Editorial relationships

Next Steps: Advocate or Educate

- What to include regardless of the format:
 - A “thank you”
 - Who are you?
 - Issue – If this bill were to become law, how will it affect you, your profession, and your patients/clients? Will it help? Hurt?
 - Patient/client/Personal story
 - Keep it simple
 - An “ask” – If advocating, yes – include an ask. If educating, don’t.

Next Steps: Advocate or Educate

- Written Testimony
 - Letter format
 - Try to stick to one page
 - Include your contact information with your signature

Next Steps: Advocate or Educate

- Oral Testimony – Bring your written testimony with you
 - Introduce yourself – are you speaking on behalf of yourself, your organization, and the town you live in
 - Try to stick to three minutes or less
 - Practice beforehand to make yourself more comfortable
 - Remember – they want to hear from you! Your voice is important – you are the expert on your community. Your lived experience and that of your patients will guide legislators in their decision-making.
 - End with a “thank you” and your request (if advocating)



Upcoming Legislative and

Advocacy & Educational Opportunities

- 2024 Legislative Session
 - Phone calls
 - Emails
 - Testifying
 - Op Eds/Letters to the Editor
- In perpetuity

NH Legislative Resources

The General Court (legislature) website is:

<http://gencourt.state.nh.us>

- You will find the calendars, bills, and possibly sign into legislative hearings at this website.

Legislative Budget Assistant to gain understanding of the budget materials: <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/lba/>



Questions?

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