

Instituting Advocacy at Your Health Center

Grassroots Leadership & Strategy

Dorian Wanzer

Grassroots Advocacy Manager, Outreach
and Communications

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Institute Advocacy: Become a champion

Advocacy is . . .

The World Health Organization describes advocacy for health as a “combination of individual and social actions designed to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular health goal or program”

In other words . . .



Using your voice to support causes you believe in

Advocacy matters because....

"True change rarely comes from the halls of Congress alone."

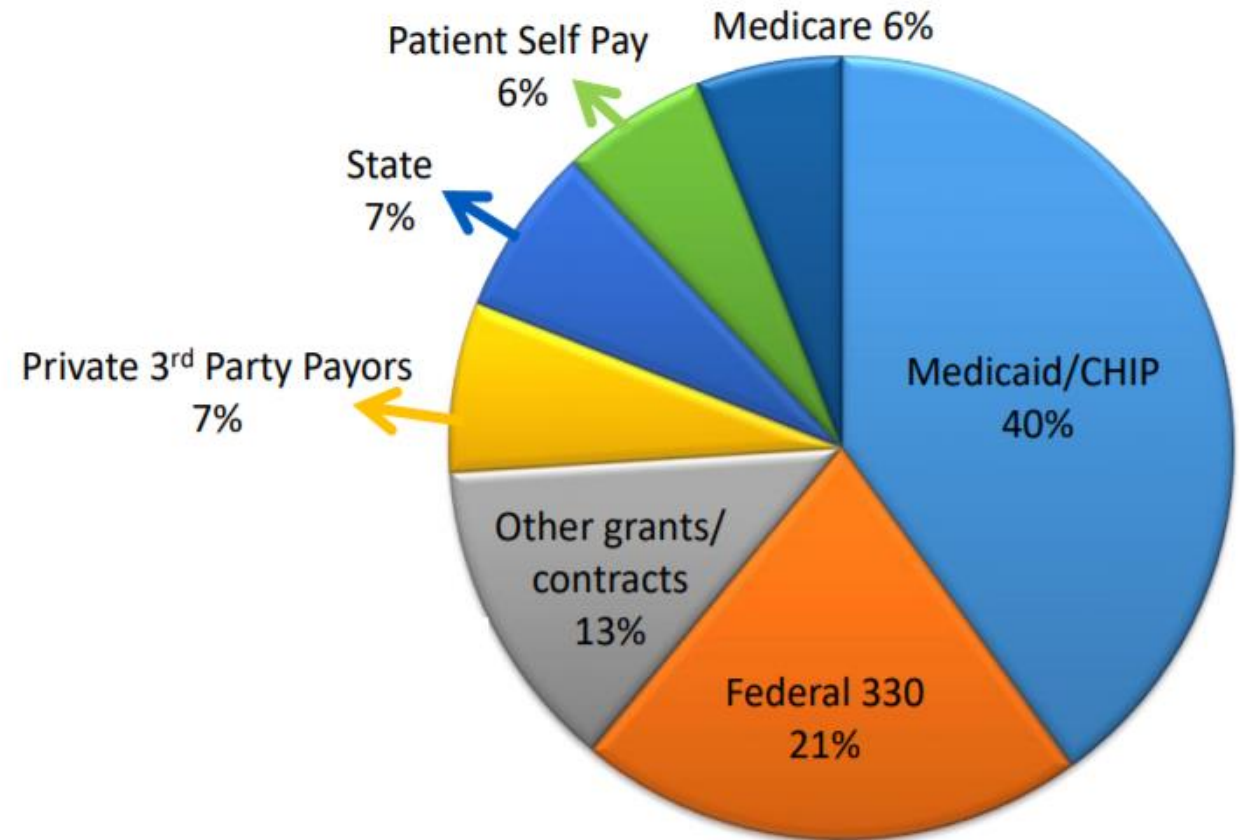
–Dr. Paula A. Johnson



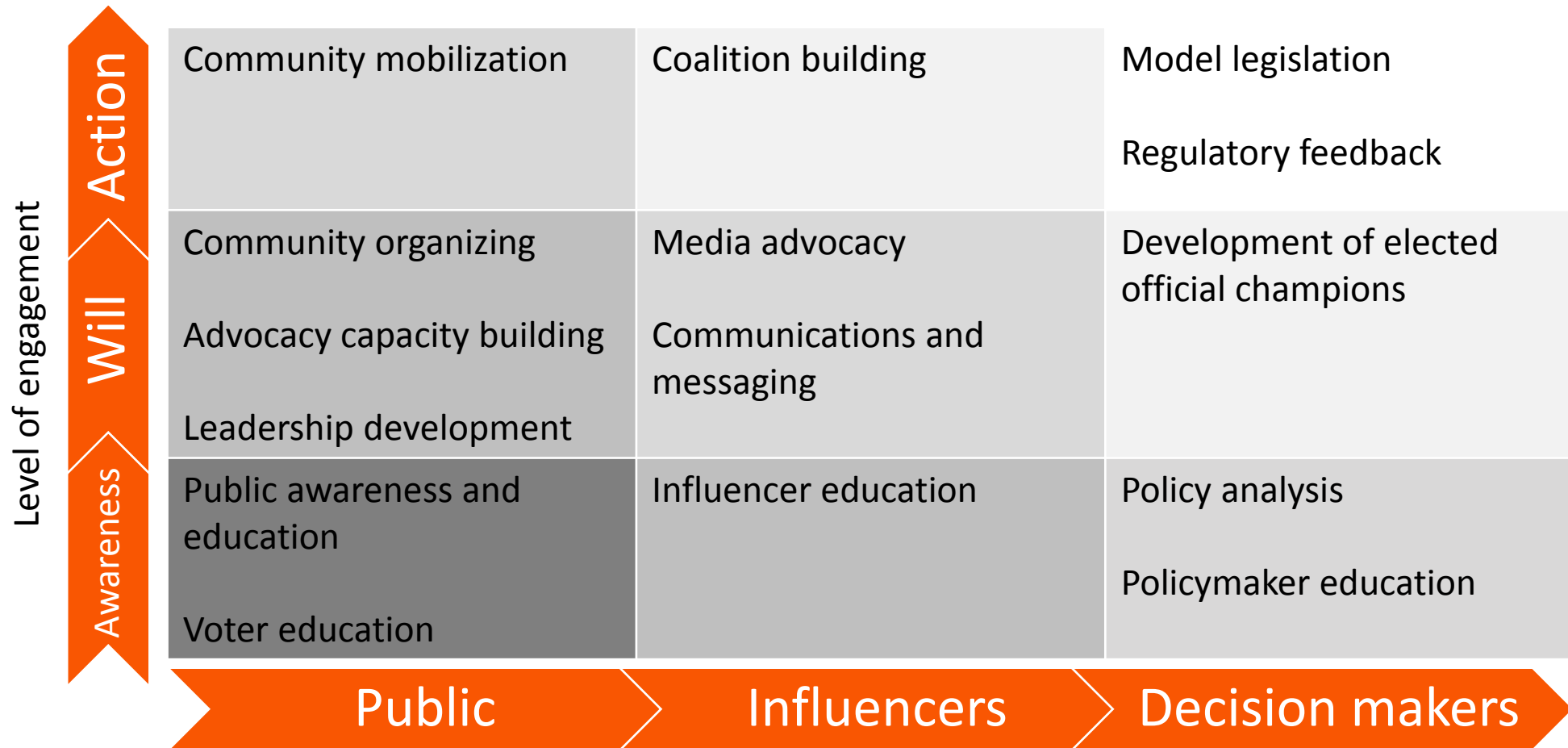
- Sometimes legislative action is the only way to accomplish your goal.
- Legislative advocacy lends focus to your issue.
- Advocacy creates its own positive publicity.

Health Centers must advocate!

- The strength of the health centers program depends on our advocacy
- Your patients and community's health depend on our advocacy
- Policy decisions don't happen in a vacuum
- Advocacy is not just lobbying



Advocacy Spectrum



Audience

Does the issue require advocacy?

- Is there a problem you've noticed in your community AND does the power to create the solution to that problem lie with someone other than yourself?
- Do services and benefits in your community depend on the will of decision makers?

If yes, then the issue requires advocacy!

Advocacy helps to address social determinants of health.



Transportation

Local government



Education

School board and local government



Housing

Local housing authority



Immigration

Law enforcement and state and federal policies



Access to health care and coverage

Local, state, and federal policies



Advocacy

Advocacy In Action



Advocacy fixed the health center funding cliff

- \$7.8 billion in federal grant funding for health centers
- \$600 million dollars to further support health center operations and address unmet need in communities across the country
- \$60 million dollars to assist health centers in areas impacted by recent natural disasters.

230,000

- Emails

35,000

- Calls

25M

- Social Media Impressions

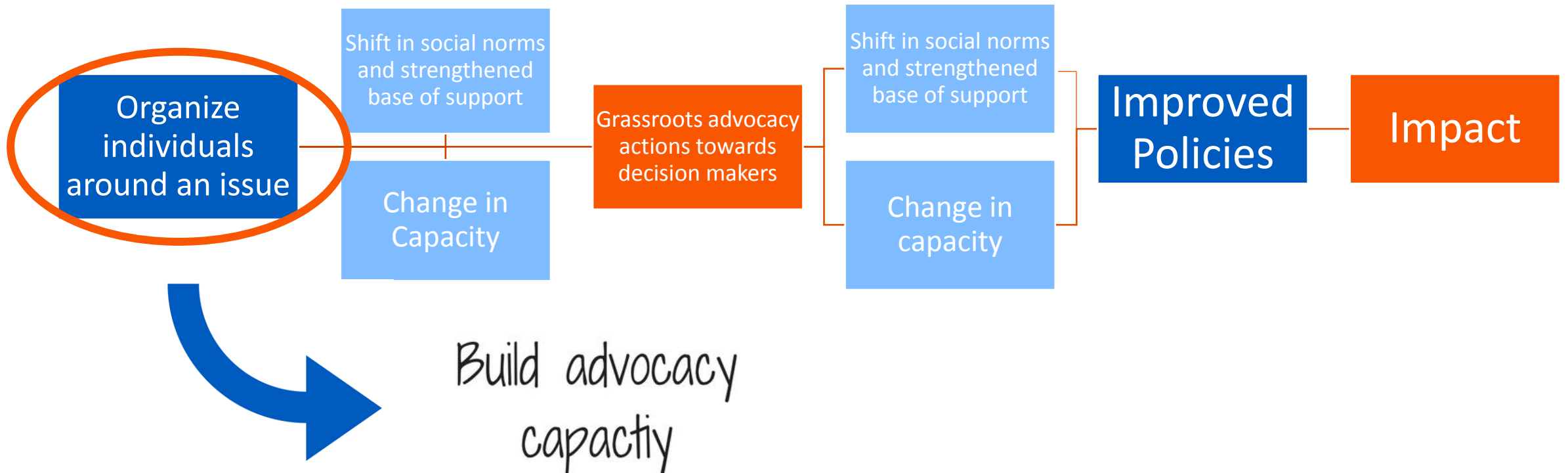
200+

- Congressional Meetings



Institute Advocacy: Lead the Charge

Grassroots Advocacy Model



Decide Grassroots Advocacy Objectives

To increase health center awareness among influential groups and the public;

To reduce stigma and fear of lack of care in the low socioeconomic groups;

To engage and mobilize key stakeholders within the health center community who will champion the development and implementation of a comprehensive health center advocacy plan and its components;

To progressively expand advocacy groups, including community volunteers and patients groups, to cover all the regions or provinces of the country;

To mobilize resources to support the implementation of key priority areas;

Who, What , When, Where, Why

Who your targets, allies, and opponents are

How will you reach your targets?

Which people and organizations should be on your side? How will you engage them?

Who will actively try to stop you? Why? How will you respond?

What you want – be specific for both targets and allies

When it's important to take action – timing is everything

Where the issue is pertinent – is this a local, state, or federal issue?

Why? This might be the most important piece!

Ask leadership to make the commitment.

Designate an advocacy coordinator

- This is you!
- Create a plan, and recruit an internal team

Get the Board on-board

- Ask the Board to pass a resolution
- Create a sub-committee on the Board



Leaders Evaluate...

Make sure you learn what works and what doesn't work for your community.

- Status update in planning/strategic meetings
- Create a patient advocacy group
- Put a comment box in clinic waiting rooms asking for feedback on campaigns
- Follow-up with advocates with results of your campaign
- Statistics, measurement, data



Institute Advocacy: Change the Culture

Can you Advocate? Yes!

Personal



You have the right to think, feel, express whatever you want!

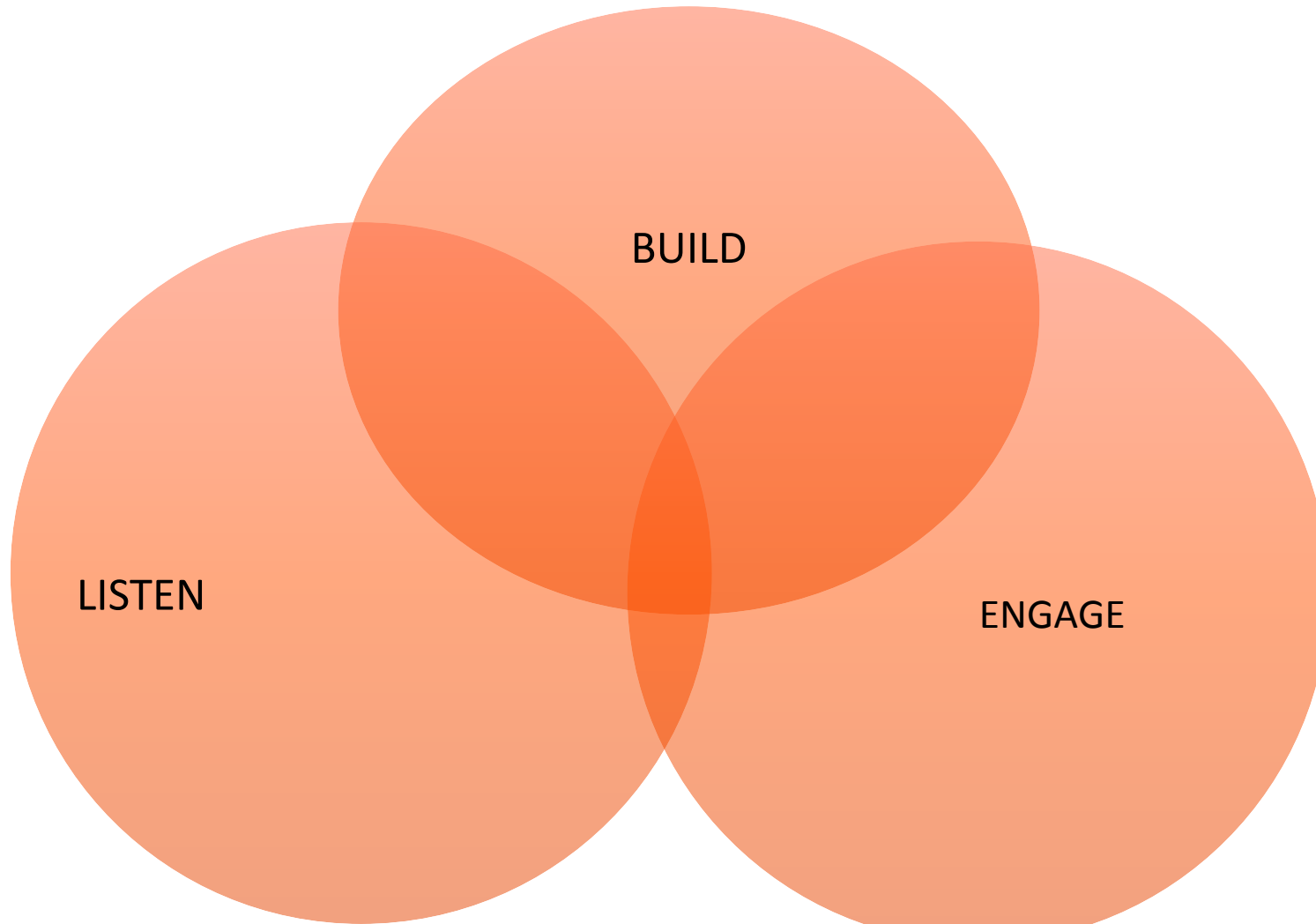
Professional



Keep it focused on your health center – educate people about what’s happening at your health center specifically.

Look to NACHC and your primary care associations for broader messaging.

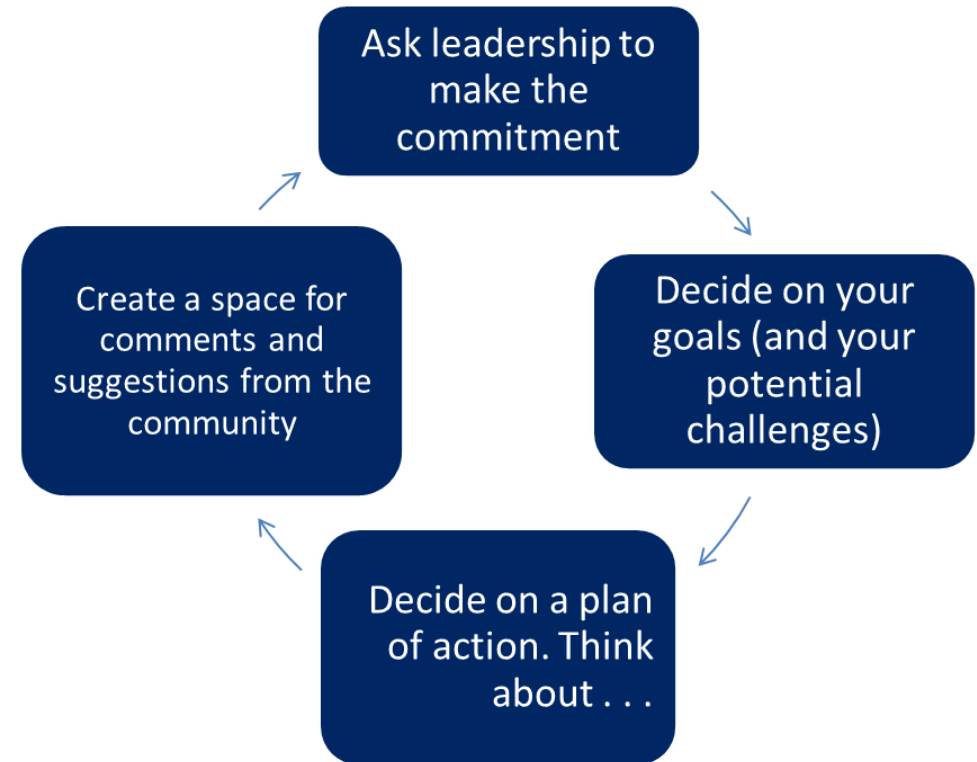
Advocacy at the Health Center Level



Advocacy at the Health Center Level

Building a culture of advocacy means:

- Changing the culture and attitude from within the health center, recognizing advocacy as a critical and mandatory component to our daily work and planning.
- Making a commitment to doing the work to build and organize our grassroots in order to fully realize the potential of our grassroots power.
- Growth and recognition of grassroots advocacy and effectiveness the same way other critical skills and programs are recognized for health center staff and boards.



Advocacy Center of Excellence Program



ADVOCACY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

**Does your Health Center have an
advocacy program in place? You
could be the next
ADVOCACY CENTER OF
EXCELLENCE (ACE)!**

Apply today!

Visit www.hcadvocacy.org/ace

- Incorporating advocacy as an element of operational excellence
- Focuses on engaging your diverse patient population in advocacy
- Establishes a standardized framework for building engagement in your community and an appetite for advocacy
 - ✓ Make the commitment to advocacy
 - ✓ Register staff and board as advocates
 - ✓ Participate in NHCW
 - ✓ Engage elected officials
 - ✓ Establish an online presence

Hcadvocacy.org



Institute Advocacy: Guidelines and Relationship Building

Can Health Centers Lobby?

YES, and you should. More than 75% of a health center's budget can be determined by federal, state and local governments' decisions. However, there are limits to what health centers can do.

Advocacy vs. Lobbying

ad·vo·ca·cy

/ˈadvəkəseɪ/ 

Meeting with legislators, or decision-makers to educate them about your Community Health Center.

Unlimited!

lob·by

/ˈləbeɪ/ 

Face to face, phone call or email contact with legislator asking for a specific action

<5% of total budget (non-330 funds)

Tips for keeping your health center advocacy non-partisan

- Keep your social media accounts separate
- Share stories
- Look at data – think about objective impact on your health center
- Tell your health center’s story to elected officials and the public alike



Engaging Elected Officials



www.hcadvocacy.org/electedofficials

- Identify your elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels
- Create a grid with relevant information to keep you organized
- Conduct a relationship inventory (at the HC and within the community)
- Start with the basics– Health Centers 101

Build and Maintain

- Access and communication are key!
- Ask questions and respect opposing views
- Be approachable and offer yourself as a resource
- Don't forget about public recognition
- Get to know their staff
- Do your homework— prep information (fact sheet, brochure, etc.)
- Take photos, promote visit on social media, engage local media
- Make a personal connection/be sincere

NACHC's Key Contact Program

Do you have a **direct relationship** with your Member(s) of Congress or their staff?

Do you **consistently respond to calls to action** with a phone call or personal email to these contacts?

Are you **committed to delivering the Health Center message** on behalf of your Health Center and the Program as a whole?

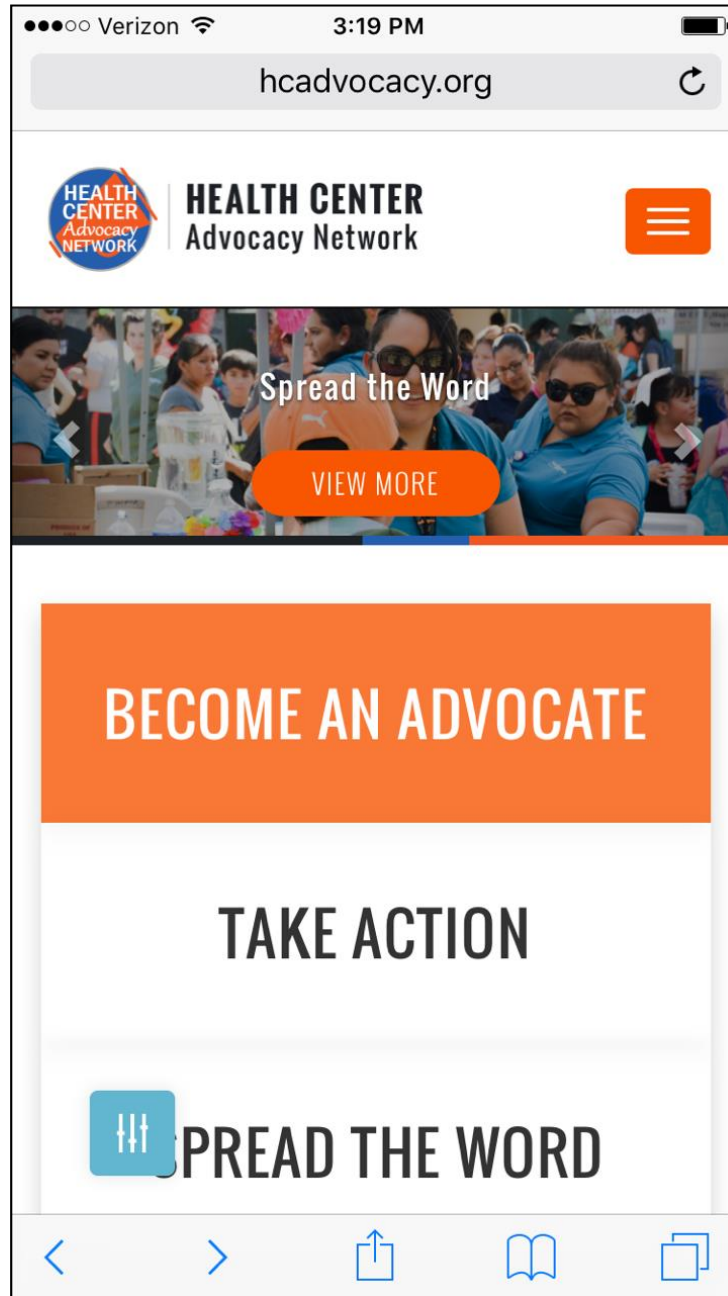


If you answered **YES – YOU could be a Health Center Key Contact.**



Institute Advocacy: Build a Strong Grassroots Network at Your Health Center

**Start with
you!**



Go to
hcadvocacy.org, to
sign up as an
advocate today.

-AND/OR -



Text ADVOCATE or
DEFENSOR to 52886

Planning

- Review past efforts and identify obstacles.
- Inventory grassroots resources—lists, potential volunteers, events, communication vehicles, etc.
- Develop a grassroots plan with timelines and benchmarks.
- Explore the intersection of advocacy and electoral objectives.
- Identify and prioritize the target districts or areas where you will focus grassroots efforts.
- Develop internal and external messages to support your organizing.

Recruitment

- Know your audience and what will motivate them.
- Develop messages that will inspire staff and patients to get involved.
- Sell it—asking is not enough. Give reasons why they should get involved.
- Prioritize your requests. Determine the one or two most important activities in order to avoid overwhelming volunteers.

Tips for Finding, Engaging and Developing Advocates

1. Encourage health center advocates to spread the word online
2. Provide updates and calls to action
3. Tell the health center story through the patient lens
4. Make the important information front and center



What about voter registration?

YES, you can!

- **Register Voters**

- Drives must be designed to educate the public about the importance of voting.
- Activities **cannot be biased** for or against any candidate or party.
- Nonprofits may target registration and turnout efforts to the areas or people they serve.

- **Educate Voters**

- Educate the public on issues and encourage participation in the political process.
- Educate **all candidates and political parties** on your issues.
- Conduct or participate in a nonpartisan candidate forum. The forum must be open to all candidates, be run in a balanced way, and include a broad range of nonpartisan questions for the candidates.
- Make presentations on your organization's issue to platform committees, campaign staff, candidates, media, and the general public.



I can't vote...
but you can vote for me

- ✓ Access & quality healthcare
- ✓ Better schools
- ✓ Safer communities
- ✓ Jobs

My future depends on you.

Community Health Vote

<http://communityhealthvote.net>

Voter Registration Guidelines

Choosing a Target Group

- You **CAN** target historically disadvantaged populations
- You **CANNOT** target ideological groups: liberal, conservatives, etc.

Choosing a Geographic Area

- You **CAN** target an area because it has historically low voter turnout
- You **CANNOT** target an area because it has a close race

Voter Registration Guidelines

Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

- As with voter registration, your GOTV drives must be designed to educate the public about the importance of voting, cannot be biased for or against any candidate or party, and may be targeted to underrepresented communities or those the nonprofit serves
- Work on behalf of a ballot measure. *Note that this counts towards your direct lobbying limits.*

NVRD 2018



Mark your calendar:
Tuesday, September 25



Legalese Resources

For information on legal implications of advocacy, including a Q&A on lobbying, past webinars, and sample policies for your Health Center, visit www.hcadvocacy.org/legalese.



For information on engaging candidates, advocacy on ballot measures, getting out the vote, and more, visit www.nonprofitvote.org.

Effective advocacy is powerful.



Every voice counts.

We have the ability to create meaningful change for the health of our communities.

You can make a significant difference by constantly educating and building public awareness

Your role as an advocacy leader!

Motivate, engage, and further the health center movement.

Serve as an advocacy leader.

Be an advocate.



Become a part of the Health Center Advocacy Network



Visit: www.hcadvocacy.org/join

or

Text **HCADVOCATE** to 52886



Questions?



NACHC

Public Policy and Research Division

1400 Eye St., NW, Suite 910

Washington DC, 20005

www.hcadvocacy.org



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers