ADVANCING PREVENTION AND POPULATION HEALTH:

New Year, New Efforts, New Opportunities

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Local and State Health Departments

• How do we build support for continued public investments in prevention and population health approaches?

• What is our role as government employees?

• Examples from the field
Policy makers

- A person responsible for or involved in formulating policies, especially in politics.

**Federal**
- President
- Senate
- House of Representatives

**State**
- Governor
- Senate
- House of Representatives

**Local**
- City Managers/Mayors
- County commissioners
- City councils
- City boards and commissions
- School boards
Kinds of policy

- Statutes
- Regulation
- Ordinances
- Judicial law
Advocacy vs. Lobbying

- **Advocacy**
  Any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others.

- **Lobbying**
  A specific type of advocacy activity that seeks to influence the enactment or defeat of a pending or proposed federal, state, or local legislation.

- While **ALL** lobbying is advocacy, **NOT ALL** advocacy is lobbying.
Why advocacy is important

• As public health professionals you have expertise and your views may be especially persuasive to policy makers.

• Without your involvement others will shape the infrastructure and make public policy decisions without the critical information you can provide.
What’s my role?

- **Government health employee** – as a representative of the state, county or city your role is:
  
  - **Education** – increasing policy makers knowledge.
    - Awareness – What is the problem?
    - Science – What is the evidence?
    - Importance – How big is it? Who is affected?
    - Analysis – Why does it exist? What are its effects?
How?

- Education – of legislators, of grassroots, of the media, of the general public
- Conducting policy analysis and data collection
- Reporting on data
- Providing technical assistance
- Conducting needs assessments and communicating results
- Convening interested parties, conducting community meetings
- Collecting and telling real stories that illustrate the problem you seek to change or demonstrate success
When?

• Policy staff requests your expertise in supporting a public health initiative
• A policy maker contacts you directly for information

What to expect

• Policy makers are busy – know their schedule
• Most policy makers are not specialists in your area
• Policy makers have many conflicting sources of information
You should

Build relationships

• Before you need something
• Become their trusted source
• Keep them in the loop and showcase your work
  • Events
  • Newsletters
  • Current news

Be specific, be prepared

• Present information in a short, easily digestible form
• Use language that a non-specialist can understand.
• Summarize information, and present clear paths for a particular course of action
Get to know your policy makers

• Make the time to meet in-person.
• Do your homework.
  • Know their positions on issues
  • Learn about their personal, educational and professional background
• Be an asset, not a problem.
• Don’t neglect staff.
  • Legislative assistants and committee administrators
• Follow up.
Tips from a Policy Maker

• What are policy makers looking for?
  
  • Policy makers are a diverse group with different ways of making decisions
  • A winning combination of data + organizational support + constituent support is hard to beat
  • Positive feedback goes a really long way
  • Accountability is important too!
What do elected officials know about public health?

What are policy makers looking for?

- Very little!
- It is important to show and quantify the benefit of interventions
- There is skepticism – personal stories are really powerful
- Youth voices are very, very powerful
SHIP 3 Results*

Farm to School efforts at 141 schools are serving 61,450 students

210 schools are providing Safe Routes to School for 106,819 students

29 post-secondary schools are working to have tobacco-free campuses

589 child care sites serving 6,816 children are improving nutrition & increasing physical activity

336 employers are leading worksite wellness initiatives, reaching 43,896 employees

210 schools are providing Safe Routes to School for 106,819 students

140 cities are taking steps to make physical activity easier

19 cities have or are working on tobacco-free parks policies

173 rental properties have implemented a smoke-free housing policy, protecting 14,600 residents from secondhand smoke

Communities are enjoying 46 new or enhanced farmers markets

125 clinics are engaging patients about nutrition, physical activity & smoking

65 clinics are working with LPH on state & federal health reform initiatives

Source: Statewide Health Improvement Program
*November 2014 – February 2015
SHIP – Goodhue County

Safe Biking in Zumbrota

• Zumbrota Bikeabout used a 90-minute ride to determine safety & improvement needs in the community

• Discussion of findings at 11/14 Park Board will be used for Zumbrota Master Bicycle Plan
SHIP – Washington County

Improving Water Access in Forest Lake Schools

• 3,100 Forest Lake-area students will have access to water bottle filling stations in schools.
• Water access based on Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s assessment and planning tool
• Increasing student access to water proved to be an early and quick strategic success for the District.
Important considerations

- **Seek legal advice.** ALWAYS seek advice from your city, county, or State staff attorney about what advocacy activities are permissible.

- **Assess your advocacy readiness.** Determine your capacity, resources, strengths, and weaknesses.

- **Plan carefully.** Think through your goal(s), timetable, and resources. Lay out your strategy and tactics. Decide who will do what and who you will need to partner with.

- **Be mindful.** Elected officials are over-scheduled. Short and sweet is important.
Remember

You’re also a citizen
• You have the right – and the responsibility – to actively participate and advocate with your elected officials.

• When you’re not on work time

Get involved!
• Neighborhood meetings
• Caucus participation
• Vote!
Thank you!

If you have questions or would like additional information, contact

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