Legislative Advocacy 101: A Primer for Residents

CHONY Community Pediatrics
2007-2008
History of the New Curriculum

- In the fall of 2007, Community Pediatrics residents Brenda Ritson, Emily Rothbaum, and Meg Sullivan got together to help faculty revise the 2nd Year Community Pediatrics Block.
- The Legislative Advocacy component of the CP Block was identified as an area of mutual interest and in need of revision.
- With the encouragement and help of faculty, a 5 session curriculum was developed.
The Goals of the Curriculum

- To teach CHONY residents HOW to effectively develop and dissipate an advocacy message
- To increase resident and faculty AWARENESS of advocacy issues and opportunities surrounding children’s health policy
More specifically, over 5 sessions, the aim is to:

- **Expose** residents to current legislative efforts, issues, and needs surrounding children's health

- **Teach** techniques for researching current legislative issues that pertain to children’s health

- **Provide** a forum (real and/or virtual) for residents to share their work on current issues, legislation, and advocacy efforts with medical students, residents, and attendings
Thereby...

- **Fostering** awareness about legislative advocacy among residents and the CHONY community

  **WHILE**

- **Empowering** CHONY pediatricians to be active advocates for children’s health issues, both now and in the future
Why should you care?

- Every level of practice, from quality improvement measures and patient safety initiatives to vaccine programs, MEDICAID, SCHIP and reimbursement for services, is regulated by State & Federal Government.
- And as pediatricians, we have the unique role of caring for patients and families that are often unable to advocate for themselves and believe it or not, your voice is **LOUD** and **POWERFUL**!!!!!
- Not to mention, children’s health policy often makes interesting cocktail party conversation and undoubtedly you will be asked to give your opinion on the “issues” in the future.
So what does the new 5 Session Curriculum look like????

AND

Does this mean my Community Pediatrics Block is going to be stressful????
Don’t worry, it will still be a relaxing month!!
We just added some more structure and didactic components...
Session 1: Legislative Advocacy 101

- Meet with a Faculty Member for Mini-Didactic
- Identify a specific children’s health policy topic that you will learn about in sessions 3-4 in preparation for a noon conference presentation you will give (more to come on that!) at the end of the block!
- Don’t worry, we have some suggestions of project topics if you can’t think of something or need a “suggestion or two” to get you started!
Session 2: A “Case Study” on SCHIP

- A few brief, easy-to-read documents on SCHIP will be provided for your perusal
- Your goal while reading will be to answer the following questions:
  - What is SCHIP, and how does it differ from Medicaid? How is it structured? Why is it constantly being debated?
  - Why do we as pediatricians need to know about SCHIP? How does it impact pediatric patients, nationwide and in New York?
  - What is reauthorization? What current controversies are national and state legislators debating regarding SCHIP?
  - What can we as pediatricians do to strengthen SCHIP?
• Using an available web based letter writing template (or your own structure), you will compose a letter to your state or national legislators explaining why you think SCHIP reauthorization and/or full funding of proposed SCHIP expansion is priority for pediatricians and why it should be for ALL legislators

***NOTE: Of course, this is only if you agree***
Sessions 3 & 4: Researching Policy and Developing an Advocacy Strategy

- Research the advocacy topic you chose in Session 1
  - Identify key stakeholders
  - Review recent history
  - Learn about current controversies/events
  - Find federal and state policies under consideration or debate
- Develop your own stance on the issue
- Create a presentation based on your work
Session 5: Spreading the Knowledge—a Presentation of Your Advocacy Message!

- Design and give a 15 to 20 minute presentation at a noon conference at the end of the block!
  - Don’t worry, there’s a guide to help you along!
  - During the second half of today’s presentation, we’ll show you a model

- The primary goal of your presentation is to educate others about your issue and motivate their participation in advocacy work!
  - **OPTIONAL**: (10-15 minutes) start a letter writing campaign, a petition signing, or post an invitation to an upcoming policy briefing meeting or other advocacy activity
The New York State Healthy Schools Act: What is it? How can we support it?

Barriers to Renewing SCHIP: Doesn’t anyone care about kids anymore?

New NYC School Policies about MRSA Infections: Science or Scaredy-Cats?

“Universal Health Care” Proposals from the Presidential Candidates: What do they really mean? What will it mean for doctors?
“But I hate politics….”

You can avoid politics, but you can not avoid the consequences of politics!

So let’s start with the basics and some fun…
with a jog down memory lane...
That was fun but advocacy work is so much more than what happens on Capitol Hill or in the Governor’s Office...
Defining Advocacy Specifically

- Advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcomes, including public policy and resource allocation decisions.
- AND advocacy is geographically limitless: You can help effect change on the local, state, federal, and global health level!
- All you have to do is get involved…and the commitment doesn’t have to be on a grand scale!
The Three “A’s” of Advocacy

- **Awareness**—you can increase your own by researching policies, and then teaching your friends, family, colleagues, and even elected officials about them.

- **Advancement**—by getting involved, you can help advance a movement or effect a policy change.

- **Action**—make contacts, write letters, call or visit your elected officials, support an organization’s lobby (ie the AAP!)
What can I do to get involved with legislative advocacy work?

- Be aware of legislative issues effecting you and your patients. As issues come up:
  - Talk to the families you are caring for
  - Research the history of the issue on the web
  - Find out about new policy proposals
- Join an organization, like the AAP, and
  - Sign-up for the legislative listserv
  - Participate in a lobby day or a “call to action” phone call
- Contact your elected officials!
  - Write a letter, send an email, fax a note of support/refute, or call the office
And of course:

- Actively participate in the NEW Legislative Advocacy Curriculum during your Community Pediatrics Block!!!!!!!
Future Plans in the Works

- Lobby visits to the State Assembly with Violet Moss
- Development of software to help you contact Legislators including a CHONY listserv or webpage to keep you updated current Legislative Issues and Events!
- AND definitely updates on the CHONY Community Pediatrics website regarding the curriculum!
What resources are quick, readily available and easy to use?

- And [www.thomas.gov](http://www.thomas.gov) to search the database of bills for the current legislative session
- [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) has a tremendous advocacy section! Login soon and often!
- State links: [assembly.state.ny.us](http://assembly.state.ny.us) OR [senate.state.ny.us](http://senate.state.ny.us)
- [http://www.ny.gov/governor/](http://www.ny.gov/governor/) NY State Governor’s website
- [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org) The Kaiser Family Foundation Organization
- Families USA Action Center: [http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/action-center/](http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/action-center/)
- Families USA Story Bank: [http://familiesusa.org/tell-us-your-story.html](http://familiesusa.org/tell-us-your-story.html)

- All to be added to the CHONY community pediatrics website in the very near future!!!!!
Questions/Comments?
Thank you!

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