Advocacy
Advocacy is the tool citizens use in our democracy to bring about improvements.

But really more than that – you advocate daily.
Stages of Advocacy

- Education
  - Senator, these are the statistics for Issue X in your district

- Advocacy
  - Senator, you should do something about Issue X, here are some ideas

- Lobbying
  - Call the Senator and tell her to vote in favor of Bill 123 to support Issue X
Why advocate?

- You care about your community
- You have a need
- You’re in Richmond or DC anyway
Current Advocacy Campaign

- **S. 198/H.R.3730**, the Rural Health Clinic Burden Reduction Act
- modernize the RHC program
- provide important regulatory relief for RHCs
  - Outdated staffing regulations
  - Outdated laboratory requirements
  - Update definitional requirements related to census definition and primary care thresholds

**NRHA:** [https://www.ruralhealth.us/advocate/rural-health-advocacy-campaigns](https://www.ruralhealth.us/advocate/rural-health-advocacy-campaigns)
Lots of Issues

What types of issues do elected officials discuss?

- Pacific Command
- Palau
- Pardon Attorney, Office of
- Parole Commission
- Peace Corps
- Pennsylvania
- Political Affairs

- Pacific Northwest Electric Power and Conservation Planning Council
- Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation
- Pentagon Force Protection Agency
- Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
- Policy Development and Research
- President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition
- Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Agency
- Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board
- Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
Lots of issues!

> You will know more about the issue you want to discuss than they do

> They will pretend they know what you are talking about

> You MUST explain acronyms & concepts
Time crunch

- You will not be the only meeting they have that day (or even that hour)
- Meetings are usually scheduled in 15-minute time slots and back to back
- Be concise
- Be flexible
- Be early
Advocacy formats

- Office visit
- Phone calls
- Fax
- E-mail
- Social media
- Greet at public events
- Invite to facility or event

NO LETTERS!!
6 Rules

1) Have an “ask”
2) Contact decision maker
3) Note importance to official’s area
4) Know who you are speaking to
5) Be concise
6) Follow up
1) Have an ask

- They like to say ‘yes’
- Will avoid saying ‘no’ – and are good at it
- Will talk about topics of interest to you, but won’t ask how they can help
- YOU must be specific about what you want from them!
Frame Your Message

- I’m here to talk about...
- No more than 3 ‘asks’ per contact
  - Short term
  - Intermediate
  - Long term
- Use anecdotes and stories
- Imbed data when possible
- Stay on message
2) Contact Decision Maker

- Go to an event where elected official is and ask in person
- Get an e-mail or phone call to correct staff person
  (DON’T leave a message with whoever answers the phone)
- For Congressional staffers:
  - john.doe@mail.house.gov
  - jane_doe@senator.senate.gov
3) Importance to Area

- How is your ask important to the official’s state or district?
- Personalize it
- Give your experience
- They want to help!
4) Know who you are speaking to

- Most Congressional staffers are under 30
- They are making important decisions
- Be polite – they hear demands all day
- Where is the bill? What committee has it?
- Is the staffer new or experienced? Are they from your area? State?
- What committees does their boss serve on?
How would I know all that?

- Advocacy Organization
  - National Association of Rural Health Clinics
  - National Rural Health Association
  - American Nurses Association
  - Association for Community Health Improvement

- Coordinate visits

- Action Alerts

- The more responses, the more likely Congress is to act!
5) Be Concise

- First impressions are important
- Have your ask condensed into a fact sheet
  - 1 page max per ask
- Walk through materials
- Don’t pretend you know more than you do
- Understand time constraints
- Be yourself
6) Follow up

- Send e-mail (along with information you promised to get for them) no more than a week after a face-to-face meeting.

- If they act on your request, make sure you let them know how much it is appreciated!
What if?

- You know the politician will vote AGAINST what you want anyway?
- You know the politician will vote FOR what you want anyway?
Role Play #1

- The phone call

Ask: support Senate Bill 198
Rural Health Clinic (RHC) Burden Reduction Act
Making the Call

- Often will leave message
  - Don’t leave it with receptionist
- Introduce yourself and explain your organization
- Keep it simple and brief
- Offer more info by e-mail
- Thank them
Role Play #2

- The public event

Ask: support Senate Bill 198
Rural Health Clinic (RHC) Burden Reduction Act
Meet & Greet

- No more than one ask
- Hand over information with the handshake
- Introduce self and explain organization
- Thank them
- Total encounter should last less than 30 seconds
Role Play #3

- The office visit
  - With staffers
  - With the elected official

Ask: support Senate Bill 198
Rural Health Clinic (RHC) Burden Reduction Act
Hollywood vs Reality

- Space
- Attention (yours & theirs)
- Knowledge
Do’s & Don’ts

✓ Concise
✓ Factual
✓ Polite
✓ Punctual
✓ Understand their time constraint
✓ Give your experience!

✗ Take their whole day
✗ Make up things – if you don’t know, tell them you’ll get back to them
✗ Be really late
✗ Threaten to not vote for them
Other tips

- Develop relationships
  - Send newsletters, event announcements, etc. Don’t wait for a problem to arise before making contact

- Invite to your organization
  - They LOVE photo ops (ribbon cuttings, scholarship announcements, etc.)
  - They want to learn about your situation
  - They want to be seen doing good things

- Friends in high places
  - Low-level staffers won’t be there for long
  - Find a way to connect with them
Indirect Advocacy

- Public gatherings
  - Media attention is key

- Letters to the Editor

- OpEd
  - Make sure you understand the newspaper guidelines
Who is My Representative?

Representatives:

- District 1: Rob Wittman (MPH)
  - Brent.Robinson@mail.house.gov
- District 2: Jen Kiggans (NP)
  - Maddie.Mitchell@mail.house.gov
- District 3: Robert Scott
  - Sophia.Dycaico@mail.house.gov
- District 4: Jennifer McClellan
  - TBA
- District 5: Bob Good
  - Courtney.Sosnowski@mail.house.gov
Representative List – Part 2

- District 6: Ben Cline
  - Darby.McQueen-Dever@mail.house.gov
- District 7: Abigail Spanberger
  - TBA
- District 8: Don Beyer
  - Kate.Schisler@mail.house.gov
- District 9: Morgan Griffith
  - Davis.Michols@mail.house.gov
- District 10: Jennifer Wexton
  - Amelia.Faraco-Hadlock@mail.house.gov
- District 11: Gerald Connolly
  - Lauren.Covington@mail.house.gov
Mark Warner
- Colleen_Nguyen@warner.senate.gov
- Jonah_Kim@warner.senate.gov

Tim Kaine
- Samantha_Koehler@kaine.senate.gov

Different state or not sure about district?
https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative
You – yes, YOU – can change DC!

- Don’t underestimate what you can do
- Realize that relationships you develop now will matter in the future
- Spending 5 minutes to send an e-mail or make a phone call can do a lot
Questions??