STRATEGIZING AND CRAFTING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY MESSAGE

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About the Consumer Voice

• The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care was formed as NCCNHR (National Citizens’ Coalition for Nursing Home Reform) in 1975 because of public concern about substandard care in nursing homes. The Consumer Voice is the outgrowth of work first achieved by advocates working for Ralph Nader and later for the National Gray Panthers. Elma Holder, NCCNHR founder, was working with The Long-Term Care Action Project of the Gray Panthers when she organized a group meeting of advocates from across the country to attend a nursing home industry conference in Washington, DC. At that meeting, representatives of 12 citizen action groups spoke collectively to the industry about the need for serious reform in nursing home conditions.

• The consumer attendees were inspired to develop a platform of common concerns and motivated to form a new organization to represent the consumer voice at the national level. Most of the original members had witnessed and endured personal experiences with substandard nursing home conditions.
Agenda

• Welcome and Introduction
  Robyn Grant, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy

• Overview of the *Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act*
  Cathy Hurwit, Chief of Staff for Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky

• Strategy Charts: What are they? How can they help you in your advocacy?
  Robyn Grant

• Strategy Charts: Consumer Voice Campaign Example
  Marybeth Williams, Public Policy Associate

• How to Craft an Effective Advocacy Message
  Robyn Grant & Marybeth Williams

• Question and Answer
  Marybeth Williams & Robyn Grant

• Wrap Up/Closing Remarks
  Robyn Grant
Overview of the *Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act*

Cathy Hurwit
Chief of Staff for Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (IL-9)
Overview of the *Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act*

- Originally introduced in the 113th Congress as H.R. 5373 by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (IL-9)
- Being reintroduced by Congresswoman Schakowsky in the 114th Congress
- Would require all nursing homes receiving Medicare and/or Medicaid funding to have a direct care registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Will be referred to the House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees
Strategy Charts: An Overview

Robyn Grant
Director,
Public Policy & Advocacy
**Strategy Charts: What are they?**

**Advocacy Planning Chart**  
*(based upon Midwest Academy Strategy Chart)*

<table>
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<th><strong>ISSUE GOALS</strong></th>
<th><strong>ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS</strong></th>
<th><strong>CONSTITUENTS &amp; ALLIES</strong></th>
<th><strong>DECISION MAKERS &amp; OPPONENTS</strong></th>
<th><strong>TACTICS</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Vision:</strong> What do you want in the longterm? Make sure your immediate goals will move you toward your longterm goals.</td>
<td><strong>Now:</strong> What organizational resources do you bring to this campaign? How many members in your alliance? How many volunteers? How much money?</td>
<td>In this column, identify WHO CARES about this issue. Identify people by where you might find them. For example, not just “seniors” but “seniors at the nutrition sites, and seniors at the social security office.” Divide those who care into constituents and allies.</td>
<td><strong>Primary Decision:</strong> Who has the power to say YES or NO to your demand? The primary decision maker should always be a person or persons, not an institution.</td>
<td>Tactics are the things you do. They are what the constituents do to the decision maker (or secondary decision maker) to get him/her to agree to your demand. Make sure that your tactics overall will help you strengthen your organization.</td>
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<td><strong>Demand:</strong> What do you want, that you think you can win given the amount of power you have? A demand is not your “dream” goal, but a realistic achievable goal. It is specific and measurable. You win it from someone.</td>
<td><strong>Then:</strong> At the end of this issue campaign (3 months, 6 months, or whatever you realistically anticipate), how do you want your alliance to be strengthened? Essentially, what are your organizational goals for this campaign? Be specific. “We want to add 5 new volunteers, raise $2000, and get our name in the newspaper 3 times.</td>
<td><strong>Constituents:</strong> These are people who are already members of your group, or you would like them to become members. List out carefully where you can find your constituents.</td>
<td><strong>Secondary Decision makers:</strong> People who don’t have the power to give you what you want, but have more influence and power over the primary decision maker than you do. Secondary decision makers can help you pressure the primary decision maker.</td>
<td>Tactics should be:</td>
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<td><strong>Fallback:</strong> Occasionally, we misjudge how much power we have. If you can’t win your demand, what specific thing could you ask for that would still be good, but not quite as much as demand. (P.S. Don’t fallback the first time the decision maker says no to your demand.)</td>
<td><strong>Allies:</strong> These are people who may not be interested in getting involved with the group Association, but can help you win on the issue.</td>
<td><strong>Opponents:</strong> People who spend money or organize against you. Having lots of opponents limits what you can win (so your demand has to be less.)</td>
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Tactics should be:  
*Fun  
*Things your members feel comfortable doing.  
*Focused primarily on the decision maker or secondary decision-maker.  
*Creative.  
*Worthy of media coverage.  
*In line with your image.  
*Not exactly what the decision maker is expecting (if possible).  
*Able to strengthen and publicize your group.
Strategy Charts:
Consumer Voice Example

Marybeth Williams
Public Policy Associate
# Strategy Chart: CV Example

## ISSUE GOALS

**Vision:**
Adequate staffing for nursing home residents

**Demand:**
Mandate Medicaid and/or Medicare certified nursing homes to provide RN staffing 24 hours a day/7 days a week
- Pass HR ____, The Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act
- Pass SB___
- Presidential signature

**Fallback:**
Mandate Medicaid and/or Medicare certified nursing homes to provide RN staffing 24 hours a day/7 days a week with waivers permitting facilities to not have 24 hour RN coverage 7 days a week under certain limited circumstances
## Organizational Considerations

### Now:
- 4614 dedicated individuals in CV Action Network
- 20 national organizations that indicated support in last Congressional session
- 114 state ombudsman programs, local ombudsman programs, citizen advocacy groups and family councils that indicated support in last Congressional session
- Social media ability
- Skilled in using online advocacy tool (SALSA)
- Engaged and committed staff, Leadership Council and Governing Board
- $207,000 for 2013-2015 staffing campaign

### Then: End of 114th Congress
- 5,000 Action Network individuals
- 25 national allies supporting the bill
- 150 state ombudsman programs, local ombudsman programs, citizen advocacy groups and family councils supporting the bill
- 25 retweets about the bill
- $10,000 funding raised to continue the campaign
## Strategy Chart: CV Example

### CONSTITUENTS & ALLIES

#### Constituents:
Long-term care consumers, family members, citizen advocacy groups, individual citizen advocates, long-term care ombudsmen, resident councils, family councils, older adults, persons with disabilities, direct care workers, elder law and trial attorneys, nurses

#### Allies:
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP); National Association of Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman (NALLTCO); Service Employees International Union (SEIU); PHI, Older Women’s League (OWL); Alliance of Retired Americans (ARA); Coalition of Geriatric Nursing Organizations (CGNO); Public Citizen; Community Catalyst; National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare; American Association of Justice; National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys; The ARC; American Medical Directors Association
### DECISION MAKERS & OPPONENTS

#### Primary:
- President
- All Members of the U.S. House of Representatives
- Members of the U.S. House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees
- All Members of the U.S. Senate
- Members of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee

#### Secondary:
- Staff of U.S. House of Representatives Members
- Staff Members of U.S. House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees
- Staff of U.S. Senate Members
- Staff Members of U.S. Senate Finance Committee

#### Opponents:
- Leading Age
- American Health Care Association
- American College of Nursing Home Administrators
Strategy Chart: CV Example

**TACTICS**

- In person trainings & Webinar Trainings (2014-2015)
- Action alert to CV Action Network
  *(When bill is re-introduced)*
- District visits
  *(Legislative District Work Periods – February 16-20\textsuperscript{th}; March 9\textsuperscript{th}-13\textsuperscript{th}; March 30\textsuperscript{th}- April 10\textsuperscript{th}, if bill has been re-introduced by these times)*
  *(October 6- November 7)*
- Hill visits by CV staff
  *(Following re-introduction of bill and throughout the 114\textsuperscript{th} Congress)*
- Hill visits during annual meeting by participants
  *(November 2015)*
- Hard copy petition within Members’ districts
  *(When Bill is re-introduced – end of 114\textsuperscript{th} Congress)*
HOW TO CRAFT AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY MESSAGE

Robyn Grant & Marybeth Williams
THE BIG SIX

1. Have an opening statement that includes your ask
2. Present the problem
3. Give the facts
4. Give a personal example or story
5. Connect to something your audience cares about
6. Reiterate the “Ask”
Identify the Receiver

This is the primary/secondary decision maker in your Strategy Chart.
#1. Have an Opening Statement

• Grab their attention! Open with a statement that engages your audience. **Include your “ask”** – tell them what action you want them to take.
#1. Have an Opening Statement

Consumer Voice Example

Ask for Co-sponsoring the *Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act*
#2. Present the Problem

Lay out the issues:

- Why is this a problem?
- Who is affected?
#2. Present the Problem

Consumer Voice Example for the
*Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act:*
What is the Problem?

- Nursing homes are only required to have a registered nurse 8 hours a day/7 days a week
- RNs are the only nursing personnel with the education and licensure to conduct assessments
- If a RN is onsite, she or he can evaluate the resident’s status and determine if resident should/should not go to hospital
- Higher levels of RN staffing improve care, save money
#3. Give the Facts


- Provide solid evidence to support your argument.
- Provide data relevant to your audience.
- When using statistics, provide a mental picture.
#3. Give the Facts

Consumer Voice Example for the
*Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act*

- Number of states with a requirement for RN 24 hours a day
- National percentage of facilities that do not currently have a 24-hour RN
- Rates of preventable poor care outcomes for Congressperson’s state
- Rate of hospitalization of nursing home residents in Congressperson’s state
- Cost of a hospitalization
- Cost of a RN annually
- Average RN time per resident in the state
Where can you find the facts?

- State survey agency
- Nursing Home Compare
- Nursing Home Compendium
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Government Reports (e.g., Government Accountability Office; Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General)
- Center for Public Integrity (staffing)
- Pro Publica website
#4. Provide a Personal Example/Story

Make it personal:

- Put a face to the issue
- Share observations
- Share personal experiences
- Tell a story
#4. Provide a Personal Example/Story

Consumer Voice Example for the
*Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act*
#5. Connect to Something Your Audience Cares About

Do your research:

- Values
- Interests
- Concerns
- Voting history
- Self-interests
#6. Make the Ask

Reiterate what you want the audience to do.

**Consumer Voice Example:** “We’d like to ask you to co-sponsor the *Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act.*”
Be Prepared for Questions & Debate

Try to imagine every perspective

...and every angle
Questions and Debate

Consumer Voice Example of Argument and Response
Closing

Closing your conversation is just as important as your opening.
Question and Answer
JOIN THE CONSUMER VOICE ACTION NETWORK

www.theconsumervoice.org

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Upcoming Advocacy Training Webinars

April 30, 2015: 2) Delivering Your Message in Person: The Nuts and Bolts of Meeting with a Key Decision Maker

June 30, 2015: 3) Delivering Your Message: Utilizing Both Traditional Approaches and Social Media

August 27, 2015: 4) How to Grow, Support, and Activate Your Network
Thanks for all you do
Contact Us

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