

Advocating for Immunization Policies: Potential Opportunities

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Presentation Overview

- ▶ Opening Comments
- ▶ Know your stuff
- ▶ Take the technical edge
- ▶ Build and nurture relationships
- ▶ Give them what they want
- ▶ Collaborate or die
- ▶ Build knowledge and a foundation in the grass roots
- ▶ Know and Understand your Detractors & Opponents
- ▶ Tenacity

Initial Rule of Advocacy

- Know and understand the landscape or audience of your advocacy efforts
- Put in another way WHO will your Advocacy be carried out on
 - Legislature
 - Regulatory Agencies
 - Governor
 - Courts
 - Media
 - Public
- Today's focus is primarily on the California State Government, especially the State Legislature and Administration

Know Your Stuff

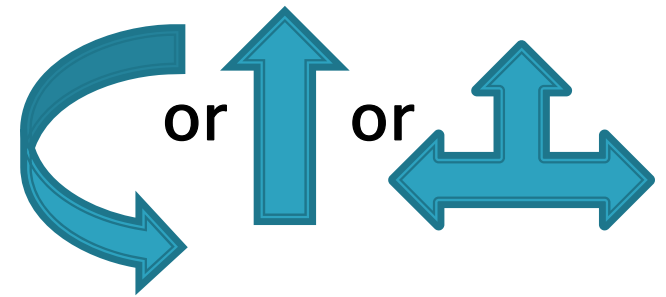
- ▶ Do your Homework
- ▶ Define Your Issue – Set the Vision
- ▶ You are the **one most interested in your issue**

Know Your Stuff

- ▶ You are the **Expert**

Know Your Stuff

- ▶ You are the **Expert**, So
- ▶ Vision Includes –
 - Where are we going and why



Drawing and Defining a Line in the Sand



- ▶ What is the Issue
- ▶ What is the Vision
- ▶ What needs to be done
 - Generally
 - Specifically
- Don't leave it to someone else to define your issue
- If someone redefines or draws a line over yours – Redraw the Line – Bring it back to your Issue and Vision
- Stay in control of what the issue and vision is

How

Capture the Technical Edge

- ✘ You are the expert in your issue area, so:
- ✘ Be seen as the expert on your issue and go to source for information about immunization or at least how to connect to vaccine resources and information
- ✘ Some ways to establish yourself as are the “Go To” group/person on your issue area
 - + Technical reports
 - + Resource Guide
 - + Providing public testimony
 - + Host policymaker education or training session
 - + Develop and maintain relationships – Leg/Leg Staff/Media

Build and Nurture Relationships

- ▶ With Legislators
- ▶ With media – Reporters – Editors
- ▶ Other groups – Coalitions and/or Organizations

Build and Nurture Relationships With Legislators

▶ How

- Meet with them – Legislators



Meet with their staff -- Know their staff by their first names – health issues person, scheduler, secretary, etc.

- Keep the Legislator's file on your issue current
- Provide them with a resource guide on your issue (i.e. experts, who to talk to, where to get information, where to go to SEE)
 - especially contacts in their District – if you have them
- Testify at public hearings
- Volunteer to help them in their district office, during their campaign
- Walk a precinct with them
- Identify people they are close to in your community, who you or your group is also close to
- Take them on a reality tour to learn first hand what the issue looks like, feels like and where it lives

How to Get a Meeting With a Legislator or Their Staff

- ▶ Call Legislator's local office
- ▶ Legislator's local contact information at
 - Assembly Member www.asm.ca.gov
 - State Senate Member www.sen.ca.gov
- ▶ If you do not know your Legislator's name call your County Elections Office or go to www.leginfo.ca.gov click on "Your Legislature," put in your zip code
- ▶ During Legislative Session – Jan to Aug – Legislators in office Thursday afternoon through weekend
- ▶ Federal Legislator contact information
 - <http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml>

Build and Nurture Relationships

Give them what they need

Legislators:

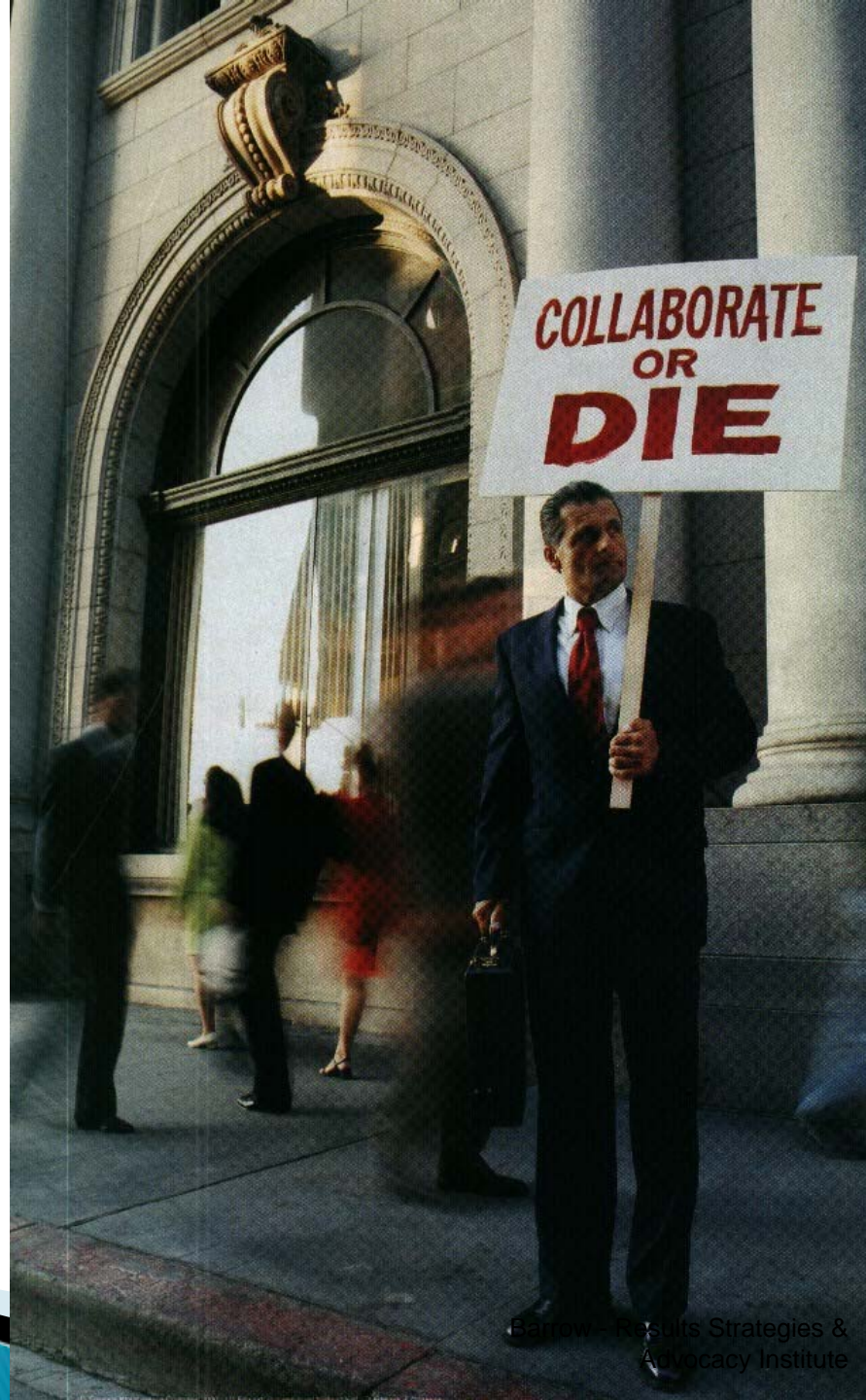
- ▶ Understand how the Legislative process works
- ▶ Learn what type and what format of information is useful in the legislative setting: For example:
 - How to write a letter to a legislator
 - How to testify
How to be an expert witness
 - How to say thank you when they do the right thing or were helpful on your issue

Build and Nurture Relationships With the Press

- Do your homework and learn who writes about health issues in your town
- Meet with them before you need them or they need you
- Keep their file on your issue current
- Give them what they need – resources, stories, access

Press:

- ✦ Understand how the press process works
- ✦ Learn what type and what format of information is useful in the media's setting: For example:
 - + How to write a letter to the editor
 - + How to write an op ed piece
 - + How to get a meeting with an editor or editorial board
 - + How to place an ad
 - + How to hold a press conference
 - + How to be a resource for them, especially when they are on deadline – Keep your rolodex of specific issue experts up to date
 - + Help them access real life stories – connect to the people, health care providers
 - + How to say thank you when they do the right thing or were helpful on your issue



Collaborate or Die

- ▶ Public health, non-profits and front line health care workers are seldom in a position to have the political clout they deserve
- ▶ Be realistic and build a broader base of support by aligning yourself with others where appropriate and with those organizations and individuals that do have political clout
- ▶ And, just like with the Legislators and media, build and nurture relationships with those you collaborate with by: liaisons, be a resource for them on your issue, and when appropriate support what they are working on

Collaborative Advocacy – Why

Here are ten reasons it is smart to partner with other existing organizations and coalitions:

- ▶ Builds a **broader unified voice** on your issue
- ▶ Creates a **broader based foundation of support** and coordination to more effectively support your advocacy efforts
- ▶ **Shares established integrity** of other existing and respected settings
- ▶ Provides more resources to help **elevate your issue above the din of noise** of many other issues
- ▶ Allows for more education and **outreach to a wider array of decision makers**
- ▶ Provides **opportunities for coordination** of the choir of interest groups on your issue that otherwise would be an ineffective discordant group of voices
- ▶ Helps you **coordinate logistic and administrative support** what otherwise could be ineffective uncoordinated efforts on the same issue
- ▶ Allows for the **utilization of a broader array of lessons learned** from other multifaceted health care groups
- ▶ Increase **funding opportunities**
- ▶ Elevates your issue by **adding more legitimacy to your issue efforts** that otherwise may be seen as self serving

Collaborative Advocacy – How

Examples and suggestions for how to partner with other exiting groups:

- ❑ Establish official liaisons between groups
- ❑ Sponsor and participate in a joint leadership council to periodically meet and conduct joint strategic planning
- ❑ Provide your members with brief monthly or quarterly summary newsletter what other groups doing and contact information
- ❑ Incorporate the other group's web site links into your web site
- ❑ Host a summit of group leaders on a common and current issue area to ensure alignment and coordination of activities on that issue area
- ❑ Invite one or two 5 minute presentations by other group's representatives to your normal meetings
- ❑ Jointly work on a grant proposal or fundraising effort together – sharing support for different parts of the same issue
- ❑ Anecdotes – mental health Healthy families

Build Knowledge and a Foundation of Support In the Grass Roots

- ▶ Bring together those who have been directly impacted by preventable diseases
- ▶ Provide them with written material and resource guides
- ▶ Build story banks to chronicle real life stories – it is said a picture is worth a thousand words, a well told real life story is worth more in the world of politics

Know and Understand your Detractors & Opponents

- ▶ Use detractors and opponents questions and issues to sharpen your image, message, and to more clearly define your issue
- ▶ Opponent's issues help force you to get better and better at knowing your issue and learning how to steer more effectively toward your objective
 - And can sometimes result in unique and unusual partnerships
- ★ Take the time to compile your opponents issues, and to develop a Q and A based on issues they raise

Tenacity

Why

- Immunization issues are not going away, whether we win today or not

How

- ❖ Be prepared for the long haul – You are experts at the “long haul”
- ❖ Do not let set-backs deter you – learn from them
- ❖ Remember in the end they (your clients, your families, your children and state and local policymakers) depend on you
- ❖ You are the experts, you set the vision, you provide the leadership