VCCA CLIMATE & HEALTH ADVOCACY TRAINING

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What can we, as health professionals do?
## Why Healthcare Professionals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest honesty &amp; integrity</th>
<th>Lowest honesty &amp; integrity</th>
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<td>- Nurses</td>
<td>- Bankers</td>
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<td>- Medical doctors</td>
<td>- Lawyers</td>
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<td>- Pharmacists</td>
<td>- Business executives</td>
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<td>- Police officers</td>
<td>- Advertising</td>
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<td>- Clergy</td>
<td>- Car salespeople</td>
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<td>- Congress</td>
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Role of the Health Professional

- Education
- Information based on evidence
- Most trusted professionals!
- Excellent Communication Techniques
  - Five Rights of Political Advocacy
    - The right preparation
    - The right communicator
    - The right message
    - The right request
    - The right repetition
Political Action

- Social and Political Advocacy is just another form of caring (Morrell, 2005)
- Health care professionals need to speak out on issues related to the health of the public
Spectrum of Advocacy

Association and Institutional
- Education
- Practice change
- Organizational statements

Community
- Education & outreach
- Collaboration & partnerships

State and Federal
- Meetings & calls with legislators
- Press: Briefings, social media, opinion pieces
Levers of political will

- Legislator visits
- Testify at hearings/EPA
- Media relations: LTE, Op-ed, editorials, press events
- Grassroots outreach: Constituent comment forms
- Grasstips outreach: Letters from big employers or people of “influence” - health professionals!!!
What are the most effective means of influencing legislators?

Congressional staffers say:

- Visits from constituents
  - Can be more powerful than professional lobbyist
- Phone calls
- Individualized emails or letters
- Computerized letters, petitions
Legislator visits

Prior to the meeting:
• Schedule in advance
• Know your audience: Research your legislator
  • What is their position on climate change?
  • How do they vote on key issues?
  • Is there common ground?
• Anticipate and be prepared to counter likely opposition arguments
• Assign roles - 1) Leader or Facilitator, 2) Timekeeper, 3) Note taker, 4) Issues Expert, 5) Follow-up
Determine goal: What is your “Ask”?  

- This is what you want to get out of the meeting.
- Decide on beforehand
- Be specific and concise

Potential Asks:
- Oppose/support action
- Issue statement
- Make a speech to members
- Host briefing or roundtable discussion
Legislator Visits: During the Meeting

• Show appreciation
• Remember you’re a trusted messenger
  • Use personal stories
• Be brief and concise, with offers to follow up
• Listen and identify concerns: Validate, pivot back to ask
• Build an on-going relationship:
  • Listen for common ground/shared values
  • Become an information resource
  • Take good notes
What’s your elevator speech?

- 1-2 minutes
- Most important points
- Your chance to shine!
Legislator Visits: After the Meeting

• Always leave with some sign of support
  • “We want to be a resource for you”
• Leave a business card and/or your information
• Follow up with a thank you email
• “Circle back” to follow up on action ask
Tying It Together

• Tweet/Facebook right from your press events/hearings/legislative visits!
• Bring copies of your own blogs/press coverage to legislative visits in your information packets
• Use Twitter/emails/Facebook to invite people to your rallies/press events
• Each advocacy activity leverages and strengthens the others
Connecting Public Concern to Solutions

**BARRIERS TO ACTION:**
- Impacts viewed as distant
- Providing science without making it personally relevant
- Too much "gloom and doom"
- Perception that solutions are not achievable

**MOTIVATORS:**
- Impacts are personally relevant and happening now
- Emphasize solutions and co-benefits
- Make information local and tangible

Source: Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, 2010
Federal Rollbacks on Climate Action

- Withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord
- Repeal of the Clean Power Plan
- Weakening of EPA enforcement of regulations
- Delay of EPA methane rule
- Weakening of clean cars rules
- Reversal of ban on new offshore drilling in the Atlantic and Arctic
- Authorization of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
Carbon Emissions & Power Plants

Clean Power Plan
- Climate and health net benefits: $26 to $45 billion
- Reduce CO2 emissions by 19%
- Projected to avoid:
  - 3,600 premature deaths
  - 1,700 heart attacks
  - 90,000 asthma attacks
  - 300,000 missed days of work or school

Affordable Clean Energy Rule
- By 2030, at most reduce carbon emissions by 1.5% below 2005 levels
- Could lead to up 1,400 more deaths
Clean Cars Rules

• The Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles
• Transportation sector = 28% of GHG emissions
• National Program
  • EPA, NHTSA, CARB
• Threats to upholding standards
  • Revising standards for light-duty vehicles MY 2022-2026
  • Reexamining CA waiver
The Virginia General Assembly
Virginia General Assembly - Background

VA is the oldest continuous law-making body in the colonized USA. (est. July 30, 1619)

• Bicameral Legislature
  o House of Delegates - 100 Members (51 Republicans | 49 Democrats)
  o Senate - 40 Members (21 Republicans | 19 Democrats)

• Committee Structure
  • House of Delegates – 14 Committees
  • Senate – 11 Committees

• General Assembly Session
  • Convene 2nd Wednesday in January
  • Sessions last 60 days in even-numbered years, 30 days in odd-numbered years*
Virginia’s Climate Action Progress.

- Joining the Transportation Climate Initiative
- Enacting a methane standard
- Joining the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification
Virginia’s Climate Action Opportunities

• Joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative through legislation.
• Linking with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative via regulatory action.
• Removing barriers to consumer-sited solar.
• Moving forward with offshore wind.
Virginia General Assembly - Tips

• Know your legislator. ([https://www.virginia.gov/services/whos-my-legislator/](https://www.virginia.gov/services/whos-my-legislator/))

• Start early. Meet your legislators before session.

• Get past the gatekeeper.

• Understand the daily schedule.

• Make a *direct and specific* ask.

• Don’t be nervous! You’re the expert.
Practice Scenario: Legislator Visit

• **Ask:** Support Virginia joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative
Take Action NOW!

• Clean cars standards
  • Health professional sign-on letter: https://bit.ly/2NHNVkJK

• ACE: Clean Power Plan replacement

• Keep on radar: NSPS repeal (methane emissions from oil and gas industry)

• Schedule a meeting with your state legislators.
THANK YOU!

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