

## ADVOCACY TIPS

### RUN A WINNING ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN



Achieving policy change is not easy, but don't let that stop you. When members of the bleeding disorders community mobilize, they can significantly impact policy decisions. This mobilization, however, calls for advocacy campaigns built on thoughtful planning and sustained action. Here are strategies to remember:

✓ **WORK WITH COALITIONS**

Don't go it alone. Work with diverse coalitions, including interests outside our community, to plan and advance the campaign. See HFA's tip sheet "Build and Sustain Successful Coalitions."

✓ **NAME THE CAMPAIGN**

Give the campaign a concise, catchy name such as the "Protect Our Medicaid" Campaign or "Health Care Fairness First." Refer to it often. Emphasize unity by using the same colors on all handouts. A clear, consistent identity will make the campaign stand out and help people remember it.

✓ **ALWAYS HAVE "ASKS"**

In every communication and at every event, have specific "asks," actions you want others to take. Because you'll meet people with varying degrees of interest, always have small asks (such as signing a petition) and larger asks (such as meeting with a legislator or helping plan an advocacy day).

✓ **USE MANY AVENUES OF COMMUNICATION**

Use as many means of communication as possible to maximize participation: phone, webinar, social media, in-person. If travel is not prohibitive, your meetings should have an in-person component.

✓ **PREVENT THE SOUND OF SILENCE**

When you make an ask publicly (for example, at a meeting you ask people to call their legislators) and no one responds, the silence is discouraging. To prevent it, recruit at least a few volunteers in advance and have them agree to voice support and encourage others when you make the ask at the meeting.

✓ **CONNECT TO RECRUITMENT "NODES"**

Strategically target recruitment efforts. Identify and connect to recruitment "nodes," places where you can easily reach many potential participants at once. Build relationships with well-networked groups. Attend high-yield gatherings like town hall meetings that attract politically active people.

✓ **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT**

Ask people not only to participate themselves but also to recruit others, multiplying recruitment efforts. Don't be afraid to be specific. "Can you bring two other people with you to Advocacy Day?"

✓ **BUILD ON LARGER OBSERVANCES**

Hold events or release press statements connected to larger observances such as Rare Disease Day. Reporters often want the local angle, which enables you to "piggyback" on existing coverage. In addition, organizers of larger observances often provide messaging and activity templates.

## ADVOCACY TIPS

✓ **BE REALISTIC**

Have realistic participation expectations. When setting up for events, set out too few chairs, not too many. It looks better to have to add chairs during the event than to have a lot of empty seats.

✓ **AIM FOR EARLY WINS**

Go for the low-hanging fruit first. Set small, specific, feasible goals as you begin the campaign. Early wins help build momentum, and every step counts on the way to long-term policy change.

✓ **CELEBRATE**

Highlight and celebrate successes, even minor ones. People want to be a part of what works. Has a news article mentioned the campaign? Send the link to everyone involved, with compliments. Did community members meet with a senator? Take photos and publicize it.

✓ **MAKE IT FUN**

Regularly infuse creativity and humor into the campaign, as appropriate. It makes advocacy less intimidating and the campaign more approachable, especially to an often politically weary public.

✓ **STAY DISCIPLINED IN MESSAGING**

Identify words that resonate with people's values (see HFA's "Messaging: Use Words That Work") and encourage your allies to stay on message, even if it seems somewhat scripted at first.

✓ **HARNESS THE POWER OF STORIES**

Few strategies are more powerful than people telling their own personal health care stories as examples of the need for a specific policy change. Integrate stories as much as possible into your campaign. For examples, see HFA's "Voices" initiative: <http://voices.hemophiliafed.org/>

✓ **USE HFA'S ADVOCACY TOOLS**

HFA has a variety of advocacy tools you can use, including templates and educational materials. We can even tailor these to your specific goals, as well as work with you to send advocacy alerts.

**HFA is here to support your advocacy! Contact us at [advocacy@hemophiliafed.org](mailto:advocacy@hemophiliafed.org)**

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Hemophilia Federation of America: [hemophiliafed.org/what-we-do/advocacy/legislative-action-center/](http://hemophiliafed.org/what-we-do/advocacy/legislative-action-center/)

Alliance for Justice:

✓ "What is Advocacy?" – <http://www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/about-advocacy/coalitions-and-affiliations.html>

✓ Advocacy Glossary – <http://www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/about-advocacy/getting-started.html>

Families USA – Advocacy Tools: <http://familiesusa.org/resources/tools-for-advocates/>