Public Health Policy Advocacy – Achievements, Challenges and Lessons Learned over the Years

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Purpose & Outline

Purpose:
To share information about the role of public health associations (PHA) & WFPHA in policy advocacy/influence

Presentation Outline:
• Policy Advocacy: what is it, why do it?
• PHAs and Policy Advocacy: our role
• Policy advocacy strategies, approaches & achievements: examples from WFPHA & national PHAs
• Challenges and Lessons Learned
• Quo vadis?
Policy Advocacy: What is it?

Advocacy: to support, plead or defend a cause

- An act of promoting a viewpoint/position
- Directly shaping opinion and action for the PHA
- Shift opinion & action » influencing policy and practice
- Countering misinformation
- A claim or act of legitimization on an issue
- Different from information, education & communications
Advocacy ≠ Lobbying

Advocacy and lobbying are not the same thing.

- Lobbying: undertaking activities aimed at elected officials and/or non-elected government officials to influence them towards a desired action which may result in benefit to an individual or organization.

- Advocacy: defending a viewpoint based on evidence and acting in the public good.
Some days, advocacy feels like this....
Policy Issues for Advocacy by PHAs

- Public Health funding: 7
- Environment & health: 8
- Health inequalities: 9
- Millennium Development Goals: 10
- Social Determinants: 10
- Human Resources for health: 12

Other (tobacco control, alcohol, nutrition, injury prevention, HIV, NCD prevention and control, development assistance framework, water supply & sanitation, MCH)

- Jassat, Knight, Chauvin. World Federation of Public Health Associations Conference, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 2012
Other (letter writing campaigns, journal, implementation research, demonstration projects, parliamentary committees, through coalitions)

Jassat, Knight, Chauvin. World Federation of Public Health Associations Conference, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 2012
In your PHAs opinion, what is the role of “public health” in reducing health inequities (or alternately increasing health equity) in your country?

- Advocate for a policy or effective program intervention with decision-makers (“agenda-setting”)
- Provide evidence for local and national decision-makers
- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Facilitate/ensure access to health services
- Disseminate/facilitate exchange on promising practices/strategies
What unique role can PHAs play in terms of the inclusion of a SDH-based approach for HE at the national level?

- Advocacy to gov’t leaders, decision-makers, experts, stakeholders about importance of SDH
- Promotion, awareness raising, knowledge transfer and training on SDH to policy-makers, media, stakeholders
- Network/alliance building to strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration
- Implementation of projects/policies to support SDH (including national “HE observatories”)
WFPHA & Policy Advocacy

- 40 resolutions
- 7 Declarations
- WHO submissions
- Policy Influence?
WFPHA’s role regarding inclusion of a SDH-based approach for HE at global level

- Advocacy with multilateral agencies and gov’ts
  - HE and SDH acted on urgently and fully integrated into policies and programs
  - PHAs included in consultation and policy-making process
  - Support for PHA-driven actions on HE & SDH
- Resolutions on HE and SDH
- Lobbying donors for funding for PHAs on SDH/HE-related initiatives
- Knowledge transfer among PHAs on promising policies and practice on HE/SDH
- Providing template for framework for PHA networking/collaboration on SDH
Policy Advocacy: Challenges

- Policy analysis, development and advocacy skills
- Dedicated human resources (staff)
- Democratic space
- Resistance of governments to listen and act in the public interest (political and personal agenda)
- Power of opposing camps
PHA Survey Findings/Lessons

- Few PHAs actively involved in policy advocacy & engagement with governments
- Need to develop policy development & advocacy skills and organizational capacity
- Need to share experiences and seek active mentoring by more experienced PHAs
- Addressing resource availability for policy development & advocacy
- Tools/methods to measure advocacy effectiveness and policy influence
Where do we go from here?

- Resource toolkit for policy development & advocacy for PHAs
- Identification of issues for PHAs in Africa (individually, partnerships, AFPHA)
- PH policy advocacy at global level (WFPHA & WHA)
- Move forward to develop policy positions and advocacy strategies
- Measuring progress/effectiveness & accountability/transparency
Leadership in Public Health

A guide to advocacy for public health associations

CPHA-ACSP

CANADA'S PUBLIC HEALTH LEADER
LE LEADER CANADIEN EN SANTE PUBLIQUE
Policy Advocacy: Being Effective

- Be organized and know the facts
- Be a good listener
- Communicate your point clearly
- Create a coalition
- Fact Sheets (clear, concise)
- Don’t force the issue
- Realistic expectations about what can be achieved/delivered
- Follow-up with key people
Policy Advocacy: Essential First Steps

- Identify the issue (internal/external to PHA) and proposed position
- Define the goal & desired outcomes
- Define the target
- Define the message
- Identify the messengers
- Identify the partners
- Define the tactics/strategy
- Define the resources
- Define the plan of implementation
14th World Congress on Public Health

Healthy People - Healthy Environment

February 11-15, 2015 • Kolkata, India

February 11-15, 2015 • Kolkata