

Influencing Change in Health Policy

- Remember, you are the expert. Legislators have less healthcare knowledge than you.
- Do not view the interaction simply as a conversation. You are delivering a message. Stay in control.
- Know your opposition. Remember, the legislator may have already been briefed from the other side. Try to anticipate what was said and how you will respond.

Developing the Key Focus of Your Message

1. Spend time defining the outcome you want to achieve. What do you want them to learn or know?
2. Get it on the FIRST bounce using a “SOUND BITE” or “MANTRA”
 - a. Example of a sound bite: “Safe Staffing Save Lives”
 - b. This becomes the platform for everything else you say. When you redirect the conversation, use it: “It all comes back to my fundamental point, Safe Staffing Save Lives”.
3. Use lay person’s English. Use clean, clear data to get your point across and have the data available.
4. Why should they care? You want to make your audience:
 - a. Feel motivated to act
 - b. Understand how your issue fits into the big picture
 - c. Remember your story and know why it matters, creates change, shows outcome, and rallies people

Streamlining Your Final Message into a Short Elevator Speech

1. **Key message (sound bite) + key facts + sparkler** (an anecdote or personal perspective)
 - a. Make it clear (quickly) why you are there. Time is limited so use your words wisely. Each word is important.
 - b. **Use the rule of three**; i.e. **ONE** main message with **THREE** supporting facts.
2. Consistency + Repetition = Impact
 - a. Deliver the message by controlling the agenda
 - b. Find a way to get back to the message you came for
 - c. If you repeat message back—don’t do it the exact same way
Note: There is an art to repetition—deliver it differently based on context
 - d. Acknowledge (their point) + bridge (to yours) + repeat a key fact + share connection to sparkler

Tips for Staying in Control

1. Follow a game plan
 - Don’t let interruptions bother you
 - **Be prepared to walk and talk.** Legislators are busy and their schedules are not predictable.
2. Negative messages have legs. DON’T share negative information. If you are fed a negative question, do not respond to it. Acknowledge it but, bridge the focus back to your message.
3. Develop your style of focusing that will alert your audience to listen
 - “Let me explain. **What really matters is.....**”
 - “We’ve covered a lot of ground today but, **what it really comes down to is...**” or “**what I really want you to remember is.....**”
 - “I am glad to have this opportunity. **I am here today to share with you.....**”
4. At the end of the conversation:
 - Leave a position summary
 - Conclude with a thank you and follow up i.e. “**Thank you and please remember.....** (your sound bite)”
5. Always follow up promptly with requested information once you are back home.

Summary

- You are the expert
- Remember, you are never off the record and negative messages have legs
- You are in charge
- Be accurate
- Be clear and brief
- Practice with someone before you talk with media or a legislator
- Use your words, not theirs
- Be yourself and be courteous