



Grassroots Advocacy

Advocacy Begins When Someone Says “No”.

You don't have to be a policy expert to advance grassroots advocacy. Hepatitis grassroots advocacy is based on championing our cause, giving people a voice, and building relationships.

Create an action network. Establish effective and timely means to reach hepatitis organization leaders, members, and allies for advocacy action. Email lists, text messages, phone trees, social media, and websites are options to explore. Develop capacity to identify and target members by legislative districts.

Collect stories. Capture the stories and experiences of individuals who call hepatitis Help-Lines, take classes, attend support groups, or volunteer. Personal stories are invaluable in portraying the many faces of hepatitis and the real life impact of funding and policies to policy makers and community leaders.

Cultivate leaders. Recruit state advocacy network leaders and local or regional advocacy representatives to coordinate efforts and relay grassroots feedback on issues and priorities. Consider contracting with a professional lobbyist. Create ad hoc workgroups with interest and expertise in specific issues.

Inspire action. Motivate grassroots advocacy with concise and compelling messages, essential information, and a clear request, or “ask”, to inform policy makers on priority issues. Recruit members to fill hearing rooms and attend events. Suggest wearing a particular color and sitting together for impact.

Provide training. Develop members’ skills and confidence of advocates in how to tell their stories effectively, how to meet with elected officials, and other related topics.

Promote connections. Let members know that their state and federal policy makers are there to represent them and need to hear from them regularly. Encourage members to meet with their elected officials both during legislative session and in the interim about hepatitis priority issues.

Track legislation. Closely follow priority legislation throughout the legislative sessions, including budgets for hepatitis services and treatment. Pay particular attention to upcoming hearings as opportunities for grassroots action. Track additional hepatitis-related legislation as needed.

Speak up. Submit written testimony to legislative committees. Offer to provide oral testimony from a consumer or family perspective before a hearing is held. Ensure representation of hepatitis’s interests on important advisory groups or committees. Bring attention to how decisions will affect people living with hepatitis.

Work with the media. Establish relationships with key reporters and editorial boards by providing facts, “real life” examples and an appeal for action on hepatitis issues. Prompt additional coverage by following up on news stories and events to help shape public attitudes about hepatitis issues.

Stay positive. Remind members to stay positive and not give up when they get a negative response. **Advocacy begins when someone says “no.”** Keep in mind that our goal is to build connections with elected officials. Time and trust helps build support for hepatitis issues.

Command Attention