



Get Ready for Hill Day: Essentials for Your Capitol Hill Visits

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Goals of Hill Day

- Educate policymakers
- Build and nurture support for behavioral health issues
- Demonstrate the commitment of the community
- Have fun!!!!





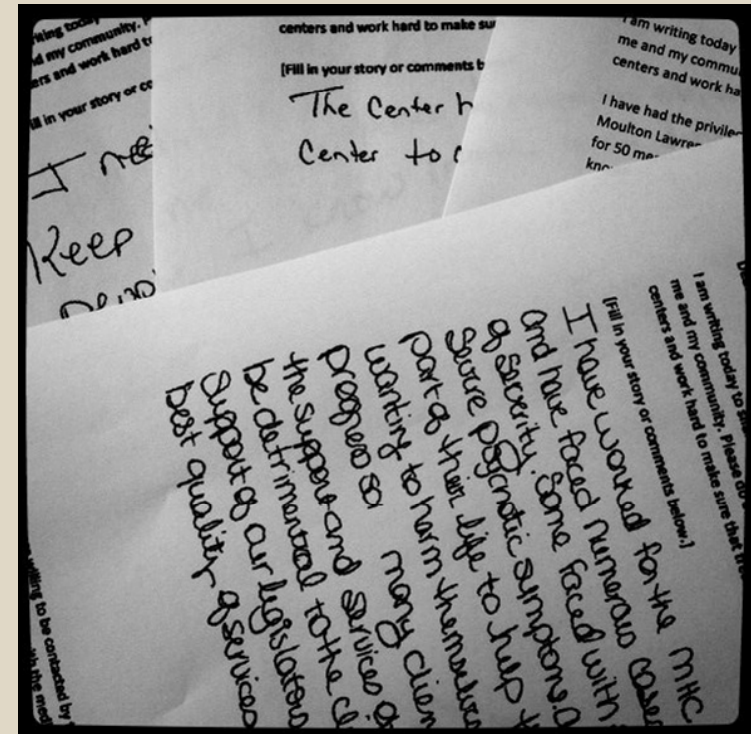
Amplify Your Voice: Hill Day Letter-Writing Campaign

- Bring the voices from your state to Washington!
- Personal stories are one of the most powerful ways of influencing Congress
- How to Participate:
 1. Download our [sample letter form](#) on the Hill Day website.
 2. Get as many people as possible to fill it out.
 3. Return completed letters to RebeccaF@thenationalcouncil.org.



Strategies for Collecting Letters

- Distribute the letter form to staff, board members, friends, family, anyone with a story to tell!
- Leave copies in your waiting room for consumers to fill out
- Email this info to everyone you know, or post it on your website
- Make sure letter-writers know to enter your organization's name, so you can get the credit





Public Policy Institute Overview: Tues., July 19th

- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast & Registration
- 8:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Policy Institute Speakers:
 - Linda Rosenberg, National Council
 - Kelly Whitener, Senate Finance Committee
 - Judy Solomon and Ellen Nissenbaum, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
 - Daniel Farmer, CMS Center on Medicare and Medicaid Innovation
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch



Policy Institute Overview (cont.)

- 12:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Policy Institute Speakers:
 - Jim VandeHei, POLITICO
 - Barbara Edwards, Director, Disabled & Elderly Health Programs Group, CMS
 - Pamela Hyde, SAMHSA Administrator
 - Chuck Ingoglia, National Council
- 5:30-7:30 p.m. Capitol Hill Awards Reception



Jim VandeHei



Breakout Sessions, July 19th

- **Building Your Advocacy Toolkit:** Rikki Amos, Public Affairs Council
 - Find out how to make the most of your Hill visits by learning the essentials about policymaking
- **Advanced Advocacy:** Al Guida, Guide Consulting
 - Take your advocacy to a new level by learning how to maximize your influence
- **Applying for Federal Grant Funding**
 - Federal officials and experts will present advice and tips on successfully applying for grant funding



Capitol Hill Reception 5:30-7:30, July 19th

- This year's award winners are:
 - Behavioral Health Champion
Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (RI)
 - Legislators of the Year
 - Sen. Lamar Alexander (TN)**
 - Sen. Sherrod Brown (OH)**
 - Rep. Rosa DeLauro (CT)**
 - Rep. John Sullivan (OK)**



Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse



Hill Day Overview: Weds., July 20th

- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast/State Delegation Meetup
- 8:30 a.m. Former Congressman David Obey
- 10:00 a.m. Group photo on the steps of the Capitol
- 10:30-5:00 p.m. Hill Visits!
- 12:00 p.m. Congressional Briefing on Behavioral Health Information Technology
- 5:00 p.m. Member Reception & Awards



Hill Day Asks

ASK: Please Co-sponsor the Behavioral Health Information Technology Act (S. 539)

- Current federal HIT funding initiatives do NOT include CBHOs as entities – and many types of providers practicing in CBHOs are excluded from the list of “eligible providers”
 - People who receive care at CBHOs will not benefit from the benefits of HIT usage
 - Limits communication between primary care providers as CBHOs



Behavioral Health IT Act (cont.)

- S. 539 extends federal HIT incentive payments to CBHOs and certain behavioral health providers
 - Expands the list of eligible professionals to include clinical psychologists and clinical social workers
 - Allows mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities that have at least 10% their patient volume attributable to Medicaid recipients to receive increased facility payments
 - Allows private psychiatric hospitals that have at least 10% their patient volume attributable to Medicaid recipients to receive these payments.



Hill Day Asks (cont.)

ASK: Please Support Legislation Creating a Definition of Federally Qualified Behavioral Health Centers

- The coverage expansions under healthcare reform will likely lead to increased demand in services, greater provider accountability for health outcomes
- Federally Qualified Behavioral Health Centers will be able to meet these expectations
 - Voluntary
 - Meet clearly-defined national standards
 - Receive reimbursement for the cost of providing services – increased capacity.



FQBHCs (cont.)

- In addition, the creation of FQBHCs will:
 - Establish federal status for community behavioral health organizations (CBHOs).
 - Provide a definition for such an entity that clearly identifies treatment objectives and updates the minimum core services required.
 - Create nationwide minimum reimbursement for community-based mental health care and substance abuse services that reflects the cost of actually delivering those same services – commonly referred to as “cost-based reimbursement”.



Hill Day Asks (cont.)

ASK: Preserve Medicaid: Please Do Not Convert Medicaid to a Block Grant or Cut Funding

- Current debates over the 2012 budget and a must-pass increase to the national debt ceiling have included a variety of proposals that would:
 - Convert Medicaid to a block grant program
 - Repeal health reform's Maintenance of Effort requirement
 - Cut hundreds of billions of dollars from Medicaid
- Urge your legislators not to balance the budget on the backs of our nation's most vulnerable populations



Member Reception and Awards 5:00-7:00 pm, July 20th

- **Hill Day Spirit Award** (2010 Winner: Colorado)
- **Fastest-growing Delegation** (2010 Winner: Kansas)
- **Strongest Stakeholder Support** (2010 Winner: Michigan)
- **Power Board Award** (2010 Winner: Texas)
- **Community Voice Award** (2010 Winner: Mental Health Center of Denver)
- **NEW THIS YEAR: Advocate of the Year Award** (goes to the individual who was most active in contacting their Members of Congress in the previous year)



Be sure to bring....

- Plenty of business cards
- Shoes you can walk in
- Temperatures will be hot! We recommend:
 - Business casual for Tuesday’s sessions (light sweaters/jackets recommended for cool indoor temps)
 - Business attire (suits) for Wednesday’s meetings
 - Tissues or a handkerchief to help you “freshen up” after walking outside
 - Drink plenty of water



Why Should I Advocate?

- YOU are an expert!!
- Our elected officials **WORK FOR US!!**
- The work you do is extremely important
- A phone call, email, or letter is all that it takes!



Importance of Advocacy

Develop Support for MH & SA with Policymakers

- Educating local officials and legislators about the importance of behavioral health is the first step to ensuring continued support.

Protect and Increase MH & SA Funding

- Grassroots advocacy and effective communication with elected officials is crucial to ensuring behavioral health funding increases and policy objectives are achieved.



What Your Elected Officials Can Do For You

- Sponsor legislation to help with a specific issue facing the mental health system
- Offer amendments to current legislation to accommodate specific needs
- Sponsor resolutions/proclamations recognizing the importance of mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Offer and support funding increases



Preparation Prior to Making Contact

Do your homework, and learn about the elected officials you will be meeting:

- Do they support and value mental health and substance abuse treatment
- What are their key issues/interests
- Have they sponsored/supported any behavioral health initiatives in the past



Preparation with an Edge...

- Schedule smartly (be early, be professional, be friendly, be flexible, & over-communicate).
- Business cards!
- Create a 1-page “cheat sheet” on the MOC to prepare for the visit. I include:
 - Committees & subcommittees
 - Summary of relationship so far
 - Photos of MOC and staff
 - Funders list; Mutual connections
 - Short History of Behavioral Health priorities (votes, statements, & cosponsorships).



Preparation with an Edge...

- Find something POSITIVE that your MOC has done that you can mention appreciating.
 - A great op-ed about supporting veterans with PTSD?
 - Supporting MH coverage for kids?
 - Great rapid-response to a recent natural disaster?
- Check out your Social Network connections
 - Did the staffer go to the same alma mater as your CEO?
 - Anyone on your board a donor or friend?
- Memorize your “Relevance” Elevator Speech
 - We serve ___ people in ___ counties in your district. We employ ___ people and bring in \$___ into your district. Our ask is _____.



Developing Effective Messages

- Remember you are an expert!
- What does the policymaker care about? (What do you have in common?)
- Why should the policymaker support you?
- What will you ask the policymaker to do?
- Give them a reason to support you!



During the Meeting

- Address the elected official by their title (Representative/Senator)
- Be well informed--know what issues you would like to discuss beforehand
- Be concise and respectful of their time
- Provide written information about your issues and leave them materials about your organization
- Follow-up from your meeting with a thank you note, and any additional information that may have been requested during the meeting.



How to Create the Worst Visit Ever

- Be Late
- Neglect Personal Hygiene & Appearance
- Dominate the conversation.
 - Talk more than 50% of the time.
- Be a Robot.
 - Don't ask "how are you?"
 - Only talk about data and research
 - Leave 500 pieces of paper behind for the staff to "read."



How to Create the Worst Visit Ever

- Treat MOC staffers as inferiors.
 - Refuse to meet with “just staff”
 - Talk to staffers like they are your own staff.
 - Talk to them like they don’t know anything.
- Be political
 - Mention what a great Republican/Democrat you are
 - Talk about how much \$ you donated
- Be Sarcastic/Combative/Aggressive/Threatening
 - Interrupt people!
 - Criticize a vote/decision that the MOC made
 - Insinuate staffer/MOC aren’t doing their best.



Meeting With Staff

Staff are a key part of the process!

- Don't decline a meeting with staff in lieu of meeting with the elected official
- Elected officials make decisions on numerous issues, so often rely on their staff to be the subject-matter experts



Opportunities for Ongoing Communication

- Invite staff and elected officials to visit your programs/facilities
- Attend their in-district town hall meetings
- Thank them for supporting specific pieces of legislation/funding increases
- Keep them informed of issues affecting your organization



How not to be “Forgettable”

- Get to know the Health Legislative Assistant
 - Find an excuse to email/call her at least 1/quarter.
 - Before an important vote, call and ask if she has any questions about the issues at place.
 - Email her op-eds and positive press about your company.
 - Educate her about how legislation will affect your company and the people you serve.
- Send personal, handwritten thank you cards
 - Send directly to staffers and MOC
 - If you know a staffer has gone above and beyond, consider sending a note about how great the staff did to the Chief of Staff or the MOC.
- Town Hall Meetings
 - Encourage staff, consumers to attend
 - If you’re likely to get to ask a question, check in with National Council about what might be good to ask.
 - Be positive & civil



How not to be “Forgettable”

- Leave behind SHORT, NICE-LOOKING materials about your issue and organization
 - Think 1-pagers with bullet points.
 - Think pictures and graphs
 - Remember -- 95% of all staffers are “Millennials”
- Within 1 week – THANK YOU NOTE.
 - Mention several personalized details of how great it was to meet with MOC/staffer ____.
 - Include any additional information that may have been requested during the meeting.
- Schedule on-site visits with MOC
 - My goal = 1 every 2 years).
- Involve Consumers/Family members
 - Personal, BRIEF, true stories have power.
- In your personal time, get RELEVANT
 - Consider donating and volunteering...



The Big Picture

Cultivating and nurturing relationships with elected officials and staff is never a waste of time.

Even people who initially appear to have little interest in behavioral health, can end up being a huge asset in the future.



Join the Conversation: Social Media at Hill Day 2011

- #HillDay2011
- @nationalcouncil
- Post photos to Facebook
- Twitpic app
- MentalHealthcareReform.org





Questions about Hill Day Registration, Events, and More?

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