

Council of Faculties/Council of Deans

Joint Task Force on Advocacy

Final Report June 7, 2011

Committee Charges

1. Review and assess advocacy information/tools already present on the AACP website.
2. Provide feedback on ways to optimize/improve information and tools already present on the website.
3. Work with the Association's Vice President for Policy and Advocacy, Will Lang, to attempt to determine why there is an apparent low level of recognition of existing resources and provide suggestions regarding ways to better publicize the availability of current and future advocacy information and tools to the members.
4. Related to charges 2 & 3, suggest ways to increase member awareness and use of the "Advocacy in Action – active advocacy" resource, already present on the website.
5. Suggest alternate/additional means to deliver "call to action" messages from the Association to the members.

Committee Members

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Procedure – Charges One, Two, and Five

The committee members reviewed the AACP advocacy web pages and those of several other organizations including:

- Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (<http://amcp.org/amcp.ark?p=F03D76AC>)
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (http://www.aaas.org/programs/science_policy/)
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (aacn.nche.edu)
- American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (<http://www.aacp.org/issuesandadvocacy/Pages/default.aspx>)
- American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (aapspharmaceutica.com)
- American College of Clinical Pharmacy (<http://www.accp.com/govt/index.aspx>)
- American Hospital Association (<http://www.aha.org/aha/advocacy/index.html>)
- American Medical Association (<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/advocacy.page?>)

- American Nurses Association
(<http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/HealthcareandPolicyIssues.aspx>)
- American Pharmacists Association
(http://www.pharmacist.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Government_Affairs&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=94&ContentID=11444)
- American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (<http://www.ashp.org/menu/Advocacy.aspx>)
- Biotechnology Industry Organization ([bio.org](http://www.bio.org))
- Families USA (<http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/action-center/>)
- National Association of Chain Drug Stores (<http://nacds.org/wmspage.cfm?parm1=5193>)
- National Community Pharmacists Association (<http://ncpanet.org/index.php/advocacy>)
- Physician Assistant Education Association
(<http://paeonline.org/index.php?ht=d/sp/i/100182/pid/100182>)
- United States Pharmacopeia ([usp.org](http://www.usp.org))

Assessment and Recommendations

Federal, state, and regional laws and regulations have a significant and powerful impact on every profession, professional organization and the people they serve. This makes it imperative for members to become involved, with the intention to influence policymakers who affect their organizations and constituencies. This is advocacy: ***“Actions taken by an individual or group that are intended to influence public-policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions.”***

Unfortunately, the vast majority of pharmacy practitioners, faculty, students, and even administration have little if any education and training in political theory and action. To them, the advocacy world can be strange, confusing, overwhelming, and incomprehensible. Not only do they not understand the language, they don’t know what can and should be done, nor have they internalized a procedure participate systematically and sustainably in advocacy activities. An effective advocacy website should therefore 1) educate visitors about advocacy; 2) motivate them to participate in advocacy; 3) provide them with advocacy tools; 4) teach them procedures to use the tools, and; 5) if possible, enable users to automate the procedures as much as possible so that they don’t have to plan and schedule advocacy activities.

Finding the Advocacy Section of the Organization’s website

The advocacy portion of the ASSOCIATION website should be easy to find. Among the sites evaluated, there were two types of headings that directed people towards advocacy: 1) “advocacy/policy” or 2) “government affairs.” Like AACP, organizations that had evident navigation to advocacy issues and actions included: AMCP, ACCP, AMA, ANA, APhA, ASHP, NACDS, NCPA, and PAEA.

Visitors to these sites would find it easy to navigate to the advocacy section of the associate website. Whether or not they DO will depend upon whether they understand **what** advocacy and governmental affairs means and **why** they are important.

The Families USA was not as helpful because it had two links – action center and advocacy tools that weren’t explicitly linked. More problematic sites included AAAS (had to navigate to programs to find it), AACN (two policy links; government affairs and education policy), AAPS (couldn’t find a link), BIO (there

were three links – international, national and state & local issues, but they didn't say what to do with the information), USP (no specific advocacy link).

Entry Page / Homepage for Advocacy

Definitions

A well-designed entry or homepage for advocacy should begin with a clear definition of advocacy using terminology that the layperson can understand. The ANA probably did this the best, but it could be improved. The rest of the sites seemed to assume that visitors would know what policy, advocacy, and government affairs were all about.

It is also helpful to include other definitions. The AMCP site did this on their entry page.

Navigation

Navigation from the entry page must be comprehensible, so that the visitor understands WHY they might want to follow that link. The links at AACP site suffer from a lack of definition. Moreover, when one follows a link – for example “agendas” – there is not enough explanation on the linked page to make it clear why one would want to navigate deeper. One link - “descriptions” – seemed likely to mystify a novice.

A helpful aspect of the AACP site was that it was clear that navigation across the top of the site takes the visitor to other areas and navigation at the left side takes one deeper into the advocacy site (also true at ACCP, AHA, AMA, APhA, ASHP. Families USA, NACDS, NCPA). This clear navigation was also achieved at other sites by hyperlinks on the page itself (e.g. AMCP). This was NOT true of all sites (e.g., PAEA, ANA).

Purpose

The advocacy sites of the various organizations seemed to have three purposes. One is to INFORM members of current legislation and regulation that could affect members both positively and adversely. The second purpose is to inform members of actions the organization is taking either to support or fight a particular piece of legislation and/or regulation. The third purpose is to induce members to ACT.

These purposes are not clearly delineated on all sites (AACP included). The Site that best delineated action, tools, and issues was Families USA. The Action Center page was compelling, the advocacy tools page was explanatory, and the issues were clear. Unfortunately, there was no entry page that linked these items! The NACDS site had separate links for issues, resources/tools and action also. However the link to the action page was mysterious (NACDS RXImpact). This is a good example of jargon getting in the way of usability.

All sites could benefit from an introductory section entitled “how to use this site.” This should include explicit procedures for each purpose. For example:

Issues

By clicking the “Issues” link, you will navigate to a page that gives a brief overview of the current issues of interest to our constituents. For each of these issues, we will describe WHY it is important, WHERE you can learn more, WHAT we are doing about it, and HOW you can help. (The navigation on the next page would, of course, link the visitor to the “what we are doing” and “what you can do” pages.

What We Are Doing

By clicking the “What we are doing” link, you will navigate to a page that will orient you to the actions our organization is taking to address the issues. For each issue, we will describe and justify our overarching agenda and describe and/or provide links to the actions we’ve taken in moving this agenda forward. These actions include, but are not limited to letters, position papers, testimonies, etc.

A LETTER is (what it is, who writes it, how it can be used)

A POSITION PAPER is

A testimony is

These resources should probably be organized according to issue and chronologically

What You Can Do

By following the “What You Can Do” link, you will be taken to a page where you can sign up for events, write letters, donate to political action funds, etc. We have organized the “ACTION Center” page so that it will be clear what you need to do, and it has been designed to be extremely easy to use.

The What You Can Do Page (Action Center)

This is the place where automation should happen. Front and center, there should be a sign up area. Each topic should have a brief but clear description of what the issue is, why it is important to AACP members, and what the desired timeliness for responses is. The response to all calls for action should be monitored and a “dashboard” approach employed to indicate the progress toward the goal. For actions that might be taken on a regular basis, such as a Hill visit, signing up might send the individual a reminder letter at chosen intervals. Visitors can choose what they sign up for:

- Newsletters (including an annual invitation to revisit the website to check or change their sign up settings)
- Alerts about new issues being posted
- A choice to opt in or opt out of particular issues
- Webinars
- Finding an advocacy mentor
- Alerts about letters or other actions to be undertaken
- PACs
- Conferences
- Hill visits
- Take your legislator to work
- Becoming the college/school advocacy champion
- Student events
- Grassroots actions (the NCPA grassroots toolkit is great <http://ncpanet.org/index.php/legislative-action-network/grassroots-toolkit-introduction>)
- Etc.

This section should include name, address, zip code etc. that are kept so that if the visitor signs up for letters, the appropriate address autofills. A good example of this can be found at the NCPA Action Page (<http://ncpanet.org/index.php/legislative-action-network>).

This page should probably also be organized by issue. Each potential action should be described stepwise, for example:

- 1) Become familiar with the issue (includes a brief overview of the issue and a "learn more" link)
- 2) Gather resources (this would include links to talking points, data, etc.)
- 3) Act (this would include a step by step procedure.... For a Hill visit, making the appointment, traveling to the Hill, what to expect when you get there, how to do the visit, how to follow up, whether or not to follow up with the organization)

This page must be exciting. It must motivate the visitor to ACT. According to the theory of planned behavior, people will act if they believe that:

- 1) A particular action will produce desired results;
- 2) The action/outcome is right and good, and is perceived to be right and good by significant others;
- 3) They are capable of acting (insofar as they know the steps of the procedure and are aware of tools to use, facilitators and barriers to action);

Sites that had motivating action pages included FamiliesUSA (<http://familiesusa.org/resources/action-center/>) and AAAS (http://www.aaas.org/programs/science_policy/) and the NACDS RxImpact page (<http://capwiz.com/nacds/home/index>). This latter page was motivating because it focused on ONE issue (featured alert). A disadvantage to this is that one might have to visit every day so as not to miss NEW featured alerts. A "sign-up" feature would help here.

Other Pages and Links

Some of the pages and links were still mystifying to members of the task force, for example:

- Budget / appropriations table
- Capitol Hill news (unless directly related to pharmacy)
- The images on all the pages seemed to be too chemistry lab oriented. They also did not change when one moved from page to page in the section. Show real people in advocacy situations and have more of them. Perhaps you could solicit from AACP members.

Proposed Additional Links

- Funding opportunities related to issues
- Partners and affiliates should be clearly listed with direct click linkage to the relevant portion of their website. There should be some statement of the value of the partnership and why AACP has participated with the given group or entity.
- The consensus was that there needs to be a "dashboard" that indicates the response to calls to action and progress toward goals of collaboration on other issues.
- Tell us your story (<http://www.familiesusa.org/tell-us-your-story.html>) – there could be an additional section on the ENTRY PAGE where stories of grassroots efforts are highlighted

Advocacy Agenda for the Future

- **There was much discussion and support for the association to consider embracing issues such as health insurance reform, patient care, and prevention and wellness as components of the agenda for 2011-2012 and beyond. The philosophy was that pharmacists are impacted by all**

of these factors and as educators we should be among the most knowledgeable in the profession since it is our responsibility to share the issues and potential solutions with our students. We thus urge the new AACP Advocacy committee to actively consider this option.

Procedure – Charges Three and Four

The committee discussed some suggested ideas to enhance participation in advocacy initiatives at the school/college level and a sub-committee of the task force held a teleconference with the AACP Office of Advocacy on this topic. The discussions and the result of the teleconference with Will Lang resulted in several recommendations deemed to be practical and within the constraints of time and budgets of the respective schools/colleges. Although not intended to be comprehensive solutions to the issue of enhanced engagement in advocacy, these recommendations are an initial step in improving awareness.

Recommendations:

1. Encourage each School/College of Pharmacy to establish a **Liaison to AACP for Advocacy**. This individual (faculty member) to become the internal champion at her/his school/college for efforts to engage members in AACP advocacy issues.
2. The AACP Office of Advocacy should consider **conducting quarterly teleconferences** with these school/college Liaisons.
3. The AACP Office of Advocacy should consider **publishing Case Study examples** on the AACP Website of initiatives at the college/school and state level that have lead to advancement of the AACP position on issues.
4. The AACP Standing Committee on Advocacy should **develop a resource kit** that can be used by the school/college Liaison to promote awareness of the issues and methodologies to advance advocacy initiatives. This could be assisted by Webinars focused on use of these resources.
5. **Examine the advocacy work already done** by Earlene Lipowski of the University of Florida, Cindy Boyle at the University of Maryland, Loretta Brickman of Temple University and others as these have pioneered advocacy efforts at the school/college level.