Successful Advocacy Strategies for State Affiliates

Relationships, Messages, Member Involvement, Funding and Persistence

Background
Using a public relations firm and a strategic plan, the visibility of Idaho dietitians was elevated during 2012 to 2013. Legislative consultants assisted in carrying out a social marketing campaign. They secured times for the Idaho Academy to present to the House and Senate Health and Welfare Committees on who dietitians were and where they worked. A fund raising campaign generated $2,700 and our affiliate adopted the theme “We Are Better Together.” In 2013, members again presented again to the House and Senate Committees with more focused messaging surrounding health care reform and the key role that dietitians play in health promotion and managed care.

Components of Success

**RELATIONSHIPS**
An underlying theme of advocacy for registered dietitians is relationship building. Our theme was “We Are Better Together.”

- We targeted our relationship efforts on the legislature, health care members, and the public.
- Relationship strategies focused on building partnerships and leveraging.

**MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**
Activating members and key partners is vital.
- Leverage personal relationships through personal communication with legislators and key decision makers.
- Testimony provided at hearings/committee meetings.
- Don’t understate invite the need to “hire the right people for the job”.

**MESSAGES**
- We, the Idaho Academy, are the group that saves healthcare dollars.
- Prevention through nutrition is the key to health care cost reduction.
- We are the only licensed nutrition professionals in the State of Idaho.
- Promote the role of registered dietitians as decision makers.

**FUNDING**
Was necessary to complete 3 basic strategies:
- Hire PR firm and lobbyist
- Monitor materials
- Hire an Executive Director

**PERSISTENCE**
- Legislation—making what registered dietitians do.
- Concurrence Resolution for—support of the Idaho Legislative of the Inclusion of Nutrition Services in the Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Diseases.
- Lobbyists able to share messages at social gatherings.
- Newspaper articles and television segments across the state.

Conclusion
Through our advocacy efforts, we have positioned ourselves in the public policy arena as key players and are ready to face the challenges that lie ahead.