Revisiting Oral Health Advocacy: What have we done, what have we learned, and what do we need

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Top Advocacy Issues of 2017

• Medicaid and the ACA
  – American Health Care Act (AHCA)
    • Removed individual mandate, decreased tax credits and other cost protections for families, changed incentive structure for healthier individuals
    • Muddied the waters on essential health benefits
    • Would have shifted Medicaid financing to per capita caps or block grants and phased out Medicaid expansion
  – Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA)
    • Similar to AHCA, converted Medicaid to per-capita-cap, weakened private coverage and insurance marketplaces
    • Preserved some of the ACA’s taxes on the highest-income earners, additional money towards opioid addiction treatment efforts and “high risk” pools
  – Obamacare Repeal and Reconciliation Act (ORRA)
    • Would have repealed ACA with no replacement

• CHIP
  – Delays on renewal (today marks 108 days since funding expired) along with concerning updates in how it’s been viewed, discussed, used

• HHS in general
  – Comments and leadership from HHS Strategic Plan as well as concerning language from Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding management of Medicaid
Issues of concern coming into 2018

• CHIP
  – Still has not been passed and behavior around this issue by Congress has been concerning
    • Bipartisan support seemed to lead to delays due to use of CHIP as bargaining piece
    • Lack of concern and action around urgency messages

• Medicaid
  – Language from Congressional leadership seems to be looking ahead to entitlements – especially Medicaid - as targets to rein in government spending in light of the massive tax cuts that passed at the end of 2017
  – Attacks BCRA/AHCA likely foreshadowing concerns and potential strategies

• ACA protections
  – Concerning attacks on EHBs from Congress
  – Concerns regarding rule interpretations going into 2018/2019

• Waivers
  – Uptick in applications with concerning changes: work requirements, drug tests, increased cost sharing, “incentives” for healthy behaviors which limit access, etc.
Oral Health Community Taking Action

Helen M. Hendrickson
Senior State Advocacy Manager

Children’s Dental Health Project Webinar
January 16, 2018
Community Catalyst is a national non-profit advocacy organization that works with national, state and local consumer organizations, policymakers and foundations to build consumer and community leadership to improve the health care system.

We support consumer advocacy networks that impact state and federal health care policy, and ensure consumers have a seat at the table as health care decisions are made.
A LOOK BACK ON 2017
A look back on 2017: Resistance
A look back on 2017: Wins

Advocates across the country to thwart threats to repeal the ACA and threaten Medicaid over and over and over...
The oral health community is part of the resistance... Because meeting our goals to reduce dental disease and promote health equity can only be reached with a strong Medicaid program and other health insurance.
Oral Health Advocates took action

- Joined the overall movement to protect healthcare
- Easier for those engaged in advocacy as part of their day-to-day
- Values based advocacy: For some, seemed partisan, need to connect policy activity at
Oral Health Advocates Interviews

- Interviews with advocates in 8 diverse states: AZ, FL, ME, NY, OH, PA, VA
- How was the oral health community in this state involved in federal advocacy around the ACA and Medicaid?
- How did the process of integrating oral and general health advocacy go?
- How have communications from the OH2020 network been useful?
Successful Strategies: Partnerships

• Partnerships with:
  – State oral health coalition
  – Dental provider organizations
  – Other oral health advocates
  – General health advocates,
  – organizations and coalitions
  – Grassroots organizations

• Many partners wear multiple hats
• Involvement with general health advocacy campaigns
Successful Strategies: Messaging & Information Sharing

- Using information sent out through Socious
- Making clear connections between federal-level policy & impact on oral health
- Including state specific data/information
- Tapping oral health advocates as allies in broader health advocacy
Challenges

- Advocacy fatigue
- Few oral health seats at the general health table
- Few staff/resources dedicated specifically to oral health
- Lack of general health knowledge among oral health community
HOPES AND GOALS FOR 2018
2018: Continued OH Advocacy

- Sharpen advocacy skills
- Broaden coalitions
- Create urgency in engaging grassroots organizing in OH activities
• Strengthen integration of oral health and general healthcare advocacy efforts

Image courtesy of the Virginia Oral Health Coalition integration toolkit
2018: Continued OH Advocacy

• Keep growing solutions: focus on state-based issues and on innovations to improve oral health care.
Potential Partners

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much”

Helen Keller
Thank You

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Q&A (and survey plug)

• Reponses? Thoughts? Questions?
Keep the conversation going...

Follow us on social media:

Twitter: @teeth_matter

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Follow up with any questions:

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