

# Taking it to Capitol Hill!



National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

# Making the Case

## *Four Secrets to Success Formula!*

- Have compelling facts
- Have real-life stories
- Offer a narrative that weaves the two (facts/personal stories) together
- Understand how your need/issue fits into the audience's world (aka, "connect the dots")

# How to Prepare for Visits

- Organize materials prior to your visits—if going as group, know who will say what
- Have enough talking points for 5 minutes or for 30
- Be prepared to talk in any setting/area
- **Be prepared to translate**—how do your local organization and local issues connect to federal policies/priorities? (OFTEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR LOCAL ADVOCATES)

# You Can Do This!

- **You are the expert! You are valuable!**
  - When you walk into that office, make that phone call or send that email, you're their boss
  - MoCs and staff are there to serve you and they need your expertise and guidance
- **You speak the truth!**
  - Use talking points but say it in your own words so they know you believe it
  - Tell stories of real people in their district/state

# Don't Leave the Meeting Unless...

- ✓ They know who you are and what your agency does (and for whom)
- ✓ They know what you are asking of them today
- ✓ They know you will be following up for future engagement (e.g., site visit)

# Who Are You?/What Do You Do?

- **Set framing context as soon as possible:**
  - **Who You Are:** Name, Title, Agency Name, one stat or mission statement
  - **You're Not Alone: Part of the National Aging Network** of 622 AAAs and more than 250 Title VI programs, the SUAs and AoA/ACL
  - **Why You Do This: Demographics and Demand for HCBS** (see beginning of Policy Priorities for talking points)



Opening small talk is fine, but then pull them back to why you are there, showing connections between your work and the policy/funding that they have power over!

# Who Are You?/What Do You Do?

- **Dive down into what you do:**
  - what you do in the community for your clients;
  - key types of services (not program names unless making the federal connection);
  - your role in development of options



# What Do You Want?

- **Your goals:**
  - Enable seniors to age with health and independence at home and in the community.
  - Demonstrate the value of HCBS to health care outcomes
- **How can lawmakers help support goals?:**
  - Reauthorize the Older Americans Act
  - Increase appropriations for FY 2020 for OAA, SHIP, etc.
  - Medicaid rebalancing (MFP), Integrated care

# What NOT To Do

- **Don't assume** the Member/staffer knows your issues or what your agency does (even if you know the Member personally!)
  - Setting the context is really important
  - Even if staffer says “oh yeah, I know about the Older Americans Act” (they don't)—  
**BUT YOU CAN MAKE A PIVOT...**
- **Don't use** state or local acronyms without connecting the dots in both directions
  - Ex.: SHINE (state program); SHIP (federal funding/authority); Medicare beneficiaries who get help daily!

# What NOT To Do

- **Don't feel** you have to answer every question on the spot
  - You want something to follow up on!
- **Don't let** small talk and diversions eat up your time; find a way to get back to *your* agenda
  - They will fill the time if you give it back to them, so avoid open-ended questions like “It’s busy up here, isn’t it?” (You’re not social workers today!)
  - They will try to fill the space with issues they are interested in, comfortable with—go there if it’s relevant and you can weave your messages in (e.g., veterans), but if not, try to get back to your agenda
  - AGAIN, YOU CAN MAKE A PIVOT...

## What NOT To Do

- **Don't argue** if the staffer goes there
  - bring the conversation back to the needs of your clients and what you need from the federal govt. to help them
  - You don't have to be an expert on the federal deficit or health care economics to know that the work you do saves lives, preserves independence and saves the federal govt. money in the process: *who could object?*

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# DO Get a Photo!

Get a picture with the Member or even staff!  
You can use it for social media (thank them publicly before you head home), in local newsletters, etc.



# Following Up/Future Engagement

- Follow up to meetings: Send thank-you notes/emails/faxes (and tweets!) to those staff and Members you met with
- Answer any questions you couldn't on site
- Follow up on your requests to Member
- Go to the next level (site visit?)
- Stay in touch with the staff especially!
  - Did you get a new grant?
  - Have to defund a provider or close a site?
  - Emerging issue locally with national implications?  
→ *Inform them!*



# Questions?