

## **Learning to Be a Passionate Advocate**

### **Going Beyond the Basics**

#### **Basic RULES of Politics**

##### **★ Registered Voter Who is a Passionate Advocate**

1. Knows their Legislative and Congressional Districts
2. Finds the information on your voter registration card or on the Secretary of State Website
3. Knows who their Lawmakers are
4. Contacts Lawmakers by phone, email, or mail
5. Lawmakers know who they are
6. Finds information about their Lawmakers on the web
7. Volunteers during their Lawmaker's campaign
8. Becomes a consultant or expert for the Lawmaker to contact for advice on issues

##### **★ Understand the Process**

1. Knows when and how to vote and can find their voting precinct
2. Knows how often each office is up for election – 6 years Senator – 2 years Congressman
3. Knows the candidates strengths and interests
4. Knows the political calendar
5. Looks on the County, State, and National Website for your political Party
6. Reads the local newspaper
7. Gets on the party's email list
8. Chooses a political party to join – Study the platforms  
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/platforms.php>
9. Hold a fundraiser (advanced)
10. Campaigns for someone running for office (advanced)
11. Runs for public office (advanced)

##### **★ Loyalty to the Academy and Some Insight Into Political Parties**

1. Belong to only one party during an election cycle (2 year period)
2. Contributing \$25 or more to a political party or attending the caucus or a closed political meeting constitutes committing to a party
3. Do not attend both parties caucuses or conventions during the same election cycle
4. If you contribute \$250 in a given year to a party you are on their contributor list
5. Avoid contributing to both candidates running for the same office
6. It is OK to say “No” when asked to contribute more money
7. Do not get too upset with the political rhetoric

##### **★ Electronic Media Use**

1. Respond to Action Alerts on Grassroots Manager on Academy website
2. Visit Your Lawmakers Web Site and contact your Lawmaker by email
3. Active on political party or organization email lists
4. Use Facebook to promote a cause
5. Visit the political party's website for updates
6. Use White House petitions

★ Support the Academy's Public Policy Areas

1. Study the Academy 's Public Policy Priority Areas on the Academy website under Public Policy
2. Read the party platforms and Lawmaker's positions on healthcare issues by their visiting state and national web sites

Democratic Party [http://www.democrats.org/about/party\\_platform](http://www.democrats.org/about/party_platform)

Republican Party <http://www.gop.com/2008Platform/>

3. Consider writing a platform statement for consideration for a political platform. See the example: **"Bring Nutrition to the Table in Washington State"** submitted during the precinct caucus March 2012 by Susan Yake. See the full platform statement at the end of this handout. To individualize it for your state, just replace the state name. You can submit it for consideration by sending it to your County and State Chairman for each political party asking them to have the State Platform Committee add it as part of the state platform.
4. Consider running as a delegate for a political party convention where you can vote on a party platform.

Why bother serving as a delegate or writing a platform statement? It is because the platform sets the agenda for the next two to four years for priority legislation. Elected officials are expected to support the platform of the political party that supported their election. As a delegate you have say on the future political process and can push nutrition issues forward.

### **Holding a Fundraiser**

- ★ Invite a large number of people – more than you would think
- ★ Follow up with personal phone calls
- ★ Consider hosting with a buddy
- ★ Keep the food simple -- focus your energy on turn out
- ★ Tell people in advance that you are asking for money
- ★ At the event, Introduce the RDs who are there

### **Giving Money**

- ★ \$25 gets you on their list
- ★ \$50 you have to write down your profession- they see the word **Dietitian**
- ★ \$100 they will call you for more (you get to talk to them personally)
- ★ \$500 they will ask you to come to smaller events
- ★ \$1,000 (you can get the PAC to donate this) they will consider you important and will hug you

## Half of Being a Political Advocate Is Just Showing Up

### ★ Show Up

1. Legislation Day & PPW
2. Town Hall Meetings
3. Party Conventions
4. Caucus Meetings
5. Fundraisers
6. Volunteer Opportunities

### ★ Handout & Handshake

1. Business Card – Write Bill # on back of card to encourage co-sponsorship
2. Introduction of Yourself
3. Name Who You Represent
4. Handouts to Support Your Message

### ★ Offer Your Assistance

1. Answer questions you know the answer
2. If you do not know the answer to a nutrition question, tell them you will get back to them. Make sure you do.
3. Offer to serve as a subject expert either in public policy or health advice
4. Offer help with campaign during a political meeting or to hold a fundraiser if you are not a government employee (Hatch Act) <http://www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm>

### ★ Work the Room

1. Find out who else is at the event
2. Seek to find common interest and views
3. Make alliances with organizations
4. Share your ideas
5. Collect business cards

### ★ Unite Your Efforts

1. List your alliances and their contact information
2. Gather signatures on a single letter or have members of your organization communicate a common central message
3. Unite to have continued congressional visits over time with same message
4. Unite together when a hearing is held

### ★ Position Yourself

1. Learn about your lawmaker before the visit
2. Email the staff and lawmaker before the visit (topics, wish list, or questions)
3. Dress the part
4. Use pictures and slogans
5. Write your thank you notes with the next step in mind

## Bring Nutrition to the Table in **Washington State**

The costs of health care in the United States have reached a point that preventive action needs to be taken to save our economy and quality of life. Seven of the ten most common and costly chronic illnesses among those over age 50 are nutrition related. These illnesses included diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, heart disease, high cholesterol, chronic lung disease, asthma, osteoporosis, stroke and cancer. The statistics for national medical costs of obesity from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for the United States was a staggering \$147 billion in 2008 (Finkelstein, 2009). The medical expenses paid by third-party payers for people who are obese were \$1,429 higher than those of normal weight.

The growing rate of obesity has tripled since 1960 followed by a tripling of the incidence of diabetes since 1980 (2.5 % to 8.3%). Over two-thirds of the U.S. adults are overweight or obese with over one-third of the adults being obese (33.8% from CDC's National Obesity Trends). Now 17% (or 12.5 million) of children are obese with 32% being overweight or obese. Diabetes affects 25.8 million people with 18.8 million people diagnosed and 7 million people undiagnosed (National Diabetes Fact Sheet, 2011 from the CDC). None of the states met the national Healthy People 2010 goal to decrease the prevalence of obesity to 15% in adults ages 20 or older.

An estimated 79 million Americans aged 20 years or older have prediabetes, a condition with an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. 35% of U.S. adults aged 20 years or older had prediabetes or an estimated 79 million Americans. Half of those aged 65 years or older have prediabetes. The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), a large prevention study of people at high risk for diabetes, showed that Medical Nutrition Therapy to lose weight and increased physical activity reduced the development of type 2 diabetes by 58% during a 3-year period. The reduction was even greater those over 60 years of age who 71% of the time can prevent diabetes with lifestyle changes.

Investing in nutrition saves money. For every dollar spent on pregnant women in Women Infant and Children's Program produces \$1.92 to \$4.21 in Medicaid savings for newborns and their mothers. The cost-savings of Registered Dietitian provided nutrition counseling known as Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) is affordable to consumers, employers, and taxpayers. One example is a study that was conducted at Massachusetts General Hospital which demonstrated a savings of \$4.28 for each dollar spent on MNT. Health plans covering these services to their benefits packages add just a few pennies per member per month. MNT services are less expensive than physician office visits and hospitalizations for complications of disease that

could be averted by nutrition interventions. Also, MNT can reduce and even eliminate the need for costly long-term medications to treat chronic diseases.

It is time to come to the table and support nutrition and Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) in the treatment and prevention of disease. We have nothing to lose but the pounds of health problems weighing down on our healthcare budget. As citizens of **Washington State** and members of the health profession:

1. We support expanding the coverage and reimbursement of nutrition services by Registered Dietitian as a component of quality health care delivery.
2. We support including MNT services when medically necessary and provided by Registered Dietitians as an important piece of Essential Benefits Package that needs to be seen as an investment in our future.
3. We encourage school policies supporting nutritionally well-balanced school meals and education and training to establish healthy lifestyle habits in our youth.
4. We support adequate funding for programs to help feed the hungry. We promote the use of nourishing foods in government assistance programs. Food insecurity is linked strongly with the risk of obesity. Support of nutrition education and wholesome foods is critical in reducing health risks and medical costs for low income citizens.
5. We seek adequate funding for nutrition studies, programs and services for older adults in the Older Americans Act to advance the concept of “healthy aging” sustaining the ability of our senior citizens to live independently when possible.
6. We support the actions that overcome threats to the safety of our food supply and recognize the importance of protecting our consumers.
7. We encourage health literacy and nutrition education for our citizens using the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in an effort to Choose My Plate wisely.
8. We support nutrition research including the Agricultural Research Service, the Human Nutrition Research Centers and the funding of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) to track our progress and find solutions to the health and nutrition issues eating away at our medical budgets today.

Finkelstein, EA, Trogdon, JG, Cohen, JW, and Dietz, W. Annual medical spending attributable to obesity: Payer- and service-specific estimates. *Health Affairs* 2009; 28(5): w822-w831.

National Obesity Trends, <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html>

Flegal, KM, Carroll, MD, Ogden, CL, Curtin, LR. Prevalence and Trends in Obesity Among US Adults, 1999–2008. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2010; 235–241.

National Diabetes Fact Sheet, 2011, [http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs\\_2011.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2011.pdf)

Linda M. Delahanty, Lillian M. Sonnenberg, Doug Hayden, and David M. Nathan. Clinical and Cost Outcomes of Medical Nutrition Therapy for Hypercholesterolemia: A Controlled Trial, *JADA* 101(9): 1012-1016, 1021-1023 (September 2001)