



PART II.  
ADVOCACY: THE  
IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING  
UP AND HOW TO MAXIMIZE  
YOUR VOICE

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# Clinicians as Natural Advocates

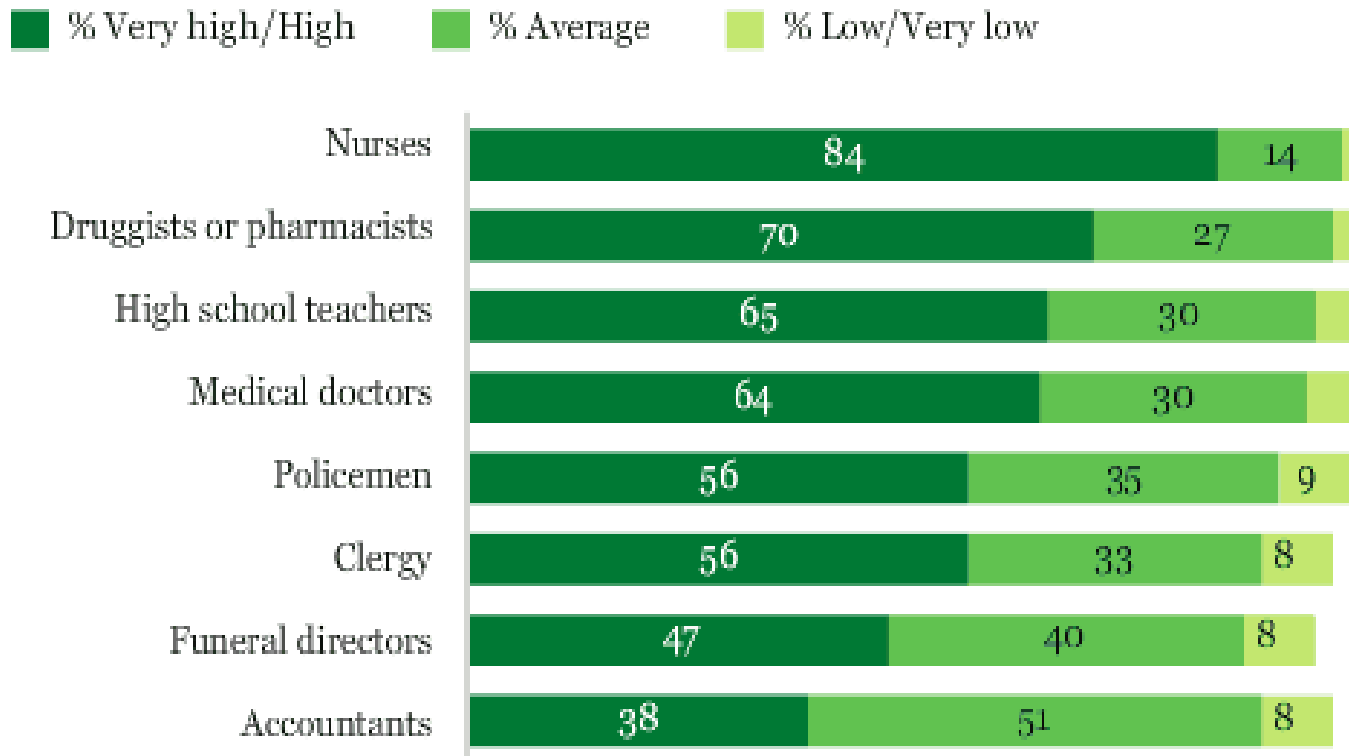
- Objectivity and Credibility
- Patient advocates and care for others - an ethical obligation to “do no harm”
- Healthcare professionals are educators. Lawmakers and the public need “translators” of complicated, scientific issues

# Why it is important for physicians to be advocates for public health

- Health care providers are a trusted and important voice that is rarely heard in public discussions about public health policy
- Foundation of medicine is prevention
- Most useful prevention activities around environmental exposures occur at the population, rather than individual level

# Clinicians: A Trusted Voice

*Top-Rated Professions for Honesty and Ethics -- 2008*



Nov. 7-9, 2008

GALLUP POLL

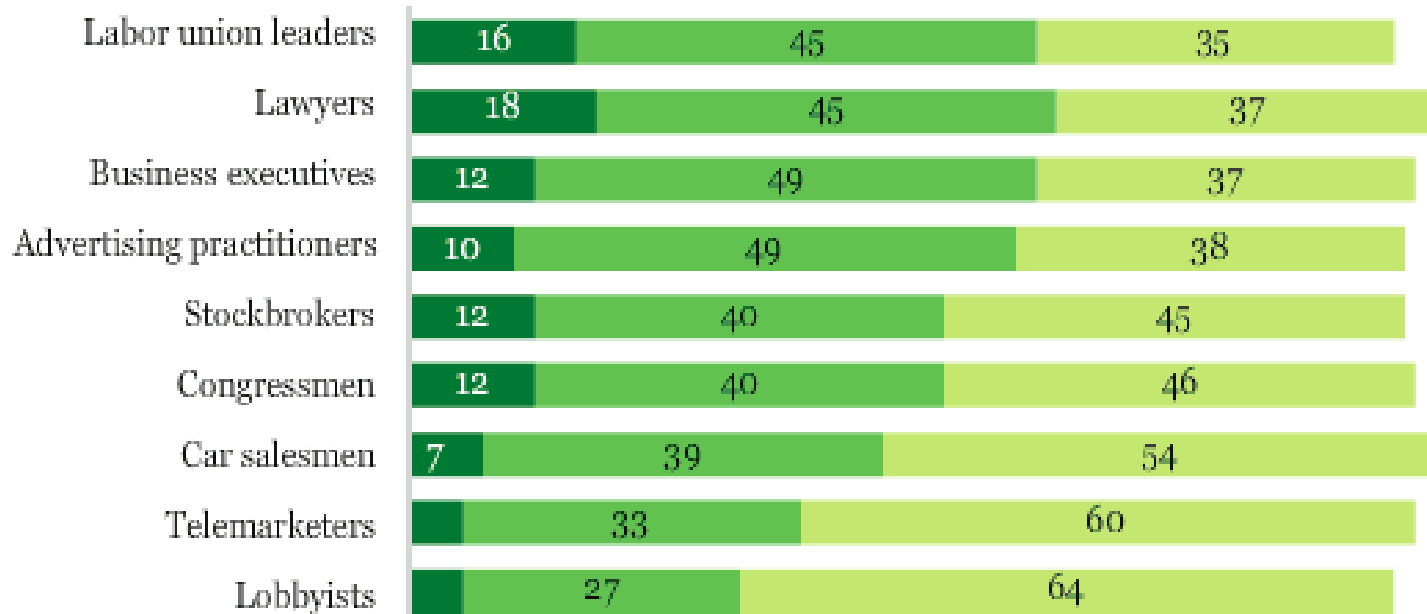
## ...unlike some others

### *Least Well-Rated Professions for Honesty and Ethics -- 2008*

■ % Very high/High

■ % Average

■ % Low/Very low



Nov. 7-9, 2008

GALLUP POLL

# What is Advocacy?

- Speaking up about what matters to you
- Action directed at changing policies, positions, or programs of any type of institution
- Drawing a community's attention to an important issue, and directing decision makers toward a solution
- Putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem, and building support for action

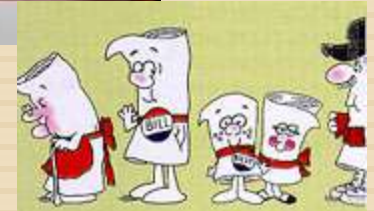
# Levels of Advocacy

- In your clinical practice
- In your hospital or institution (committee work, “Green Teams,” work on safer substitutes, green purchasing)
- In your professional associations
- In nongovernmental organizations (working for healthy communities)
- At the city and county level (zoning boards, boards of health, city council, mayor)
- At the state level (state legislature, governor)
- At the federal level (Congress, the President)

# Federal Legislative Process

Advocacy takes place on many levels. Let's focus on the role of advocacy in the federal legislative process.

- *Get a relevant bill introduced.*
- *Ask for specific things in the bill.*
- *Get co-sponsors for the bill.*
- *Full committee review.*
- *The bill reaches the floor.*



# Federal Legislative Process



## Tips for federal advocacy:

- Build relationships with your Senators and Representatives.
- Become a resource for your Members of Congress.
- Consider this work analogous to patient education.

# How to call your lawmakers

***Least time-consuming. Calls are counted and do make a difference.***

- Call the Capitol switchboard (202-224-3121) and ask for member's office.
- Ask to speak with the legislative aide who handles the relevant issue.
- Tell them who you are.
- Tell them why you are calling. Refer to the relevant bill. For toxics work, these would be the Toxics Chemical Safety Act of 2010 (H.R. 5820) in the House of Representatives and the Safe Chemicals Act of 2010 (S. 3209) in the Senate.
- Explain what you'd like the Member of Congress to do. Ask for something specific. For example: "Will Representative X co-sponsor the Toxics Chemical Safety Act of 2010?"
- Thank the staffer for their time.

# How to write to your lawmakers

**Lawmakers need and want to hear from you. That is their job.**

- ▣ Say why you are writing and who you are.
- ▣ Provide details. Explain facts about the legislation.
- ▣ Ask for the specific action you want (“the ask”). This is similar to “the ask” with a phone call. For example: “Please support the Toxics Chemical Safety Act of 2010.”
- ▣ Ask that the lawmaker respond to you and inform you of her or his position.

# How to meet with your lawmaker

- Request the meeting. This is the hardest part! Be persistent.
- Who should attend? Strategize.
- Establish your agenda and goals.
- Research your member's stance. Know your audience.
- What materials should you bring?
- Prepare for the meeting.
- Practice what you are going to say.
- Arrive on time.
- Be concise.
- Press for commitment.

# How to meet with your lawmaker (cont.)

- After: Thank the lawmaker in writing.
- Provide a follow-up e-mail or fact sheet, or schedule a second meeting.
- Keep in touch, so you can eventually build a relationship.
- Share the knowledge you learned with other advocates – tell your PSR chapter about what happened.

# Advocacy Through the Media

## Op-Eds

- What is the “news hook”?
- Collaboration is helpful: seek a co-author.
- Follow the guidelines of the paper to which you are submitting the piece.
- Submit to only one paper at a time.
- Consider local and regional papers.

# Advocacy Through the Media

## LTEs

- ❑ Determine publication guidelines before submitting.
- ❑ Reference the title, date, and author of the original piece in your opening
- ❑ Put the most important point in the first paragraph
- ❑ Length: shorter is better (200 words or three quick paragraphs)
- ❑ Offer a solution
- ❑ Include full contact information

# Other ways to be an advocate

## Writing -

- \* letters to professional organizations
- \* written testimony at hearings
- \* articles in professional publications such as newsletters
- \* articles in peer-reviewed publications

## Using social media

- \* blog posts – original and comments
- \* Twitter
- \* Facebook

# More Advocacy Tactics...

## Meetings and presentations -

- \* with lawmakers in their offices as a constituent
- \* presentations to community groups, trade groups
- \* Grand Rounds
- \* with agency staff (EPA, Housing Authority)
- \* boards of directors of companies, institutions

## Calls to legislators

Joining the Green Team at your healthcare facility

Radio and television interviews

# Join a National Network of PSR Toxics Ambassadors.

PSR's national network of Toxics Ambassadors have gone through similar toxics advocacy trainings around the country.

- receive monthly emails about toxics policy strategy, legislative activity update, and an action of the month.
- You can also join a closed social network where you can voice your experience as a health professional advocate, learn from others doing similar work around the country, and see the impact of your work on a national level.

# Join the Safer Chemicals Campaign.



SCHF is a coalition of diverse groups united by their common concern about toxic chemicals in our homes, places of work, and products we use every day. We want Congress to set health-protective standards for chemicals in commerce. As a member of the campaign, you'll stay up to speed on the toxics movement and what you can do to help strengthen chemical regulation. Sign up at [www.saferchemicals.org](http://www.saferchemicals.org).

# What's next?

- Breakout groups
  - Member meetings
  - Op-ed writing
  - Social media?