



How to Advocate Like A Texan

Nora Belcher, Executive Director
Texas e-Health Alliance
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Background- Nora Belcher

- 20+ years in public policy with an emphasis on health care technology
- Senior leadership roles in Texas Medicaid and the Governor's Office
- Won computer programming contest in the 1980s and still has the trophies

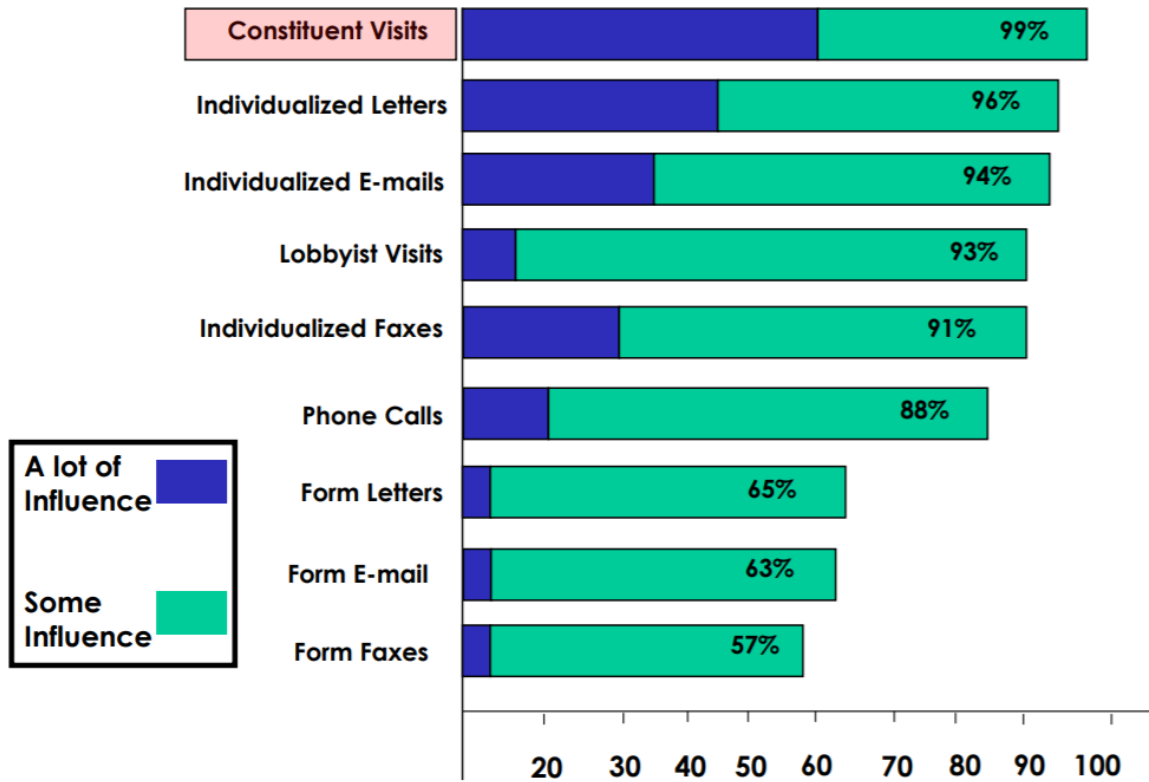
What is the Texas e-Health Alliance?

- State's leading advocate, from local communities to the national level, for the use of health information technology to improve the health system for patients
- 501(c)6 non-profit started in 2009
- Serves as a trade association for HIT companies
 - As such, cannot recommend or endorse specific products

Abstract

- Effective advocacy frequently includes mobilizing an organization's grassroots membership to visit with legislators while they are in session. This can be a useful tool in educating legislators on issues, raising the visibility of specific topics, and conveying the impact of pending legislation on a legislator's home district. In this session, Nora Belcher, executive director of the Texas e-Health Alliance, will share stories from her two decades of experience at the Texas Capitol, provide tips on how to be an effective advocate, and give insight into how grassroots visits can be effective advocacy tools, and highlight current topics of interest.

The Importance of In-Person Meetings (Source: Congressional Management Foundation)



- **Why am I going?**
- What am I going to say?
- How do I get ready?
- What do I do once I'm there?
- What should I NOT do?
- What do I do when it's over?

Why am I going?

- Start with the goal in mind:
 - Influence or education?
 - Creating a new law or repealing an old one?
 - Is the other side showing up?
 - Offense vs. defense
 - Is money needed?
 - Where are you in the legislative cycle?
 - Interims vs. sessions

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What am I going to say?

- Pick your battles
- Identify the main messages and summarize
- Frame the discussion
 - specific problem and proposed solution
 - Do you need help figuring this out? That's ok too
- Make it personal
 - How does this impact their district?

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How do I get ready?

- Be completely up to speed on the topic
 - State and national developments
 - Recent committee/floor discussions and votes
- Know the context
 - Is there legislative history?
 - What's the member's voting record? (this may not be the same as their opinion)
 - Are there opponents?
 - How does this impact their district and voters?

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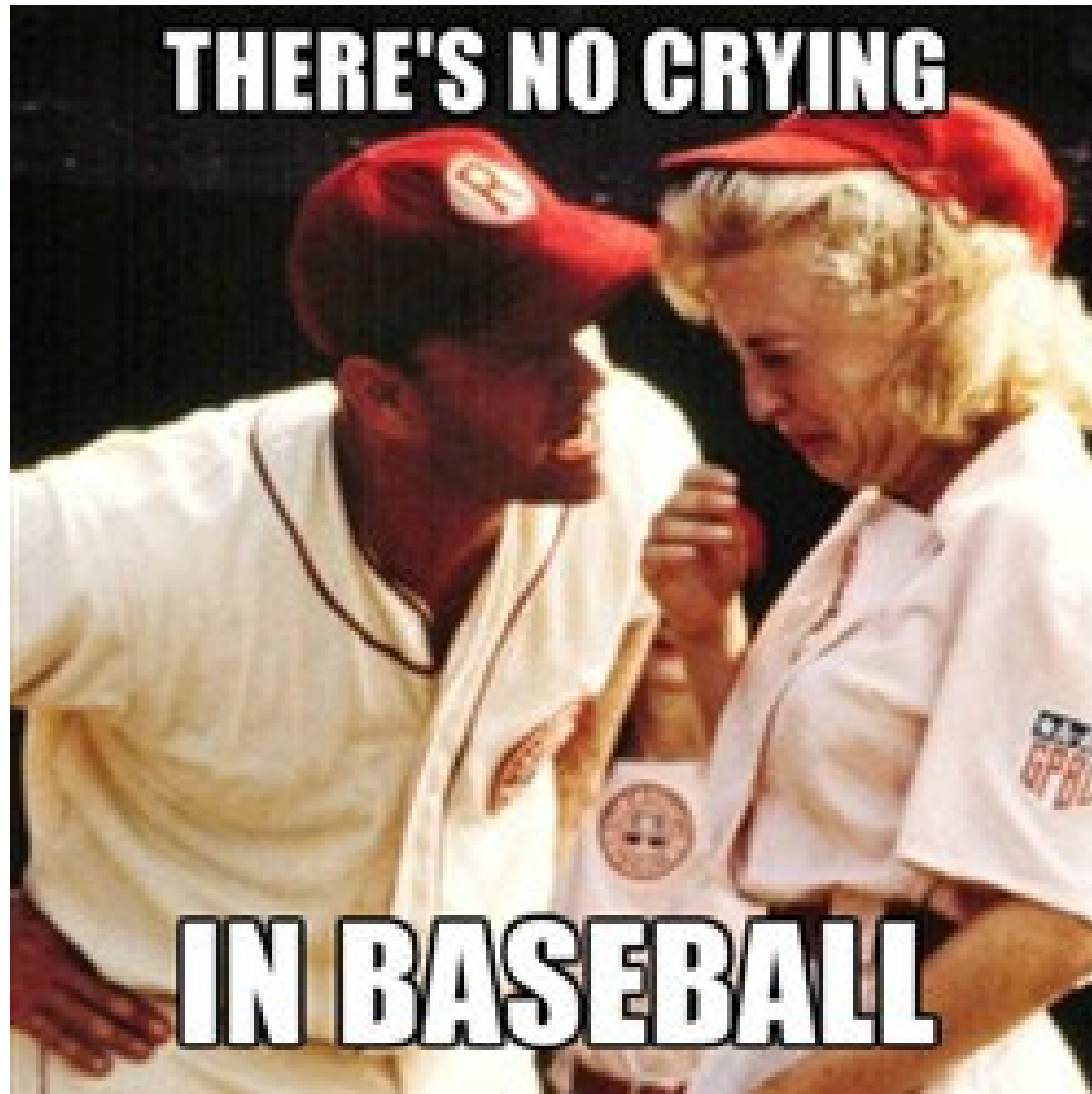
What do I do once I'm there?

- Introduce yourself and give context.
- Be positive and polite (to staff, too).
- Be flexible and respect their time.
- Be specific/tie it to their district.
- Use personal anecdotes.
- Ask how you can help them.
- Say thank you.
- SHORT leave behinds only (1 page)

- Why am I going?
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- **What should I NOT do?**
- What do I do when it's over?

What should I NOT do?

- Don't be close minded.
- Don't confuse opinions with voting records.
- Don't be argumentative or confrontational.
- Don't be overly technical.
- Don't lose track of time.
- Don't make threats.
- DON'T CRY.



- Why am I going?
- What am I going to say?
- How do I get ready?
- What do I do once I'm there?
- What should I NOT do?
- **What do I do when it's over?**

What do I do when it's over?

- Say thank you for the visit- in writing.
- Emailing materials is good too (but not too much).
- If you promised to follow up, follow up!
- Track your topic- if it comes up for a vote and the member you visited with votes your way, use that as an opportunity to touch base and say thank you.

Things to Talk About

House Appropriations

5. Review the information technology (IT) supporting the Texas Medicaid Program. Evaluate the IT systems' capability to meet the needs of Texas Medicaid to ensure the Health and Human Services Commission's acquisition and procurement processes comply with the requirements of SB 1, Rider 6 (Health and Human Services Commission), relating to Texas Medicaid and Healthcare Partnership); Section 9.01 (Purchases of Information Resources Technologies); and Section 9.02 (Quality Assurance Review of Major Information Resources Projects). Identify ways to:

- Modernize systems and improve interoperability between systems;
- Ensure IT functionality is aligned with the needs of the Medicaid Program, including conformity to the managed care model;
- Reduce administrative burdens;
- Provide cost savings;
- Improve future procurements; and
- Create better transparency and oversight of Medicaid IT contracts

Things to Talk About

House Public Health

1. Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - a. HB 4, relating to the provision and delivery of telemedicine and telehealth services; and
 - b. HB 1616, relating to the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact.
4. Study current telemedicine trends by assessing and making recommendations related to standardizing required documentation healthcare providers must obtain for consent for treatment, data collection, sharing and retention schedules, and providing telemedicine medical services to certain cancer patients receiving pain management services and supportive palliative care.



Things to Talk About

House Select Committee on Health Care Reform

Speaker Dade Phelan has assembled this special committee to take a broad look at health care reform in Texas. Here are the members:

- Sam Harless, Chair
- Toni Rose, Vice-Chair
- Greg Bonnen
- John Bucy
- Giovanni Capriglione
- James Frank
- R. D. "Bobby" Guerra
- Stephanie Klick
- John Lujan
- Tom Oliverson
- Armando Walle

Things to Talk About

House Select Committee on Health Care Reform.

Duties: The committee is created to provide a cross-jurisdictional forum for the examination and consideration of issues that broadly affect the state's health care delivery system. The committee shall:

- (1) Study the implications of excessive health care costs on the efficacy of Texas Medicaid and the private health insurance market and the resulting impact on individual Texans, businesses, and state government. Specifically, the committee shall:
 - Examine the interaction of specific factors of health care affordability such as transparency, competition, and patient incentives. Make recommendations to expand access to health care price information to allow consumers to make informed decisions regarding their care;
 - Examine the impact of government benefit, administrative, and contractual mandates imposed upon private insurance companies and their impact on employer and consumer premiums and out-of-pocket costs, including the effects of specific benefit and any-willing-provider requirements. Make recommendations for state and agency level mandates and regulations that could be relaxed or repealed to increase the availability and affordability of private health coverage options in this state; and
 - Review access to and affordability of prescription drugs;

Things to Talk About

House Select Committee on Health Care Reform.

- (2) Monitor the implementation of, and compliance with, current price transparency requirements and study ways that the state can support patients and increase competition. Make legislative and administrative recommendations, as appropriate;
- (3) Evaluate innovative, fiscally positive options to ensure that Texans have access to affordable, quality, and comprehensive health care, with an emphasis on reaching low income and at-risk populations. The evaluation should include a study of strategies other states and organizations have implemented or proposed to address health care access and affordability. Make recommendations to increase primary health care access points in Texas;
- (4) Study ways to improve outreach to families with children who are eligible for, but not enrolled in, Medicaid or CHIP, including children in rural areas; and
- (5) Examine the potential impact of delayed care on the state's health care delivery system, health care costs, and patient health outcomes, as well as best practices for getting patients with foregone or delayed health interventions back into the health care system. The study should consider patient delays in obtaining preventive and primary health services, such as well-child care, prenatal care, screenings for cancer and chronic disease, behavioral health, and immunizations, in addition to delays in seeking urgent care or care for chronic illness.

Questions?

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