There oughta be a law
A primer for getting hearing loss legislation passed in your state

Presenters

Steve Frazier, Hearing Loss Support Specialist
Anne Lobdell, Doctor of Audiology
Consumer Driven Legislative Initiatives

• When and how to start a campaign
• What tools and materials are needed
• Getting your bill written
• Finding a legislator to carry your bill
• The legislative process
• Rallying support for the legislation
• Advocating for your bill
• When the voting is over
Many issues can be addressed

- Telecoil counseling prior to sale of hearing aids.
- Health insurance to cover hearing aids.
- Mandatory trial period for hearing aids.
- A hearing loss education program for health care professionals.
- Increased Medicaid coverage for hearing aids.
RECENT INITIATIVES

California, Colorado, Delaware, New Mexico, Washington, Utah

In discussion or planning stage

California, Colorado
Kansas, Iowa
HOW DO YOU START?

REACH OUT TO STAKEHOLDERS

Agencies that work with HoH

Hearing Loss support groups

Supportive hearing care professionals

Groups like HLAA, ALDA, AARP, LWV
WHEN DO YOU START?

1. START EARLY.

Time needed to develop and institute an effective campaign.

2. REACH OUT TO OTHERS.
HOW DO YOU START?

1. FORM A COMMITTEE
2. Appoint a leader
   but
3. Share responsibilities
REACH OUT TO HEARING CARE PROFESSIONALS

Try to recruit an audiologist and a dispenser to serve on your committee.
RALLYING SUPPORT
CREATE A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF PLANNED LEGISLATION

“Our bill will require by statute that hearing care providers counsel all hearing aid buyers in ADA required assistive listening technology prior to the sale and fitting of hearing aids.”

“Our bill will mandate that medicaid cover the cost of two hearing aids up to $4,000 for the pair at least once every five years for clients who have a hearing loss sufficient to benefit from hearing aids.”
RALLYING SUPPORT

Request letters of support from:

✓ State speech and hearing association
✓ American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA)
✓ American Academy of Audiology (AAA)
✓ Association of Doctors of Audiology (ADA)
✓ International Hearing Society (IHS)
✓ National offices of HLAA, ALDA, TDI, Say What Club
RALLYING SUPPORT

Request letters of support from:
- Experts on issue
- HLAA/ALDA etc. chapters in the state
- State AARP office
- City, county and state agencies:
  - Comm for Deaf and HoH
  - Voc Rehab
  - Senior Services
TOOLS AND MATERIAL

1. WEB SITE
2. SOCIAL MEDIA
3. EMAIL LISTS
4. PRINTED MATERIAL
TOOLS AND MATERIAL

WEB SITE

Create a new one or use an existing site to post information and updates.
TOOLS AND MATERIAL

SOCIAL MEDIA

Set up Facebook and Twitter accounts and begin seeking friends when you first begin the planning.
TOOLS AND MATERIAL

EMAIL LISTS

Get cooperation for the use of email lists of stakeholders (HoH, agency people, others) or begin to create your own...
YOU'LL NEED AN EMAIL ADDRESS

Use an existing one or create a new one that can be used for all communications related to your initiative.
Prepare a handout to share with prospective supporters, legislators and others containing basic info on the issue.
1. Review known existing laws on the matter to be addressed.

2. Review your state's laws and regulations to determine where your issue fits.
GETTING YOUR BILL WRITTEN

1. Communicate with major stakeholders requesting their input.

2. Draft initial wording of changes or additions to existing laws and regulations.
GETTING YOUR BILL WRITTEN

Start search for a sponsor with your own legislator or that of a committee member.

Sit down with him/her and review the issue and why the need for your bill.

Have authoritative documentation available to support your contention if it appears to be needed.
GETTING YOUR BILL WRITTEN

Once you have a sponsor committed, review your committee's draft with the sponsor.

After changes negotiated with the sponsor, the bill will go to “legislative services” or similar to be put into acceptable words and format by their experts.

BE CERTAIN YOU ARE KEPT IN THE LOOP!
GETTING YOUR BILL WRITTEN

The bill carries that sponsor's name so he/she must be satisfied with it BUT...

It's your bill too, so you and your committee should have a say in the final version of the bill before it is filed and begins the legislative process.

BE CERTAIN YOU ARE KEPT IN THE LOOP!
Now is also the time to

PLAN AHEAD FOR PASSAGE

How you raise awareness of new regulation.
Where and how to get funding if needed.
How you will monitor enforcement.
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Different states have some procedures and terminology that are unique to them but basic process pretty much the same.

IDEA DEVELOPED

A legislator – a Representative or Senator – decides to sponsor a bill (an original idea, constituent request, an interest group, a public official or the Governor). Other lawmakers of the same or different political party may be asked to join as co-sponsors.
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

BILL DRAFTED

At the sponsoring legislator’s direction, the state's nonpartisan legislative services agency provides research and drafting assistance and puts the bill in proper technical form.
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

BILL INTRODUCED

Bill is filed by the legislator in her/his own chamber, which could be either the Senate or the House of Representatives. If the chamber leadership does not call the bill for a First Reading, it “dies.” If the bill is called, it is on track to move through process.

The appropriate official of the chamber can choose not to refer the bill to a committee. In this event, the bill “dies.”
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS
BILL ASSIGNED TO COMMITTEE

The committee takes action on the bill. The committee chair may choose not to schedule bill for hearing. In this event, bill “dies.” If the bill is to advance, it is scheduled for a public hearing. At that hearing, the committee discusses the merits and disadvantages of the bill, and any interested party may ask to speak to the committee. Interested persons may speak in favor of or in opposition to the bill.
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

BILL ASSIGNED TO COMMITTEE

Following this hearing, the bill can be voted upon or tabled. If the bill is tabled, it may or may not come back for a vote. If it does not come back for a vote, the bill “dies.

If the committee casts a vote on the bill, the bill can be defeated or it can be sent on to another committee or “advance”. If the bill advances it is to the chamber for deliberation. Chamber leadership may choose not to schedule the bill for a Second Reading. In this event, the bill “dies.
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

COMMITTEE ACTION

A) Report the bill with favorable recommendation.
B) Report the bill with amendments with favorable recommendation.
C) Report a substitute bill in place of the original bill.
D) Report the bill without recommendation.
E) Report the bill with amendments but without recommendation.
F) Report the bill with the recommendation that the bill be referred to another committee.
G) Take no action on a bill.
H) Vote to not report a bill out of committee.
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS
BILL VOTED ON BY FULL CHAMBER

Following an established procedure for amending it the bill will come to a vote by the full body. A simple majority of the full chamber can usually advance the bill.

If a majority vote is not received, the bill “dies.”
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

THE PROCESS REPEATS IN THE OTHER CHAMBER

Once the bill passes the first chamber it goes to the second where the process repeats.

The second chamber may fail to act on the bill, in which case the bill “dies” or it can “die” at any step of the way and just as long as the bill is advancing, amendments may be proposed and accepted.

If the bill advances through the second chamber without amendments it is sent to the Governor for signature.
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The bill returns to the house of origin.
If the bill is amended it returns to the house of origin.
The house of origin may fail to take action, and the bill “dies.”
The house of origin votes to approve the changes then the bill is sent to the Governor for signature.

If the first chamber does not approve the changes made by the second chamber, and both houses want the bill to advance, the bill is assigned to a Conference Committee.
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

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CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Conference Committee is made up of members from both legislative bodies and the members attempt to reconcile differences between the chambers.

If agreement cannot be reached, the bill “dies.” If agreement is reached, the bill returns to both chambers. Both chambers must approve the bill before it can be sent to the governor for signature.
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

ONCE THE BILL IS RECEIVED BY THE GOVERNOR

If signed, the bill becomes law.

If nothing done the bill becomes law without the Governor's signature or “dies” with a “pocket veto” depending on the state.

If vetoed, the bill “dies.”
RALLYING SUPPORT

WITH OK FROM YOUR BILL'S SPONSOR:

Once your bill is written, begin phone/email/letter writing campaign.

Ask supporters to let their senators, representatives and the Governor know their position on an issue/bill.

Seek out volunteers to attend (and testify) at committee hearings.
ADVOCACY OR LOBBYING

Advocacy
Telling legislators how an action would help you and others. Educating a legislator about the effects of a policy on your constituency.

Lobbying
Asking a legislator to vote for or against or amend legislation. Emailing a “call to action” urging others to contact their legislators in support of action on introduced legislation or pending regulations.
HOW CAN YOU BE AN ADVOCATE?

You can be an advocate by educating legislators or policymakers about the needs of the people you serve, and developing a relationship where you act as trusted voice on policy issues.

You and others can advocate by Writing, emailing or calling your elected officials.

Making your views known to policymakers and your community through traditional and social media.
ADVOCATING FOR YOUR BILL

ALABAMA

“Any citizen not lobbying for compensation who contacts a member of a legislative body, or gives public testimony on a particular issue or on particular legislation, or for the purpose of influencing legislation and who is merely exercising his or her constitutional right to communicate with members of a legislative body is not a lobbyist.”
FOLLOW YOUR BILL

Bill Finder or other online tools to track your bills progress and alert you to committee hearings.

Do morning, afternoon and night.
AFTER THE BILL PASSES BOTH HOUSES

Encourage supporters to continue advocating with the governor's office.

Contact the Governor's staff and try to establish a relationship.

Find out to whom they should go and provide advocacy material.
FOLLOWING UP

Thank your bill sponsors and co-sponsors.

Thank your supporters.

Send out a news release re the results.

Begin your post passage awareness campaign.
QUESTIONS?
Thank you for attending our workshop

Get your free thumb drive containing

many looping workshop slide presentation and more..