



Spare Some Social Change?

Integrating Service and Advocacy to Prevent and End Homelessness

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NATIONAL
HEALTH CARE
for the
HOMELESS
COUNCIL

Homelessness: Fact of Life???

- With 30+ years of endemic homelessness in the U.S. it is easy to write it off as beyond our control, a fact of life, and here to stay...



Homelessness Reality Check

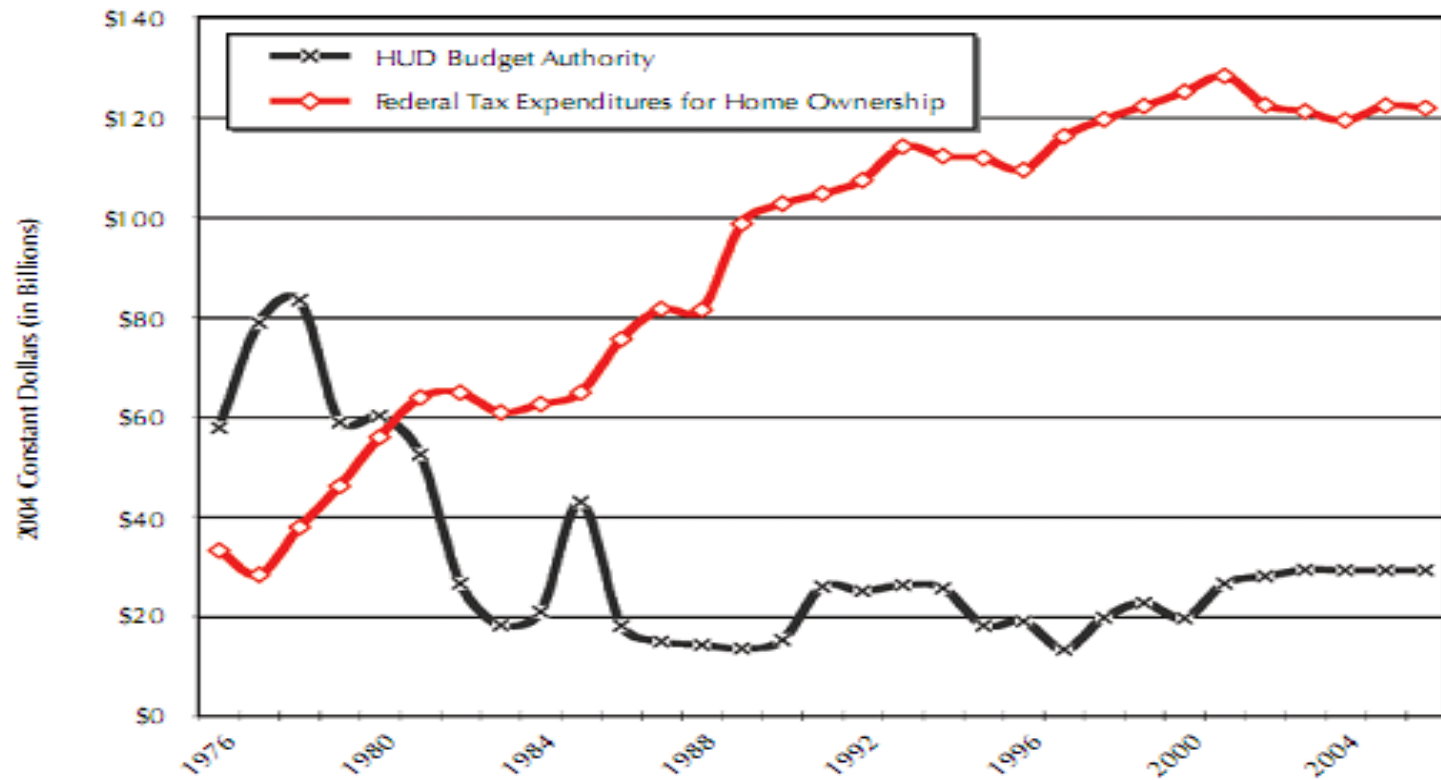
- In 2012 constant dollars, HUD budget authority was \$95 billion in 1979. The FY2012 HUD budget was
 - A. \$100 billion
 - B. \$72 billion
 - C. \$56 billion
 - D. \$38 billion

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Changes in Federal Priorities

Chart 7: Comparison of Federal Tax Expenditures on Home Ownership and HUD Budget Authority ¹⁰⁷



Source: Western Regional Advocacy Project

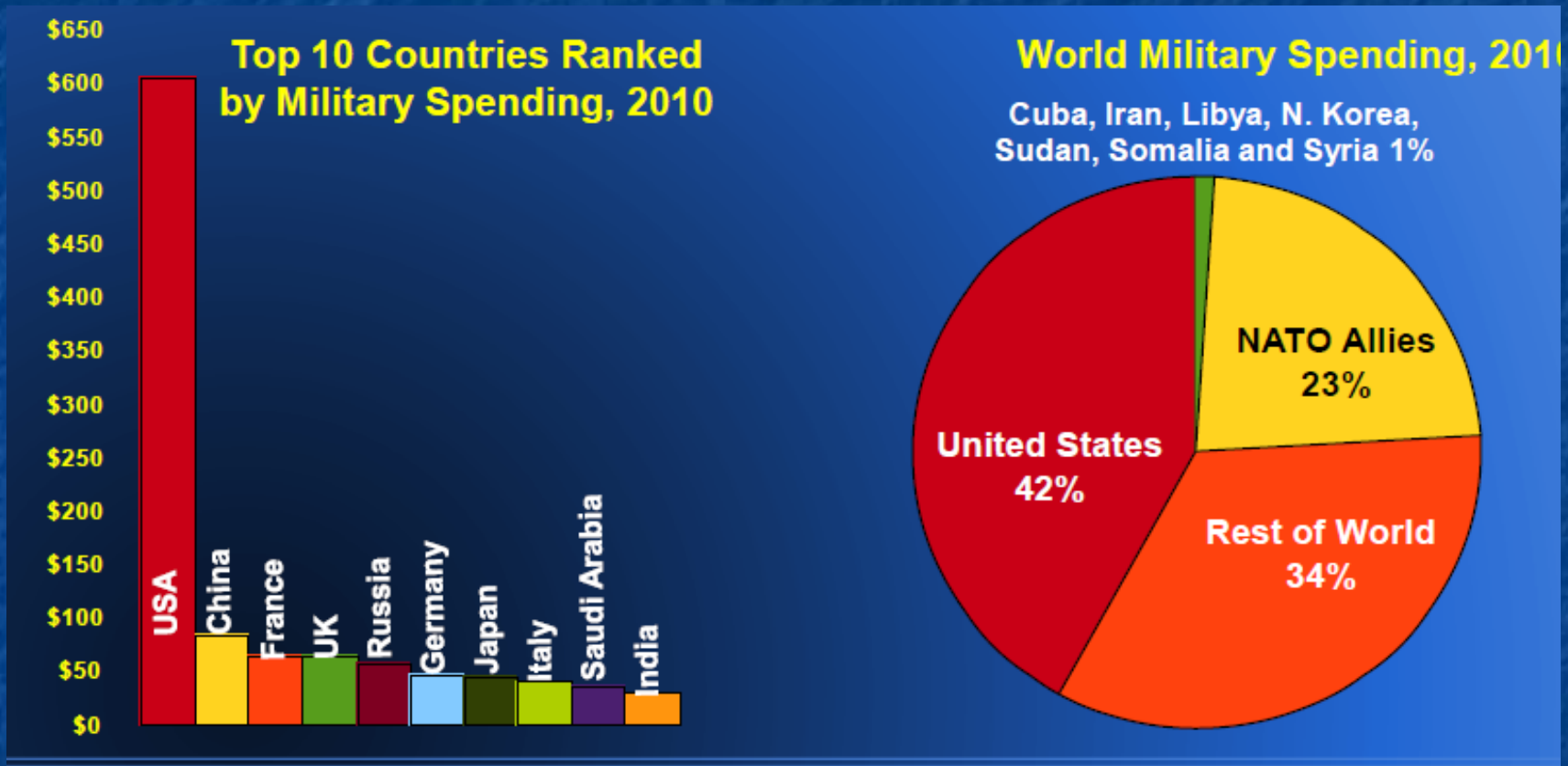
Homelessness Reality Check

- Military spending accounted for what percentage of discretionary funding in FY12?
 - 20%
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 - 42%
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Military Industrial Complex



*Source: National Priorities Project

Homelessness Reality Check

- A family earning the current Federal Minimum Wage of \$7.25/hour could afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in:
 - A. St. Joseph, MO
 - B. Wichita, KS
 - C. East St. Louis, IL
 - D. Nowhere in the U.S.

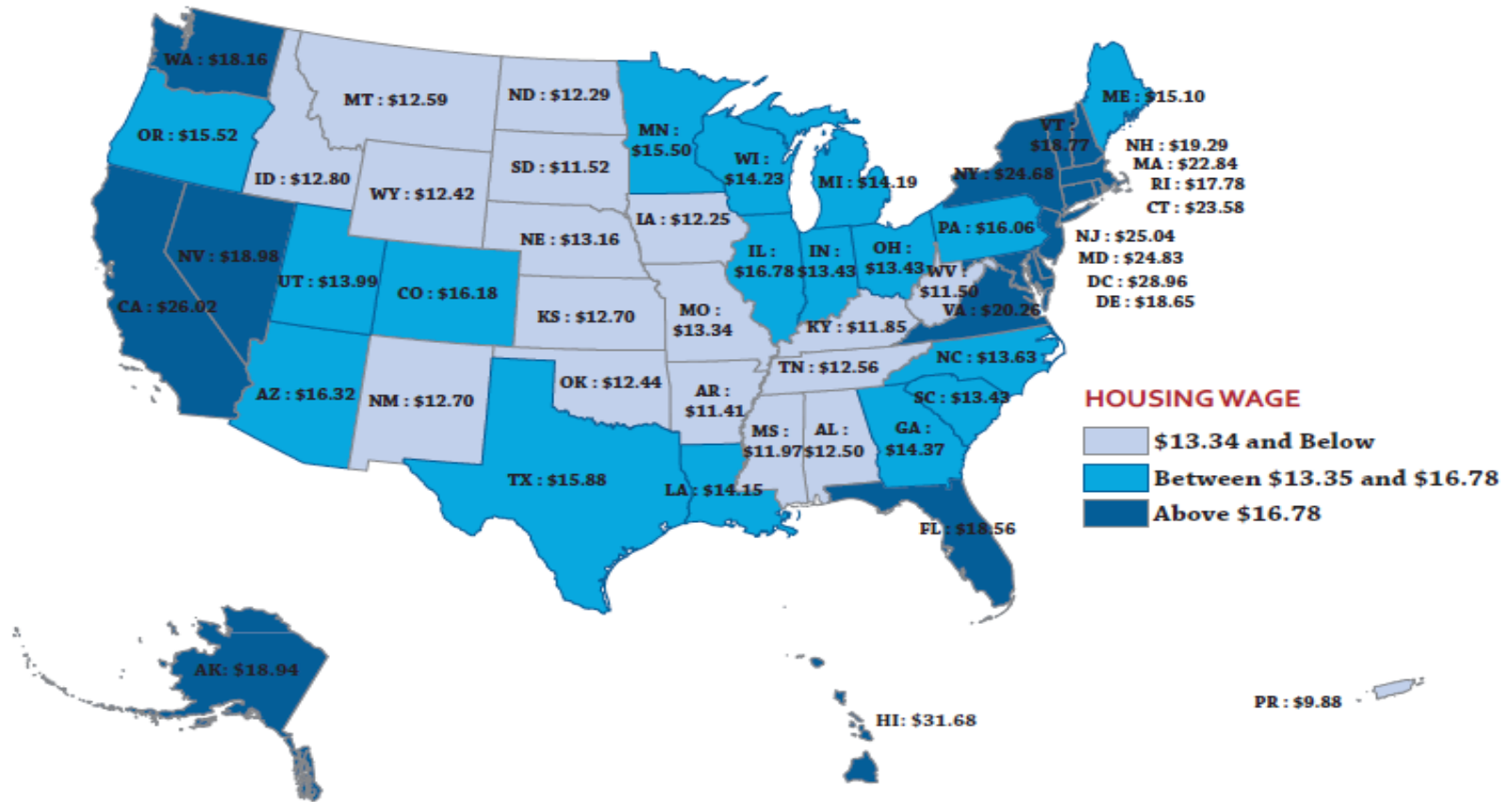
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Rental Housing Out of Reach

2012 TWO-BEDROOM HOUSING WAGE

Represents the hourly wage that a household must earn (working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year) in order to afford the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom unit at 30% of income.



Homelessness Reality Check

- What proportion of personal bankruptcies are caused by medical debt?
 - A. 80%
 - B. 62%
 - C. 39%
 - D. 22%

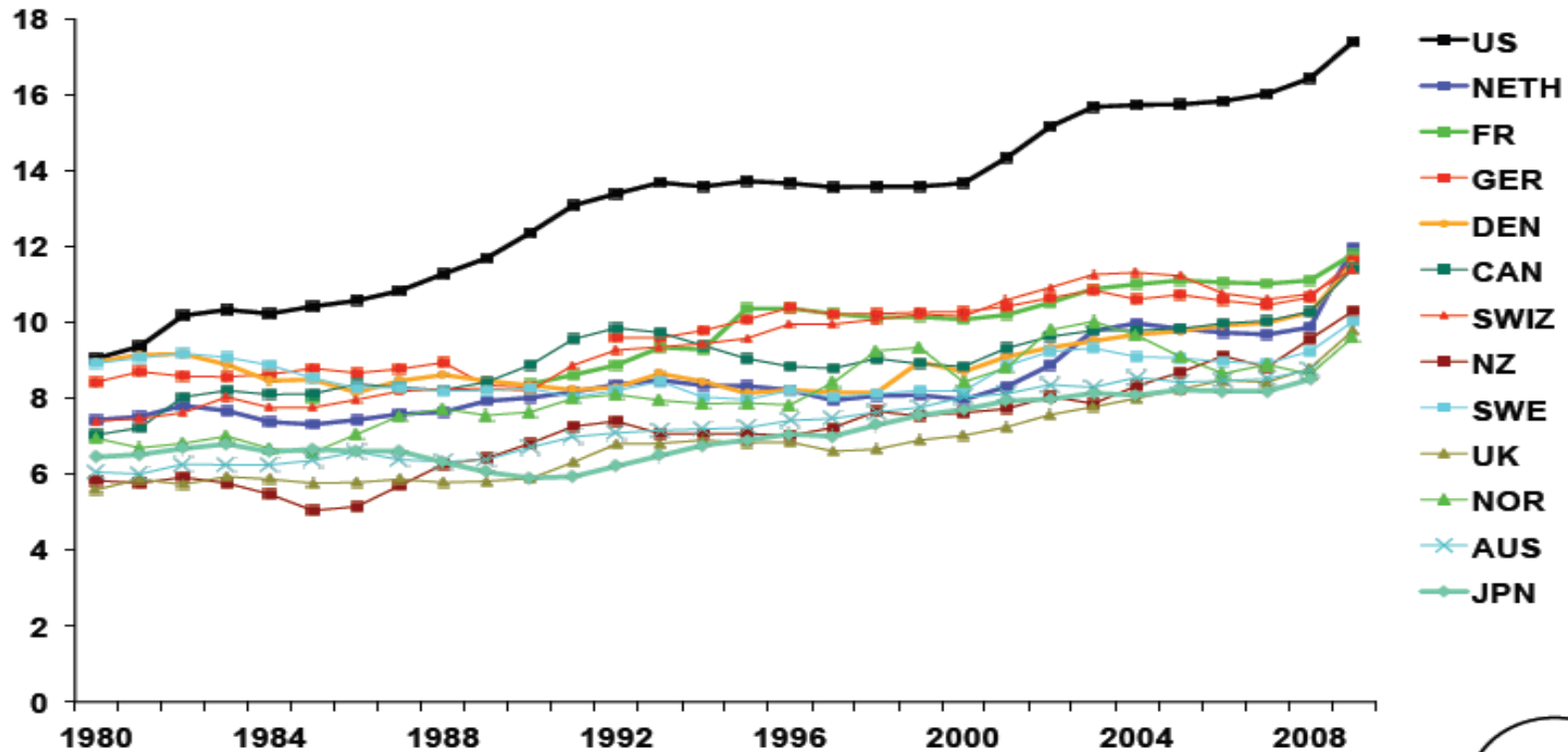
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Rising Medical Costs

Health Care Spending as a Percentage of GDP, 1980–2009

Percent



GDP refers to gross domestic product.
Source: OECD Health Data 2011 (June 2011).



Homelessness Reality Check

- Poverty fell in the U.S. for decades after WWII but this trend has changed. How many more people have fallen into poverty since 2000?
 - A. 5,000,000
 - B. 8,000,000
 - C. 14,000,000
 - D. 25,000,000

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Historic Income Disparity



1947-1979 Source: United for a Fair Economy (www.FairEconomy.org): Based on analysis of US Census Bureau data
1980-2007 Source: Congressional Budget Office, Average Income Pretax (www.cbo.gov): 2007 Dollars

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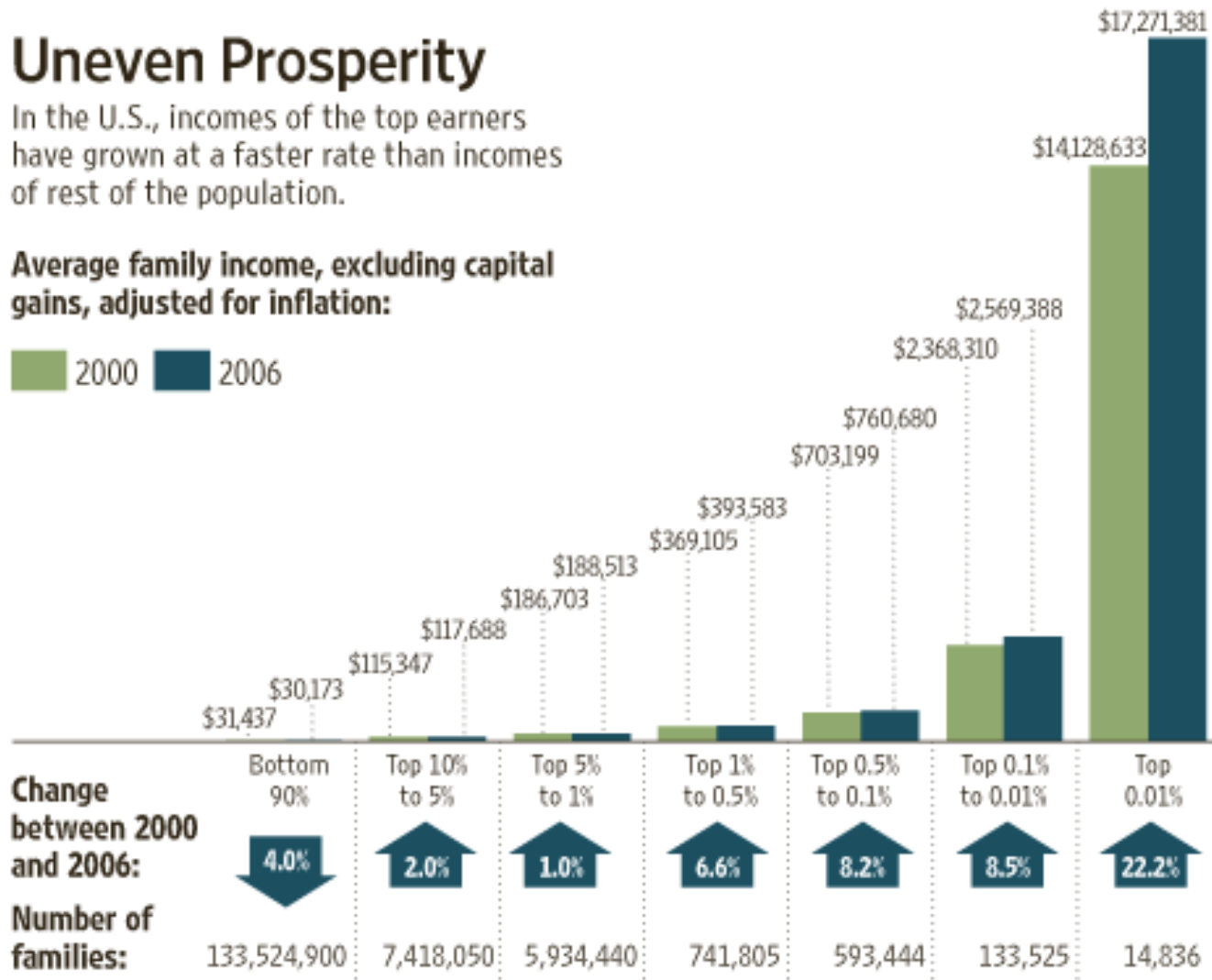
Recent Income Disparity

Uneven Prosperity

In the U.S., incomes of the top earners have grown at a faster rate than incomes of rest of the population.

Average family income, excluding capital gains, adjusted for inflation:

2000 2006



Source: Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez

Homelessness: The real story

- Contemporary homelessness is the product of conscious social and economic policy decisions that have retreated from a commitment to insuring basic life necessities for all people.



Integrating Service and Advocacy: Overview of Workshop

1. Demystify and define “advocacy”
2. Overcome barriers to advocacy
3. Provide strategies for integrating advocacy into your work
4. Describe different advocacy activities
5. Discuss advocacy needs locally and nationally

Advocacy—What is It Anyway?

- To advocate (verb): To speak or write in favor of; support or urge by argument; recommend publicly
- Advocate (noun): A person who speaks or writes in support or defense of a person or cause; to plead for or in behalf of another; to plead the cause of another in a court of law
- Synonyms: Champion, proponent, backer, believer, sponsor
- Antonyms: Opponent, discourage

Describing Advocacy

- Introducing yourself and your work
- Raising awareness
- Facilitating consumers' voice
- Educating policy makers and the public
- Prevention and universal solutions



Who's an Advocate?: Fighting Stereotypes



HCH Providers as Advocates

Individual Advocacy

- Locate detox placement for client
- Hunt for specialist who will treat your uninsured client
- Pack client's infected wound —yet again
- Secure housing voucher for client

Policy Advocacy

- Work with local coalition of providers to increase addiction funding and bed spaces
- Write your Governor about advance implementation of Medicaid expansion
- Work with a willing shelter to ask local hospital to support a medical respite program
- Join/form a group of providers, faith ministers, and concerned citizens to expand affordable housing

HCH & other service providers are natural advocates

- Real life experience
- Important to the community
- Credible



Benefits of Integrating Service & Advocacy



- Improved system
- Empowered staff (burn-out prevention)
- Empowered consumers (clinically helpful)
- Increased credibility/visibility of issues
- Increased funding opportunities

Overcoming Barriers

- Legality
 - Advocacy vs. Lobbying
 - NO LIMITS on advocacy
 - Minor limits on lobbying for 501c3s:
 - Up to 20% can go to lobbying if claimed
 - ~5% if not claimed
 - May be different at government agencies like Health Departments



Overcoming Barriers

- Publicly Funded
 - Public private partnership
 - Feedback is needed
 - Need not be adversarial



Overcoming Barriers

- Time
 - Phone calls and emails are not time intensive
 - Council will do much work for you
 - Can be incorporated into clinical and administrative duties



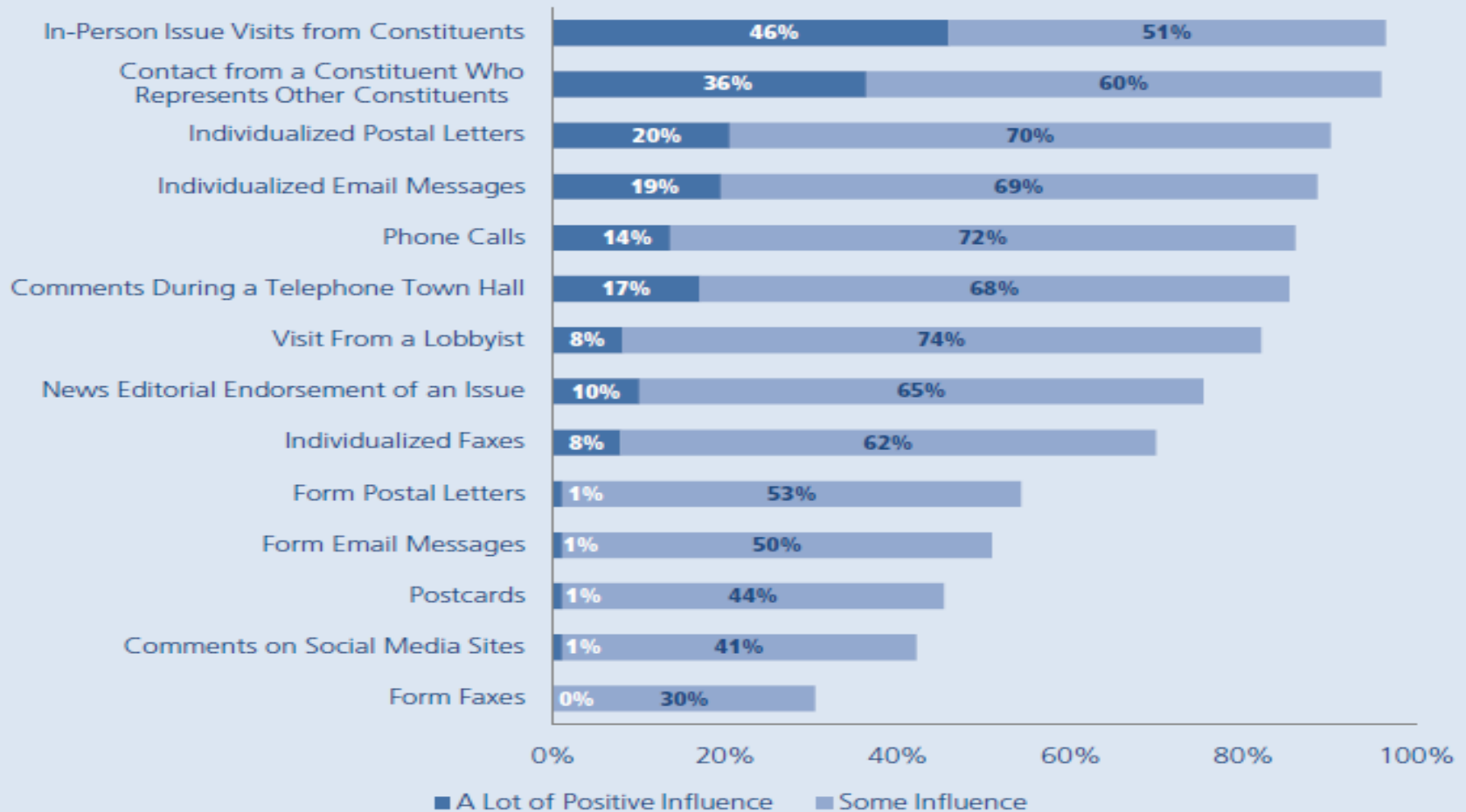
Overcoming Barriers

- Remaining optimistic
 - Your voice does matter
 - Self care is critical, as with clinical work
 - Your voice is needed to balance scales



Survey of Congressional Staff

If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy strategies directed to the *Washington office* have on his/her decision?*



*Question was asked only of senior managers and mail staffers. Their responses are aggregated (n=194).

Integrating Service and Advocacy: Administrators

- Allow time for advocacy in job description
- Create tangible advocacy opportunities and encourage participation
- Recognize staff and consumers for their advocacy work
- Include advocacy in staff and Board orientations and trainings
- Encourage participation in external coalitions

Integrating Service and Advocacy: Board

- Include advocacy in your Mission Statement
- Develop an annual advocacy agenda
- Make time to discuss advocacy at meetings
- Use external contacts and professional experience to advocate for project and patients

Integrating Service and Advocacy: Clinicians and Staff

- Correspond with public officials
- Use real life stories, make it personal
- Participate in internal advocacy committees
- Participate in external coalitions
- Discuss advocacy with consumers and support their involvement
- Know its not just the CEO' s job

Integrating Service and Advocacy: Consumers

- Join Consumer Advisory Board or Board of Directors
- Participate with the National Consumer Advisory Board
- Discuss advocacy and organizing at meetings
- Voter registration and education
- Use staff support for advocacy activities

Where to begin?



- Unique value of your project and work
- Programs that your project and clients depend on
- Issues you have seen
- New issues you see
- Who's in charge?

What to do: Build Relationships

- Contact officials
- Educate and be a resource (candidates for office too!)
- Invite officials for a tour
- Invite officials to events like Homeless Persons Memorial Day or HCH Day



What to do: Advocacy Actions



- Mobilize project, patients, community
- Call-in day
- Petition
- Letter writing
- Board Resolution
- Letter to the editor, op-ed, press conference, rally

Actions you can take NOW

- Congressional Switchboard Phone Number: 1-877-210-5351
- White House Phone Number: 202-456-1111
- Look over Resources Handout
- Sign up for *the Mobilizer* on the handout

Guidelines:

Meeting with public officials

- Relax: Remember they work for you and you are the expert in your field
- Plan: Have materials, stories, and data ready
- Strategize: Know what you want to say and have responses prepared for likely concerns
- Tell the truth: If you don't know the answer of a question offer to get back to them
- Don't Burn Bridges: Today's opponent could be tomorrow's ally

The Council's Current Federal Policy Priorities



- Protect or increase funding for targeted homeless programs
- Protect Medicaid program integrity
- Protect Health Reform and ensure effective implementation

Universal Solutions

- Implement *Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*
- Enact single payer health care system
- Capitalize the National Housing Trust Fund
- Support adequate employment and income supports
- Expand permanent supportive housing and medical respite models

Note on Health Reform



- Medicaid will be expanded to most HCH patients in 2014
- Much of the implementation effort is at the state level
- Outreach and enrollment is essential
- Be a part of this discussion

Sustaining Advocacy Activities

- Don't Give Up! 😊
- Success will be incremental—plan for long-term effectiveness
- Continue relationships in the community



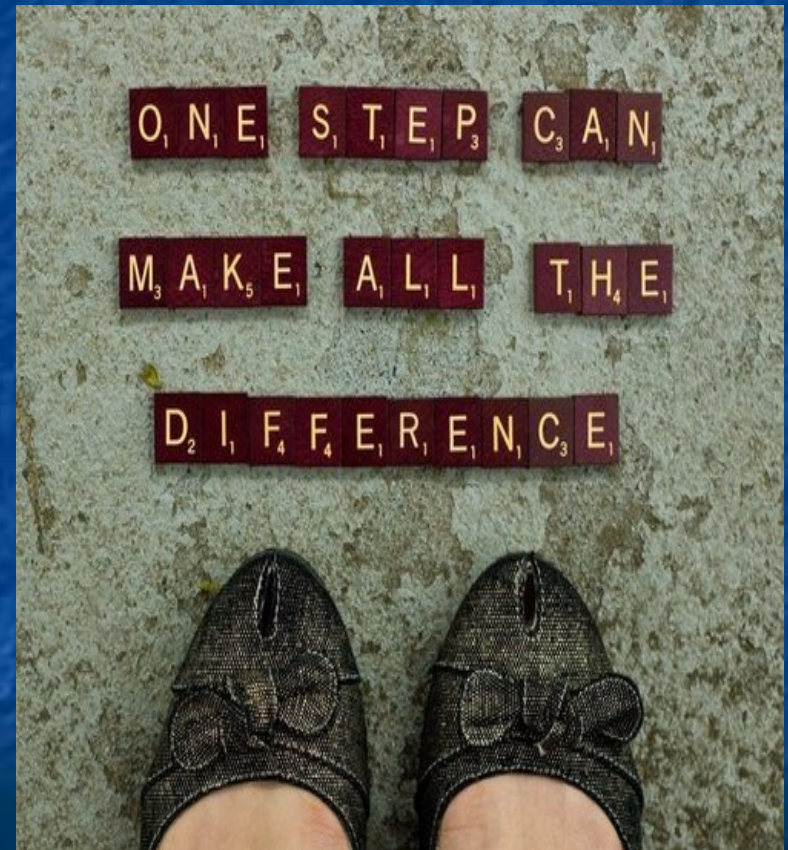
History shows great challenges can be overcome



- “Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.”
– *Martin Luther King Jr.*

Small steps achieve big goals

- “Have a bias toward action—let’s see something happen now. You can break that big plan into small steps and take the first step right away.”
 - ***Indira Gandhi***



National HCH Council Resources

- www.nhchc.org/Advocacy
- Policy statements, federal priorities, health reform, other publications
- Dan Rabbitt, Health Policy Organizer, drabbitt@nhchc.org
- *The Mobilizer:* www.nhchc.org/mobilizer.html
- *The Advo-kit:* www.nhchc.org/Advocacy/advo_kit.html