

On*BOARD* Webinar

The Board's Role in Advocacy



An ACLCO Board Learning Opportunity



Introductions



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Your turn!



Agenda

- ▶ Introductions
- ▶ Definition of Advocacy
- ▶ Hoped-for Advocacy Outcomes
- ▶ Responsibilities
 - ▶ ACLCO
 - ▶ Clinic Executive Director
 - ▶ The Board and Board members
- ▶ Group Exercise (*based on AGM Advocacy training event*)
 - ▶ Call to action
- ▶ Upcoming webinars & wrap-up

Why Do You Serve on a Clinic Board?

Call out or text your
reason on the chat line!

What comes to mind when the topic of Advocacy -
and your role as a Board member - is raised?

- Any concerns?
- Any questions?



National Council of Non-Profits Survey

- ▶ Less than half of boards surveyed by BOARDSource in 2014 reported they were aware of, or participated in, their organizations' advocacy work
- ▶ Some board members continue to believe (incorrectly) that “non-profits can't do advocacy.”

What's your view?



Advocacy – What People are Saying

“As you move through this world advocating for what you believe in, do it with love and an open heart, not with anger and a closed heart.”

Jenn Bruer, *Helping Effortlessly: A Book of Inspiration and Healing*

“All advocacy is, at its core, is an exercise in empathy.”

Samantha Power

“I spend half my time comforting the afflicted, and the other half afflicting the comfortable.”

Wess Stafford

“True advocacy is born from culture, not technology or marketing.”

Jay Baer



Definition of Advocacy

- ▶ “Public support for, or recommendation of, a particular cause or policy”.
- ▶ “An advocacy group or organization is one that tries to influence the decisions of a government or other authority.”

Advocacy synonyms: align, defend, champion, endorse, support, back



Hoped For Advocacy Outcomes

- ▶ Increasing awareness of the value of the clinic and the clinic system
- ▶ Clarifying the clinic's point of view to community leaders, politicians and other organizations
- ▶ Representing those in the community who depend/rely on the clinic/clinic system
- ▶ Building a guiding coalition that can be called on to act whenever the clinic's or the clinic system's message needs to be heard

What Powerful Advocacy Looks Like

- ▶ Speaking the truth in a calm but unwavering voice
- ▶ Reminding decision-makers of our shared values and beliefs
- ▶ Sharing tested solutions to community problems
- ▶ Helping community leaders understand the impact of their decisions
- ▶ Standing for what we know to be true: using our voices



Advocacy – Who’s Responsible?



“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

Henry Ford



ACLCO Role

- ▶ Develop clear advocacy plans covering system-wide issues
- ▶ Lead provincial-wide campaigns
- ▶ Coordinate and support the local campaigns that every clinic is engaged in



Executive Director Role



- ▶ Be the driver of local clinic advocacy efforts (e.g. organize town halls, round table discussions etc.)
- ▶ Lead staff efforts to advocate on behalf of clients
- ▶ Educate the Board about key policy issues
- ▶ Ensure that the clinic's advocacy plan is aligned with any ACLCO province-wide advocacy effort

The Board Role

- ▶ Support the Executive Director and staff during important advocacy efforts – understand that other plans may need to be put on hold
- ▶ As part of a formal campaign and under the guidance of the ED, advocate on behalf of the clinic with key decision makers
- ▶ Understand the difference between passion and emotion!



The Resonating Volunteer Voice

- ▶ Board members are the citizen leaders from whom decision-makers need to hear
- ▶ They can serve as powerful ambassadors/champions for the clinic mission
- ▶ They can help build positive relationships within the community



Key ACLCO Advocacy Messages



Key ACLCO Advocacy Messages

- ▶ The cuts to legal aid in the provincial budget are extremely disturbing:
 - ▶ They will have a devastating impact on legal aid services for low and moderate income Ontarians.
 - ▶ They will certainly have a direct impact on front line services/jobs.
- ▶ Community legal clinics are small, storefront offices, in every community in Ontario, with no bureaucracy or administrative fat to trim.
- ▶ Clinics are non-profit organizations, governed by volunteer boards of directors drawn from the local community.



Key ACLCO Advocacy Messages

- ▶ Everyone in every one of the 72 community clinics in Ontario deals directly with clients.
- ▶ A cut of this size would substantially decrease the services clinics provide to their communities.
- ▶ Community clinics assist their clients with preserving the basic essentials of life:
 - ▶ Helping people keep a roof over their heads
 - ▶ Having some income to put food on their table
- ▶ Studies show that every dollar retracted from legal aid leads to a \$3-5 increase in other areas of government expenditure, such as homelessness, health, family breakdown and incarceration.



Group Exercise



Based on recent Advocacy Training at the
ACLCO AGM

AGM Workshop Team Topics

1. How to build a board of clinic advocates
2. How can we use advocacy efforts to increase membership
3. What the board needs to know to help create broader community awareness of the clinic and its services
4. How board members can contribute to maximizing community partnerships/collaboration
5. How the board contributes to building relationships with local officials
6. What would our community look like without the clinic



What would our community look like without the clinic

Who do you want to influence?



What would our community look like without the clinic

What do you want to say?



What would our community look like
without the clinic

What do you expect their response to be?



What would our community look like without the clinic

How will you help them see it your way?



Call to Action

What is one step you are willing to take as a legal clinic board member after this webinar to support the “save the legal clinics campaign?”



Upcoming Training



Key Board Roles & Training Support

1. Determine vision and purpose
2. Ensure Effective Planning
3. Monitor and strength programs and services
4. Ensure adequate and financial resources The Board's Role In Managing Risk
5. Protect assets and provide proper financial oversight
6. Enhance the organization's public standing The Board's Role in Advocacy
7. Build a competent board Assessing Board Effectiveness My Role as a Board Member
8. Ensure legal and ethical integrity
9. Select the Executive Director
10. Support and evaluate the Executive Director Best Practices in ED Evaluation



Thank you!



<http://onboardlegalclinics.org/home.html>