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Pebble in a Pond: Advocacy 101 for Non-profit Milk Banks

Human Milk Banking Assn of North America Symposium • Chicago, IL • April 12-13, 2019

Key Presentation Points and Resource Links

Objectives

(1) *Describe the ten basic obligations for governing a non-profit organization*

1. Determine mission and purposes; advocate for them
2. Select the Chief Executive (Exec Dir)
3. Support and evaluate the Chief Exec
4. Ensure effective planning
5. Monitor and strengthen programs and services
6. Ensure adequate financial resources
7. Protect assets and provide financial oversight
8. Build a competent board
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity
10. Enhance the organization's public standing

[Ingram, R. (2015). *Governance Series: Vol. 1. Ten basic responsibilities of nonprofit boards* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: BoardSource]

(2) *Define the difference between “lobbying” and “political activity” by a non-profit organization*

“What is advocacy?”

One of the key roles for a board member is to act as an advocate for his or her organization. Advocacy means that the board member represents the organization in the community; articulates the mission of the organization; and supports and defends the organization's message.

“What is lobbying?”

The IRS defines lobbying as ‘carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation.’ This means activities that try to influence legislators to pass laws that are favorable to one's cause. There are two categories of lobbying:

- Direct lobbying occurs when the organization contacts legislators or government officials directly.

- Grassroots lobbying tries to influence legislation indirectly by attempting to mold the general public's opinion on an issue.

“What is political activity?

Political activity is intervention by any means in any political campaign in favor or against a candidate. This does not include nonpartisan voter education or get-out-the-vote drives.”

[BoardSource. (2016, June 8). Advocacy, lobbying, and political activities. Retrieved from BoardSource website: <https://boardsource.org/resources/advocacy-lobbying-political-activities/>]

Note that Canadian law offers similar distinctions, permitting nonprofits to educate and engage with officials on matters affecting the foundation's mission, but frowns upon direct campaigning for the election of individuals.

(3) Define three advocacy activities a non-profit human milk bank can engage in, today, to educate and to be better-informed about important issues.

1. Join your state breastfeeding coalition; links at the U. S. Breastfeeding Committee website <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/>. Provincial links for Canada are at the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada: <http://breastfeedingcanada.ca/ProvTerrInfo.aspx>
2. Anyone can sign up to receive the Weekly Wire email newsletter from the United States Breastfeeding Committee; start at their website <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/>. It contains
3. Join BoardSource to learn best practices on all aspects of non-profit organizational leadership: <https://boardsource.org/>. Many governance principles are universal to USA and Canadian organizations.
4. Build a resource list of community-based sources for breastfeeding/chestfeeding support, to share with your donor parents
5. Sign up for customized e-mail alerts from the Federal Register, which publishes all federal regulatory activity: <https://www.federalregister.gov/reader-aids/office-of-the-federal-register-blog/2011/04/email-notifications-now-available>. For Canadian federal and provincial and territorial regulatory alerts, use <https://data.bloomberglp.com/bna/sites/6/2019/03/09-8581-24857-Canadian-EHS-Legislative-Regulatory-Alerts-Brochure.pdf>

Some helpful websites and links:

(1) United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) website is rife with resources at the US federal level, and within the states/territories/tribal/cultural/local communities (via their coalitions) <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/>. Do sign up for the Weekly Wire email alert; it is filled with timely notices and links on all matter of information pertaining to breast/chestfeeding and human milk use.

(2) Critical thinking skills “cheat sheet,” on condensing complex issues into manageable discussion and advocacy points: <https://www.wabisabilearning.com/blog/critical-thinking-skills-cheatsheet-infographic>

(3) Outside the box approaches to public health matters work! “Civil Rights Laws as Tools to Advance Health in the Twenty-First Century” <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032315-021926>

(4) Informed-decision making, after a risk-benefit discussion between a parent and primary health care provider, is best practice for consideration of informal milk sharing and use. See Sriraman, N., Evans, A., Lawrence, R., Noble, L., & Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Board of Directors. (2018). Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine's 2017 position statement on informal breast milk sharing for the term health infant. *Breastfeeding Medicine*, 13(1), 1-3. Retrieved from <https://abm.memberclicks.net/assets/DOCUMENTS/ABM's%202017%20Position%20Statement%20on%20Informal%20Breast%20Milk%20Sharing%20for%20the%20Term%20Healthy%20Infant.pdf>

(5) Tamarack Institute's “The 4 M's of Effective Communication: <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/the-4-ms-of-effective-communication>

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