



# Policy as a Practice

ESTABLISH YOUR ASSOCIATION (AND  
YOURSELF) AS AN ADVOCATE AND  
EFFECTIVELY INFLUENCE POLICY CHANGE

## What is policy?

- ▶ a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual.

# Engagement Influences Policy

- ▶ **To be engaged IS to be an advocate**

- ▶ Advocacy: the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal : the act or process of advocating something
  - ▶ Advocacy does NOT have to mean lobbying.

# Why Engage?

- ▶ **Policy decisions do not happen in a vacuum**
  - ▶ Competing priorities
  - ▶ Dueling numbers
  - ▶ Health (and social determinant) policy is about people
- ▶ **Engagement does not always mean lobbying: walk your line**
  - ▶ Getting policymakers to pay attention
  - ▶ Getting legislators to vote on a certain issue
- ▶ **Legislative/Administrative decisions always involve politics**
  - ▶ Good policy development is not enough --- relationships matter
  - ▶ What good is great policy if it doesn't get enacted?

# Engagement = Effective Communication

- ▶ **Effective engagement has one requirement: COMMUNICATION**
  - ▶ Communicating with the right people supports policy change.
- ▶ **Effective engagement impacts policy change**
  - ▶ Make engagement an ongoing commitment and priority for not only yourself, but your association.
  - ▶ Translate patient, professional, and community issues into educational issues.
  - ▶ Make your voice and perspective heard and understood.

# Good Engagement = POWER

- ▶ **What is POWER in the context of your patients, your association, and your community?**
  - ▶ ability to act or produce an effect
  - ▶ possession of control, authority, or influence over others
  - ▶ political influence
- ▶ **Power is measured by the ability to successfully advance a policy agenda.**

# Engagement Basics

- ▶ Know what you want and when you want it
- ▶ Know who can give it to you
- ▶ Know who you can (or can't) work with
- ▶ Know who or what your opposition looks like
- ▶ Know how to get attention
- ▶ Know that engagement is a CONTINUUM that NEEDS your voice

# Examples of Engagement Tools

## ▶ **Direct (quality)**

- ▶ Face-to-face conversations
- ▶ Personal phone calls
- ▶ Clinic tours
- ▶ “White Coat” days

## ▶ **Indirect (quantity)**

- ▶ Letters to the editor
- ▶ Opinion editorials
- ▶ Media advisories
- ▶ Press conferences
- ▶ Email/Facebook/Twitter/Instagram Content
- ▶ Switchboard calls

# Making Engagement a Practice

- ▶ **Building a culture of engagement means**
  - ▶ Changing the culture and attitude from within the association and recognizing engagement as a critical component of your work and planning.
  - ▶ Making a commitment to doing the work to build and organize your community in order to fully realize the potential of your power.
  - ▶ Recognize and invest in engagement efforts in the same way other critical skills and programs are recognized.



# Engagement is where Policy and Practice Collide

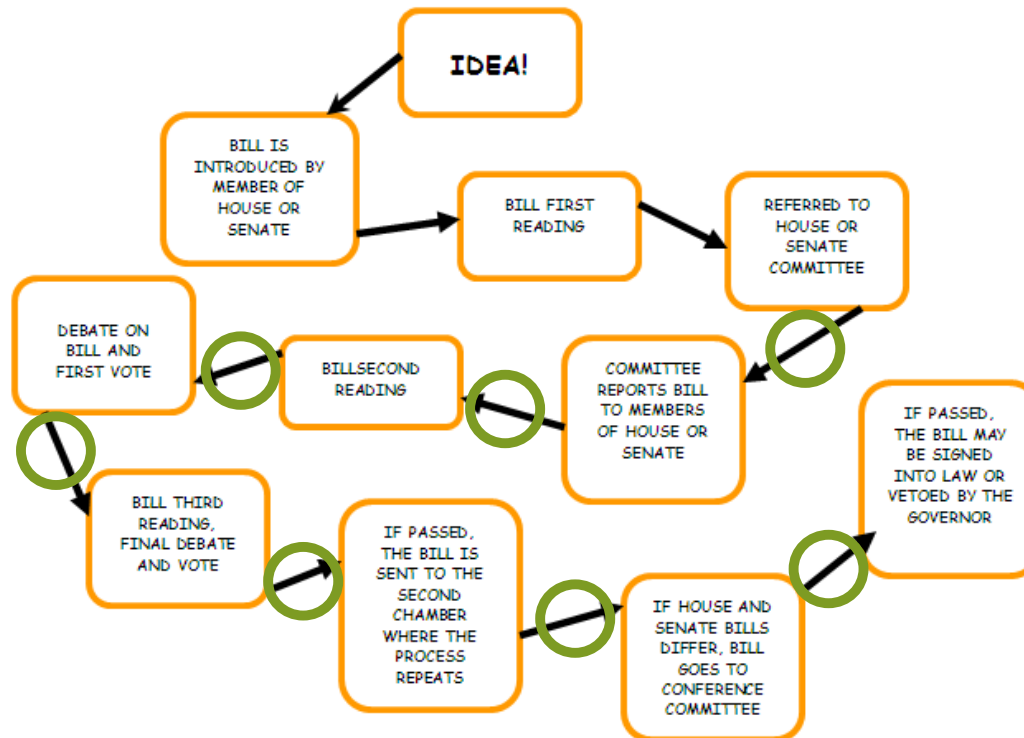
- ▶ Without engagement, it is very hard to “cold-start” a policy initiative with decision-makers. If the people who vote on an issue don’t know WHY the policy is important, they will not make it an important part of their agenda.
- ▶ As health leaders, you are in perfect position for engagement and establishing your authority on any number of key issues that affect your patients and your practice.
- ▶ By becoming a prominent leader on critical issues, you will build the political strength of your association.
- ▶ Ultimately, from that base of strength, you will not only be able to protect the interests of your association, but you will be able to effect policy change.



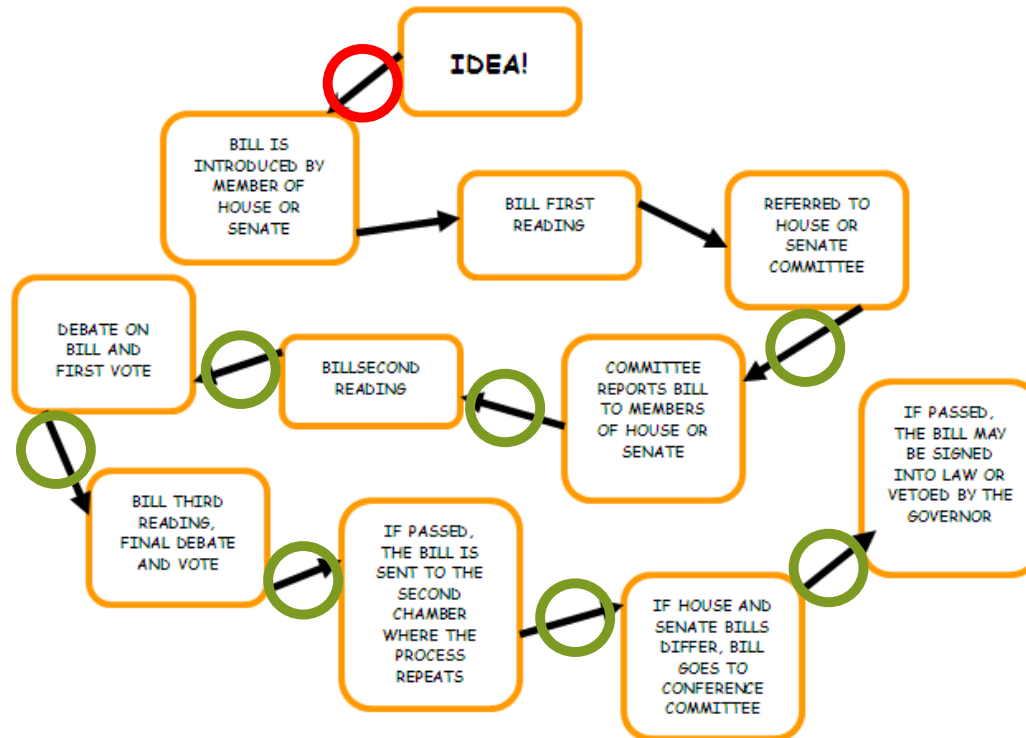
# When to Engage

SESSION YEARS VERSUS INTERIM YEARS

# When to Weigh in: The 120 day Session



# When to Weigh in: The 610 day Interim



# Time to Generate the Ideas for 2027

- ▶ Reflect on 2025 Legislative Action
  - ▶ The WINS: Prior Authorization; Medicaid Expansion
  - ▶ The LOSSES: Anti-LGBTQ legislation; Katie Beckett Waiver\*
- ▶ 2027 Forecasting
  - ▶ Medicaid
  - ▶ Rural Health Transformation Program
  - ▶ SNAP
  - ▶ LGBTQ/Women's Health
  - ▶ Licensing



## Our work (JANICE?)

- ▶ Joint MAFP and MTAAP advocacy committee
- ▶ Made up of family docs, pediatricians, NPs, PAs, therapists, lawyers, and more
- ▶ Met weekly during session, PRN otherwise
- ▶ Tracked bills and issues that were of highest importance to both organizations
- ▶ Advised Stacey on positions on certain bills, assigned physicians to talk to lawmakers or testify as needed

# Bill tracking

1	Priorit	Topic	Status	Description	Sponsor	Status link	Position(s)	MTAAP/MAFP Membe	Testifie
87	<a href="#">SB62</a>	1 Medicaid	DEAD	Phase out of expansion	Glimm	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Oppose		
88	<a href="#">SB199</a>	1 Medicaid	DEAD	Add work requirements to Medicaid expansion	Trebas	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Oppose		
89	<a href="#">SB334</a>	3 Medicaid	DEAD	Providing medicaid expansion to able-bodied adults who comply w	M Regier	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Oppose		
90	<a href="#">HB386</a>	3 Medicaid	DEAD	Continuous eligibility for expansion, caregivers	Howell	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Lauren	Y
91	<a href="#">HB273</a>	Medical debt	DEAD	Provide for limitations on the collection of medical debt	Stafman	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Monitor		
92	HB163	Medical education	DEAD	Tax credit for preceptors	Walsh	<a href="#">270686</a>			
93	<a href="#">SB216</a>	5 Medical education	DEAD	Montana physicians' workforce investment act	Lenz	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Monitor		
94	<a href="#">HB620</a>	4 Noncompetes	To Governor	Prohibiting noncompetes for physicians	Gist	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Lauren	Y
95	<a href="#">HB198</a>	5 Noncompetes	SIGNED	Prohibiting noncompetes for physicians, PAs, NPs	Etchart	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Monitor		
96	<a href="#">HB398</a>	1 Prior auth	SIGNED	Continuity of care / negotiated bill	Karlen	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Kim, Lauren, Saul, (Ju	Y
97	<a href="#">HB399</a>	1 Prior auth	SIGNED	Prescription drug bill	Karlen	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Kim, Lauren, Saul	Y
98	<a href="#">HB544</a>	1 Prior auth	SIGNED	Biologics for kids <18, no retroactive denials	Buttrey	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Kim, Lauren, Saul, (Ju	Y
99	<a href="#">SB446</a>	1 Prior auth	Enrolling	Peer to peer	Ricci	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Kim, Lauren, Saul, (He	Y
100	<a href="#">SB447</a>	1 Prior auth	Enrolling	Reduce number of prior auths	Ricci	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Kim, Lauren, Saul, (He	Y
101	<a href="#">SB449</a>	1 Prior auth	Enrolling	Continuity of care	Ricci	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Kim, Lauren, Saul, (Ju	Y
102	<a href="#">SB317</a>	4 Prior auth	Signed by president	Prohibit health insurers from performing prior authorization on psyc	Lenz	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Julie, Lauren	Y
103	<a href="#">HB610</a>	4 Prior auth	To governor	Revise preauthorization laws relating to healthcare	Seekins-Crowe	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support		
104	<a href="#">SB422</a>	Prior auth	Enrolling	Prohibit step therapy for metastatic cancer	Boldman	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Lauren	Y
105	<a href="#">HB794</a>	Prior auth	To governor	Revise pharmacy laws	Schomer	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support		
106	<a href="#">HB740</a>	Prior auth	SIGNED	Revise laws relating to pharmacies, PBMs	Bertoglio	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Kim	Y
107	<a href="#">SB448</a>	5 Prior auth	DEAD	Timely payment	Ricci	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support		
108	<a href="#">SB483</a>	Prior auth	DEAD	Prohibit step therapy in general	Boldman	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support		
109	<a href="#">HB220</a>	3 Poverty	DEAD	Creates \$1200 child tax credit that adjusts down for AGI > \$50k	Caferro	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Lauren	Y
110	<a href="#">SB321</a>	3 Poverty	DEAD	Child tax credit + business credit for providing child care	Kassmier	<a href="#">Bill Explorer</a>	Support	Lauren	Y

## Topics we weighed in on

- ▶ Medicaid reauthorization
- ▶ Vaccination
- ▶ Prior authorization reform
- ▶ Vaping / tobacco
- ▶ Climate and energy
- ▶ Child tax credit
- ▶ Chiropractor prescribing
- ▶ Paid parental leave
- ▶ Child abuse and neglect
- ▶ Medical record access by parents

**Tracked: 138 bills  
Testified: 57 bills,  
19 unique testifiers**

# 2025 Advocacy

## Success

- ▶ Medicaid expansion
- ▶ Prior authorization & PBM reform
- ▶ Malpractice non-economic damages cap
- ▶ Tobacco control
- ▶ School health (AEDs, epinephrine and albuterol access)

## Little/No success

- ▶ Protecting at-risk populations (especially LGBTQ+)
- ▶ Pro-vaccine legislation (but did prevent BAD vaccine bills)
- ▶ Environmental and pollution protections
- ▶ Continuous eligibility for Medicaid

# Looking forward: The Interim (LAUREN)

- ▶ Executive agencies overseen by interim committees
  - ▶ Important for medicine:
    - ▶ Children, Families, Health and Human Services
    - ▶ Budget Part B
- ▶ Study bills
- ▶ Agency rulemaking and initiatives
- ▶ Licensing boards for physicians, nurses, other health professionals
- ▶ Governor's initiatives

## **PLUS:**

- **Federal actions**
- **Preparing ideas for the 2027 session!**

# Big issues

- ▶ Rural health transformation project
- ▶ Medicaid access & work requirements
- ▶ SNAP changes
- ▶ Vaccination landscape (mostly federal)





## Join Advocacy Committee

- ▶ No minimum commitment
- ▶ Happy to keep you informed on ongoing issues, engage on what you're passionate about
- ▶ Not a time-add: it can be a source of motivation to affect change beyond patient care

# Policy as a Practice

► Questions?

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