
Developing An Advocacy Campaign On Implementation Of Lifestyle Change Program To Prevent Breast Cancer

Overview of the Proposed Policy

It's been proven in studies that risk for breast cancer is linked with age, sedentary and poor dietary lifestyle. Especially the combination of dietary choices that are fatty, smoking and prolonged use of excessive alcohol profoundly increases chance of breast cancer in women. However, some women even with a healthy lifestyle can get breast cancer.

The American Cancer Society (2017), recommends women stay at a healthy weight throughout their life and avoid excess weight gain by balancing food intake with physical activity. With this regard, the policy solution that has been chosen is related to the implementation of lifestyle change program as a preventative means against breast cancer in the society. The policy proposal will be enacted via the creation of a new legislation with a specific goal of achieving recommendations for women who are at risk of developing breast cancer to avoid certain food choices that contain excessive levels of fat. Within the same policy, there will be educational programs available to curb the use of alcohol, smoking, and substance abuse.

Another critical piece of the legislation will promote awareness and benefits of healthy lifestyle through advocacy campaigns. Especially, for the policy to have a decent chance of making significant gains to cut down risk for breast cancer in women, the policy rollout will need to involve sustainable patient education and simple steps to maximize adherence to the recommendations to breast cancer screening and other diagnostic testing if the results show some abnormality.

The Effects of Existing Laws on Advocacy Efforts

The Breast and Cervical Cancer Mortality Prevention Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-354) established the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. According to the CDC (2018), this program provides breast and cervical cancer screening exams as preventative health measure to underserved women, including those who are older, have low incomes, or are members of racial and ethnic minority groups. This existing law will impact the advocacy efforts of the proposed policy because parts of the aforementioned law which are already in effect bears similarities with the proposed policy of breast cancer awareness and prevention through recommended guidelines of healthy lifestyle and educational programs on some of the contributing risk factors. Due to the

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significant overlap of the existing law and the proposed policy, the advocacy campaign of the proposed policy can build on the early detection statutes as a way to advance advocacy efforts of lifestyle changes to reduce the risk for breast cancer in women. The existing law will also improve training of health professionals in the detection and control of breast cancer which further propels the advocacy efforts of the proposed policy.

The “Three Legs” of Lobbying

For any proposed policy to have a chance of being enacted into law, all three legs of lobbying must be in place. Any proposed policy must have the support of the executive branch and policy makers to become fully operational. History has taught us that the most effective way to influence law makers into action for a specific policy is through professional lobbying, energizing grass roots sentiment and a media blitz, hence the term “three legs” of lobbying. The advocacy campaign starts with the nurse. The nurse will foremost have to create numerous opportunities to constantly talk about the proposed policy from a professional standpoint. The nurse must explore ways to effectively inform policy makers about the health-related and cost benefits of the proposed policy. The reason is that the incumbents will only support the proposal if they perfectly understand how it will impact the target audience.

Secondly, on the effort of energizing grassroots sentiments on the proposed policy as a way of lobbying, the nurse will need to reach out to women and community organizers to disseminate the message of benefits of the lifestyle change as a way to reduce breast cancer to the society at large. Policy makers are easily influenced once they are convinced that there is grassroots support for the proposed policy because they will have to face the uproar and loss of support of their constituents if they are not. The third leg of lobbying which is media ties the other legs together. Media informs and shapes the opinions of society. Media has the power to reach masses in a way that nothing else can. Nurses will have to capitalize on that to empower and educate how the proposed policy will improve quality of life of women through healthier lifestyle changes that reduce breast cancer. The nurse should strive to communicate the potential benefits of the proposed policy not only to the women who are at risk of developing breast cancer but also to the community at large.

Obstacles that Could Arise in the Legislative Process

To propose new policy, the nurse must have a good understanding of the potential obstacles involved during the advocacy efforts and be ready to address them as they arise in order to improve chances of success. New policy brings about change and for every change, it is natural to expect resistance or skepticism from policy makers and the target audience. This may occur as a result of their limited knowledge of its anticipated benefits. To address this challenge, the

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nurse should take advantage of professional communication strategies to enlighten policy makers about the benefits of the breast cancer prevention policy to their constituents.

The other potential obstacle is financial constraints. Especially when there is an issue of limited finances, the nurse will encounter difficulties of procuring resources that are needed for the successful execution of the proposed policy. The most appropriate way to overcome the financial-related hurdle is to make a proper financial arrangement and to ensure that adequate funds are available before the implementation process begins.

Although there is a plethora of hurdles that a nurse may face while attempting to influence policy change, these hurdles should not dissuade one from doing so because of the numerous benefits that may arise from a successful execution of the proposed policy.

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