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19TH ANNUAL  
ADVOCACY  
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equipping and  
empowering  
advocates for public health

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# Building Your Health Advocacy Toolkit: Tactics for the Trenches

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**#Q149**



Questions?  
Comments?

# Speakers

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Heidi Hancher-Rauch is an associate professor of public health and director of public health programs at the University of Indianapolis.

Amy Thompson is Professor of Population Health at the University of Toledo.

Jodi Brookins-Fisher is director and professor of public health in the Division of Community Health, School of Health Sciences at Central Michigan University.

Alexis Blavos is an assistant professor at Courtland University

# Session Objectives

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By the conclusion of this session, you should be able to:

1. Identify various advocacy tools and skills needed to effectively advocate for social and policy change.
2. Explain the pros and cons of using advocacy tools in various settings.
3. Demonstrate how they can personally utilize at least one new tool or skill they learned during the session in their home districts to impact social and/or policy change.



# Activism Isn't Always Marching.....

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# Activism Comes in Many Forms

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1. Give Your Time to a Group or an Organization
2. Speak Up
3. Donate, Support or Boycott
4. Overload the system
5. March

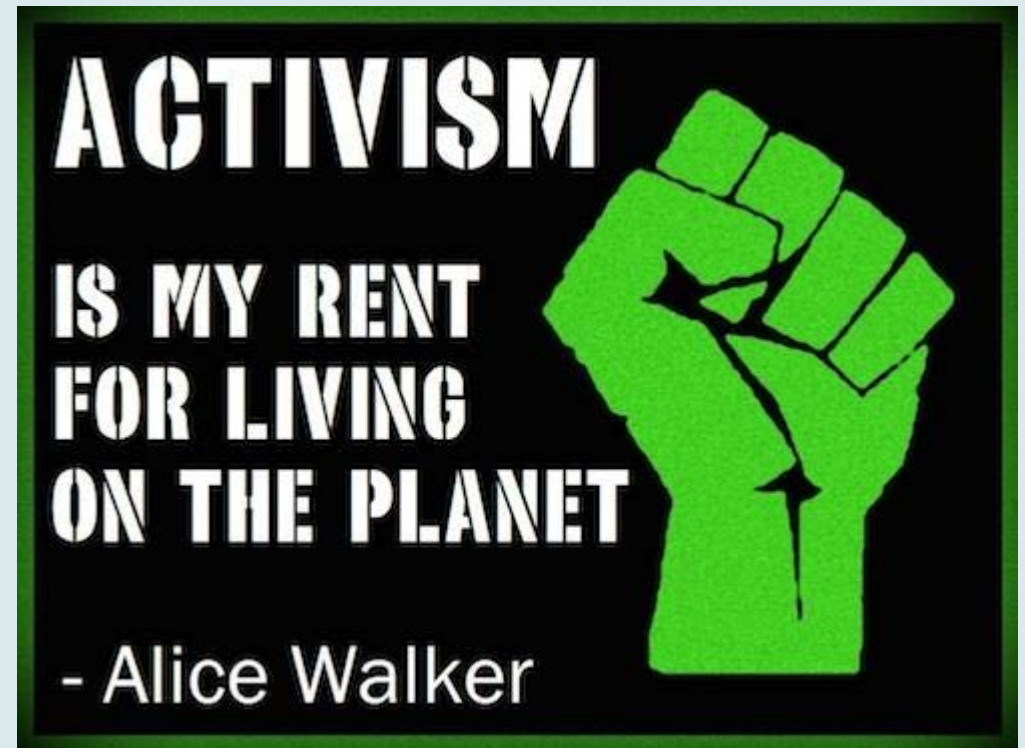




# Activism Comes in Many Forms

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6. Live by Example
7. Have Conversations
8. Educate Yourself on the Issue



# Activism Comes in Many Forms

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9. Host a Townhall Meeting

10. Develop an email template with talking points

11. March

12. Use Social Media

13. Meet with Your Policy Makers-school boards, city council, faculty senate



# Planning a Lobby Day

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# Planning is Key

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- Review the legislative calendar to be sure the legislators are in session at the Capitol.
- Create a planning timeline.
- Try to work with one of your local legislators to possibly secure meeting space.
- Develop key priorities and an advocacy packet
- Market your event to like-minded professionals using Social Media.

# Planning Con't

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- Schedule as many appointments as you can with legislators in advance.
- Supply participants with their legislators contact information in advance.
- Have a brief training and practice session if possible before hand.
- Estimate the number of people that might attend and create and agenda.
- Make sure there are “leaders” that can help groups who are less experienced in advocacy.
- Ensure Follow-Up to determine if additional resources are needed.

**A**

ACTION

**C**

CHANGES

**T**

THINGS

# To whom do I send the letter or postcard?

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- When creating a letter to your legislator always know which district he/she is representing and who represents YOU
- Ballotpedia.org has an up-to-date compilation of all political figures
  - search using just your state zip code
  - once the list is compiled, click on a legislator and review her/his credentials, voting statistics, and history
  - their office and contact information is available

Slides adapted from John Little, MPH Student, Central Michigan University

# Creating an Informative Letter

- Sometimes creating a personal letter is an effective way of addressing an issue that is not time sensitive
- Personal letters, whether handwritten or typed, add a level of intimacy between legislator and the persons they represent
- Letters must be:
  - Addressed to the proper legislative office
  - Concise: full of facts and acronyms that the legislator will know
  - Tasteful: no one wants to read a letter full of hate and accusations
  - Neat: proofread everything and ensure that spelling and grammar are correct
  - Organized: the letter is engaging, flowing from point to point that makes sense
  - Willing to open a dialogue between the legislator and the writer
- Always close with a way for follow-up and know it can take time for a response

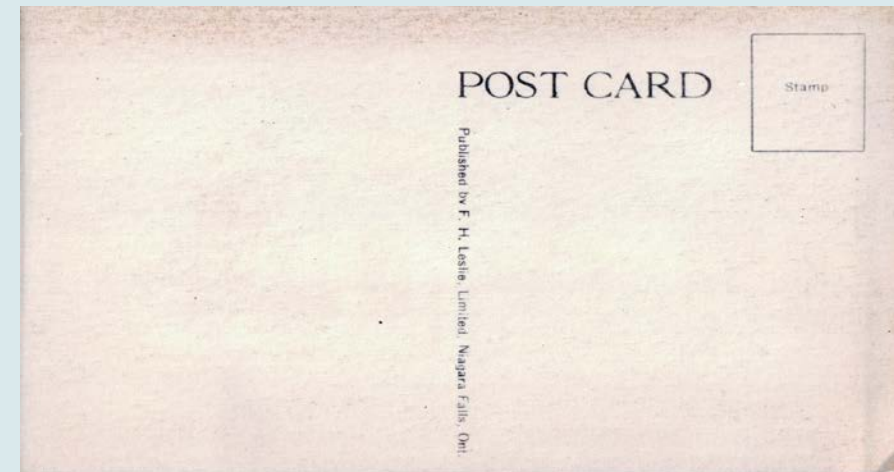
Slides adapted from John Little, MPH Student, Central Michigan University



# A word about postcards...

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- Postcards are usually given to constituents on behalf of an organization to get a mail blast to a legislator
- They are NOT as effective as a personal letter or postcard, but do send in a time-sensitive situation



# Creating an informative email

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- Legislators have email accounts that are monitored regularly and prove to be an effective way to discuss time sensitive topics
- Remember to keep the email:
  - **D**on't waste their time with frivolities or extra information
  - **E**ngaging: tell them why this piece of legislation is important
  - **A**ccurate: all information disclosed must be from credible sources or experiences
  - **R**espectful: use clear and concise tones when addressing the legislator
- Always proofread messages before submitting them
- Keep the tone friendly; You catch more flies with honey than vinegar
- Say thank you!!!

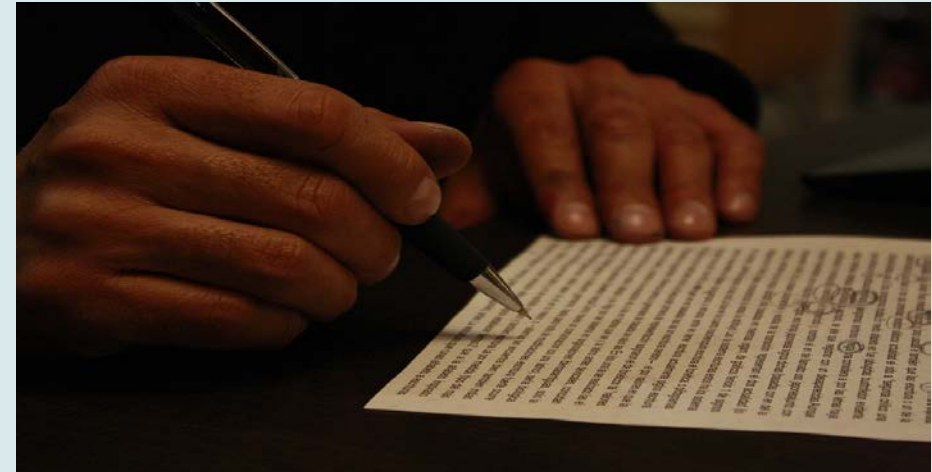
Little, MPH Student, Central Michigan University

Slides adapted from John

# Letters to the Editor

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- In response to something that was previously written in the paper
- Know your goal
- State your position- stick to 3-4 points
- Cite sources within to substantiate your points if/when needed
- A letter to the editor is different from an “op-ed”



# Online Advocacy Tools/Tactics

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Strategic planning and organization

Online forums

Online petitions

- [Change.org](https://change.org)
- [US Whitehouse Petitions](https://www.whitehouse.gov/petitions)



# Online Advocacy Tools/Tactics (cont.)

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## Social Media (viral marketing)

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Snapchat
- Instagram



# Online Advocacy Tools/Tactics (cont.)

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## Listervs/Email Distribution Lists

- Social action
- Political party affiliation
- Legislative
- SOPHE action Alerts



## Direct emails

# Professional Advocacy Techniques

Attend advocacy events

- Local
- National

Engage with Community Partners

Who Practice Advocacy

- Coalitions, Not-for-Profits, etc.

Meet with Legislators



# Professional Advocacy Techniques

Engage with an Advocacy Committee

- SOPHE
- Local chapter of SOPHE

Help Write Resolutions

- Mental health, opioid prevention and treatment, etc.

Help write White Papers on Hot Topics





# Applying Your Advocacy Skills

Scott County, IN Opioid Epidemic

Background of the Problem

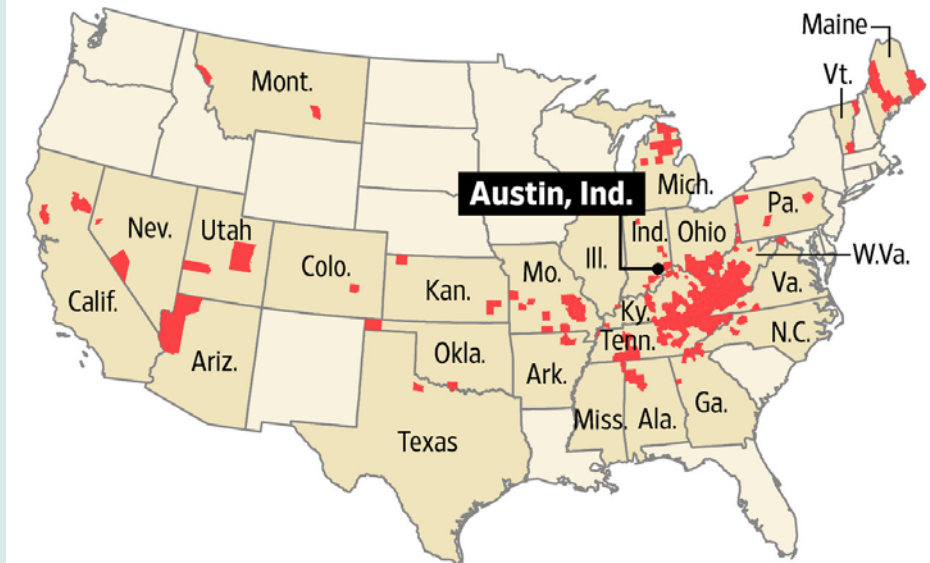
How would you practice  
advocacy to effectively address  
the issue?

Share your ideas

## Where Disease Eruption Is a Threat

A CDC report identified 220 counties where factors such as unemployment rates, overdose deaths and sales of prescription painkillers contribute to a high vulnerability for outbreaks of HIV and hepatitis C among injection drug users.

■ Counties vulnerable to outbreaks of HIV and hepatitis C



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

# The Public Health Response : Role of Advocacy



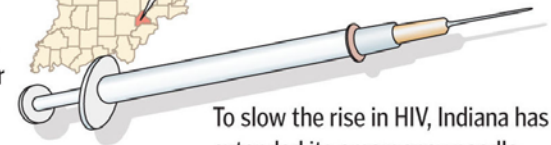
## 142 cases of HIV linked to illegal drugs

Many cases in Scott County are traced to people injecting Opana, a prescription painkiller similar to heroin and sold in pill form.



Opana is a hard pill that is difficult to crush and dissolve for injection drug use. For that reason, users find larger needles are necessary.

**Oxymorphone**  
An opioid painkiller sold under names Opana and Numorphan



To slow the rise in HIV, Indiana has extended its emergency needle exchange program in the area.

SOURCES: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, STATE OF INDIANA BILL THORNBRO | HERALD-TIMES



A screenshot of a Huffington Post article. The title is "Indiana Shut Down Its Rural Planned Parenthood Clinics And Got An HIV Outbreak" by Laura Bassett. The article includes a video player with the title "Why This Indiana Town Is Facing An HIV Epidemic" and a "TRENDING" section at the bottom with various news thumbnails.



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# Questions?

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