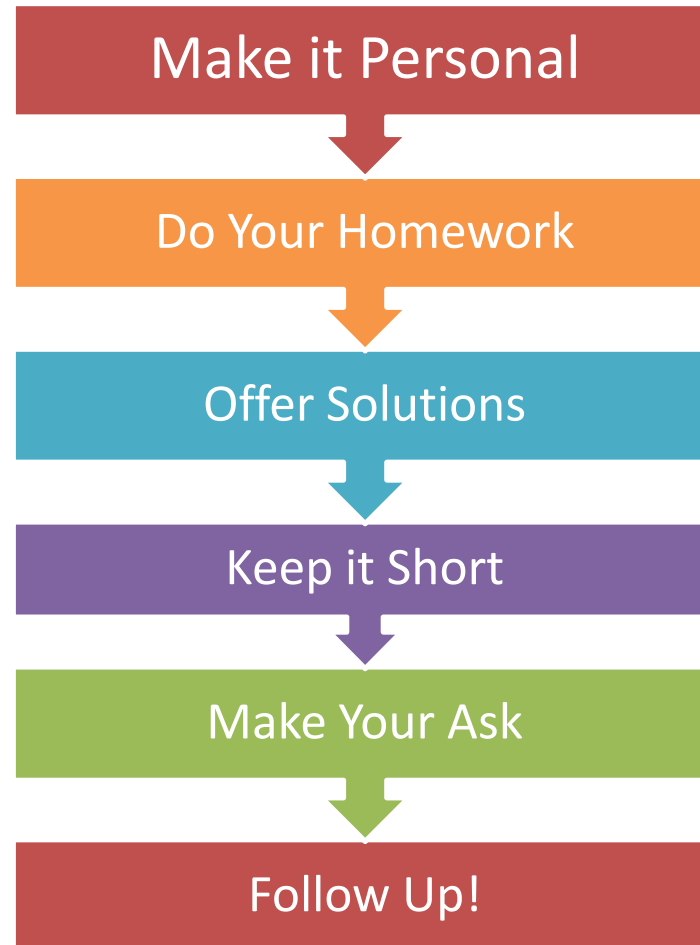


Telling Your Story



Keys to a Successful Legislative Visit



The Power of Your Personal Story



- **YOU know HIV/AIDS issues**
- **YOU are an expert on how HIV impacts your life**
 - As a person living with HIV
 - As a person providing services to people living with HIV
- **Your personal experiences provide perspective and impact beyond statistics**
- **Lawmakers need the human story and face to understand importance of policies**

Make It Personal

- **Introductions:**
 - Give your name
 - Where you are from
 - Relevant background information about yourself
- **Talk about the expertise you bring:**
 - As a person living with HIV
 - Someone working in the field
 - As a concerned community member



Make It Personal

- **Talk about:**
 - The issues and programs that matter to you and why
 - (ADAP, health care reform implementation, case management, housing assistance, mental health, substance use counseling and treatment, food and nutrition, prevention, etc.)
 - How those programs help/ed you
 - What would happen to you and others people living with HIV without these programs or if new programs were developed



Do Your Homework

- **Consult the factsheets in your packets**
- **Think about how the policy asks relate to your life and experiences**
- **Use the testimony worksheet to help organize your thoughts**



Offer Solutions

- This is not the place to complain, but to offer viable solutions to problems and challenges
- These are the policy and funding asks
- Talk about what is working
- Talk about where policies and programs can be improved



Keep It Short

- You may have only a few minutes
- Make sure you and your group are well organized so you can deliver your message and ask clearly and concisely
- Stay on your issue
- If conversation veers, bring it back!



Make Your Ask

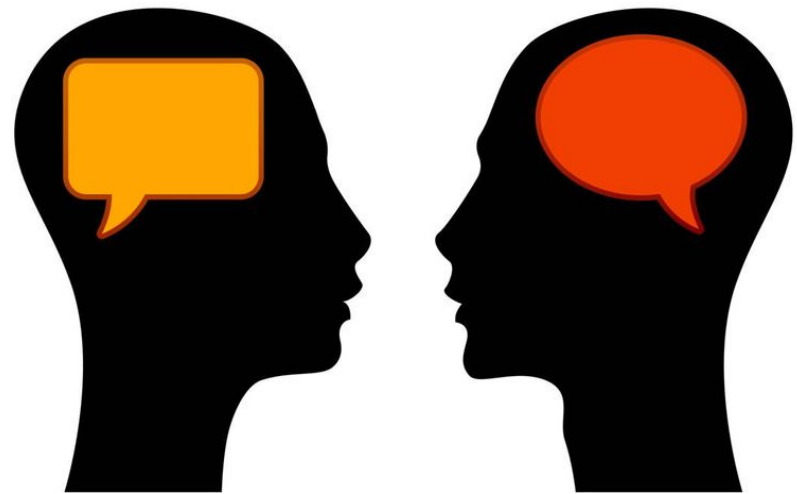
- Directly ask if you can count on the member's support for:
 - Health care reform implementation
 - Increased appropriations for HIV/AIDS programs
 - National HIV/AIDS Strategy
- **Wait and listen for a response**



Putting It All Together

The Introduction:

- *My name is Jonathon Smith.*
- *I am a lifelong resident of the district.*
- *I am 29 years old and have lived with HIV for five years. My whole family lives in the area. I live alone and work for a small company that does not offer health insurance.*



Putting It All Together

The Issue:

- *I am here to talk to you about the importance of implementing health care reform.*
- *My thanks to Congress for enacting health reform that will eventually allow me to obtain private insurance despite my pre-existing condition.*



Putting It All Together

The Personal Story:

- *Health reform will eventually allow me to obtain private insurance despite my pre-existing condition.*
- *Until the new benefits of the law are available, I must continue to rely on the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) for my HIV medications.*
- *I am employed and healthy because of the assistance I obtain from ADAP.*
- *Without ADAP, my medications would cost me \$2,500 per month, which I cannot afford. Without my medication, I would become sick, disabled, and unable to work. ADAP in my state is facing a budget crisis.*



Putting It All Together

The Concern:

- *I'm afraid I will be denied services or that others like me who need help staying healthy with HIV won't get the chance to rebuild their lives.*

The Consequences:

- *If ADAP is not fully-funded, tens of thousands of people like me will be denied life-saving medications. ADAP reduces expensive emergency room and hospital care and helps prevent new infections.*



Putting It All Together

The Solution:

- *Many important health reforms, including Medicaid expansion, will not occur until 2014.*
- *In the meantime, we need you to provide health care access for those who are uninsured or underinsured.*
- *Please support \$126 million in emergency funding for ADAP this year to ensure no one in the U.S. goes without needed HIV therapies.*
- *Congress should also pass the Early Treatment for HIV Act so states can extend Medicaid coverage immediately to low-income people with HIV before they become disabled.*



Putting It All Together

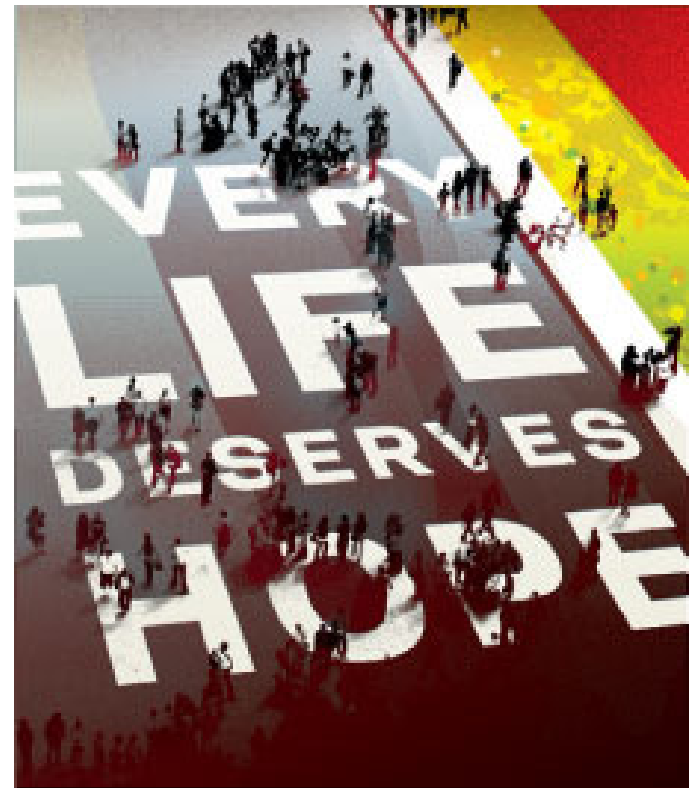
The Ask

- *Can I count on your support of a \$126 million supplemental appropriation for ADAP this year?*
- *Will you co-sponsor and vote for the Early Treatment for HIV Act?*



Other Tips

- If conducting meetings with other advocates, determine who will cover which issues.
 - Practice delivering them together.
- Arrive at your meeting early.
 - If you can't avoid being late, call to notify the member's office.
- Be polite and courteous.
- Take note of any questions or requests for additional information.



Other Tips

- Hand over the packet at end of meeting
- Be gracious, attentive and organized
- Stay on your issue – don't stray
- Say “I don't know” if you don't know the answer to a question
- Thank them for support (if appropriate) and time
- Follow up!



Follow Up!

- Thank the Congressperson or staffer for their time
- Tell them you will follow up with them soon
- Send a thank you card to reiterate your ask and show your appreciation
- Send them the additional information they requested and/or answers to their questions
- Keep track of their support or opposition to your asks and call or write to say thank you or to keep pushing them



File a Visit Report to Help Track our Progress

- After your visit, take 5 minutes to fill out an online visit report available here:
- This is to help us keep track of which Members of Congress have been reached and what messages they've received.



Write and Deliver Your Own Story

- Use testimony worksheet to organize your thoughts and prepare for tomorrow
- Role play meetings with congressional offices with folks next to you
- We'll reconvene as a group to see how it went!



Questions?

