

*your background on myself*

CONSUMERS IN ACTION

*- Nancy Cluz's advice  
on how to work  
on legislation*

INTRODUCTION

What's next -- SB 350 signed:

1. Work within the parameters of the law to make it work.
2. Challenges ahead -- cultivating relationships with physicians; working through MANA to get educational programs accredited and to have MANA provide malpractice insurance.
3. Work with Medical Board. Designate a liason and keep open lines of communication. Have representatives at all public meetings of the Division of Allied Health and, later, at the Division on Licensing. Know the proposals ahead of time and come with solid arguments backed up with written evidence. Bring doctos and certified nurse-midwives whenever possible. The Board is made up of doctors -- they relate best to doctors.
4. Opposing concerns are often just opinions and fears. You base your arguments on documented facts. Your job is to educate with facts, not to debate philosophies.
5. Stick to the issues raised. Don't expand the discussion and invite more regulation.
6. [I know this is already happening to some extent] Work, through MANA, with the Clinton task force. Send representatives to all public discussions as there health plan evolves.

Further legislation:

There's always further legislation to be done. Timing is important. Have to give current law time to work before proposing changes. Best to focus on implementation of current law.

Working in the Legislative Arena:

1. Give up any notion that you are ABSOLUTELY right and those who disagree with you must be ABSOLUTELY wrong.
2. Respect concerns of all interested parties and do what you can to alivate those concerns.
3. Act professionally -- be open-minded, solicitous of questions and concerns, never offer your opinion unless asked, back up everything you say with facts, preferrably written documentation.

4. Be a good listener -- listen for common concerns and weaknesses in the opposition.
5. Cultivate support among other organized interest groups.
5. Work out a strategy and see it through.

### NO RIGHT OR WRONG

Toughest test of character. It's ok to be idealistic and opinionated. Just resist acting that way with those who make or influence policy. Once you have won over key members, they will do the soap-boxing for you.

Be a Colombo -- be prepared, do your homework and let the opposition sink itself. In the end it doesn't matter what you "think", only what the members think.

### RESPECT CONCERNS/BE A GOOD LISTENER

1. Not wrong, only different experience.
2. Share each other's experience and solicit suggestions on how to alleviate concerns.
3. Don't argue! Waste of time. Only hurts your reputation.
4. Listen for arguments in support or opposition to the bill.

### BE PREPARED

1. GET YOUR DUCKS IN A ROW (ala poli sci classes)
2. Have responses to all concerns. Research ways to meet the needs of others without circumventing the intent of the bill.
3. Have organized written documentation supporting all your claims. The sources must be from recognized publications, institutions, expert testimony.

(example: The studies supporting the safety of midwifery came from well know medical journals or governmental institutions. There were birthing publications mixed in which was ok because they were accompanied by the big guns.)

### ASKING A LEGISLATOR TO CARRY A BILL

1. THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW  
Ask legislator to introduce bill

Make appointment/bring key people who can speak clearly and consisely without personal opinion.

2. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH CURRENT LAW  
Current statute  
Studies/statistics/newspaper articles  
Personal experiences  
Other written documentation
3. IS THIS A PROBLEM IN OTHER STATES?  
Statutes from other states  
Any other documentation
4. PROPOSED LEGISLATION  
Written proposal specifically adding to or changing a law.  
How does this fix the problem  
How is it in the PUBLIC interest (verses a special interest)
5. SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION  
Where will the ORGANIZED support and opposiiton come from?  
What will they say?  
Who will testify in committee?

#### LEGISLATOR'S DECISION

1. Yes

-- the bill is introduced and the member makes all the decisions after that.

-- some offices work differently -- identify key staff person and work according to their habits/style.

-- Be as helpful as possible -- your input will be more valuable.

-- Session is a mad house -- members and staff will avoid argumentative people. There's no time to waste. Your're either in or out. Make it EASY for them.

2. No

-- Seek advice of the member whether to go elsewhere. It may not be a good time for that bill. There are lots of variables. Consider different strategies that will cause a member to take a lead on your issue and be inclined in the future to carry a bill. Members, even those that turn you down may be helpful. Listen to em.

(Pool -- if this swimming pool is too big for them, don't insist they jump in now; suggest ways they can get their feet wet; maybe they will be ready to jump in next year -- don't burn your bridges.)

## CULTIVATE SUPPORT:

### 1. Network with other organizations:

- find out what issues you have in common and support them
- send letters of support to members on other issues -- become part of a coalition to be identified with mainstream groups
- educate them on your issues
- be professional/make them comfortable to work with you.

## WORKING WITH OPPOSITION

1. Have written documentation supporting your position.
2. Never give your opinion. Either ask or answer questions. Don't answer questions with an opinion unless asked. Always give facts you can back up.
3. Be honest. If you don't know, admit it. You can get back to people. Any dishonesty can destroy negotiations, the bill, and reflect badly on your entire organization.
4. In the end, you will get whatever is feasible. If you can't win with facts, you are probably not ready to pursue legislation.

(Example: Negotiations with the CMA this year. No two groups could be anymore different than the CMA and the midwives. But the midwives had very good representatives who were able to maintain their professionalism in the face of great frustration. We did not try to change anyone's mind. We simply explained what works and what doesn't work based on facts, not opinion. We drew from studies, statutes, regulations, and testimony from licensed practitioners.

We had to make some compromises. You have to be willing to make compromises if you expect to make progress. No controversial bill gets through the legislature without making compromises.

Focus on actual language not on philosophical differences --

(Example: Avoid debate over the fundamental issue. Focus on details. Get the opposition to accept the principal concept by engaging them in peripheral issues -- CAR DEALERS.)

I've learned from Senator Killea that really effective

legislators are those who listen to all points of view and try to be fair. It's give and take or it's nothing at all. I felt if we couldn't find common ground with the CMA in the Capitol, then how could we expect midwives and doctors in the field to rise above their fears about each other.

## CONCLUSION

To be consumers who get action from the legislature, you have to be organized, clear in your objectives, have support from other organizations, have articulate spokespersons with professional demeanors, have lots of facts and written documentation to back up your claims, and be flexible and welcome to the concerns of all interested parties.

It can be very stimulating, challenging, and fun. But you have to be willing to be disappointed. Big ideas often take time--years. Persistence pays off.

## QUESTIONS