

University of Massachusetts Medical School

Community Health Clerkship

Health Advocacy

GERIATRICS

Advocacy Organizations	
What are some Local organizations that do advocacy work?	Mass Home Care, Central Mass Agency on Aging, Elder Services
What are some State level organizations that do advocacy work?	Mass Home Care
What are some National level organizations that do advocacy work?	National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform, American Elder Advocates
What are some International organizations that do advocacy work?	
Advocacy Issue	
Looking at the State, National, and/or International level, at the websites or information from the organizations above, what is a major area of advocacy at this time? <i>Try to choose an advocacy issue that will in some way affect the local community.</i> Advocacy specifically refers to promoting legislation, policies or specific budgetary appropriations that positively affect a health issue. This may occur through decreasing barriers to accessing health services, providing an infrastructure conducive to effective health promotion programs, or directly increasing the resources and infrastructure of the public health system.	Advocating for the licensing of Certified Medical Technicians to administer oral medications. Medication Assistants are allowed in level 4 nursing homes, but not in skilled nursing or assisted living facilities.
What specific law, policy or appropriation is being advocated for?	The advocating is for the licensing of medication technicians to administer medications in nursing homes or assisted living.
Who is doing the advocating? (Which organizations?)	Mass Home Care, Elder Services
Who is being lobbied?	Massachusetts State Legislature
Whom will this issue affect?	The issue will effect elderly living in nursing and assisted living facilities where medical technicians are currently not allowed. The issue will increase compliance and effectiveness of medications in the nursing and assisted living facilities.
Were they or will they (in your opinion) be successful?	Other states have allowed Certified Medical Technicians to administer oral medications in the nursing and assisted living facilities. As a result, there is a good chance they will be successful.
Why or why not? What do they need to be more successful?	With the baby boomer populations getting older and as a result a greater percentage of the population needing these services, the advocacy has a very good chance of being successful. The greatest stumbling block at the moment is the Massachusetts Nursing Association who is opposing medical technicians. If the nursing coalition could be convinced that this would aid them and cut down on the amount of work they need to do, the advocacy would have a greater chance of being more successful.

What are the consequences if they are not successful?	The system will continue as is and there will be more of a burden on nurses and primary caregivers to monitor medications. As a result, medication adherence will decrease and cause a greater strain on the elderly population.
If they are not successful, what other strategies can be used to achieve the same goal?	If this is not successful, other strategies to increase medication adherence would be finding cheaper alternatives to pill dispensers and finding combination medications that would cut down on the number of pills elders would have to take.
How can physicians and/or nurses be involved in this advocacy issue?	Physicians and nurses can lobby the Massachusetts state legislature in order to certify medical technicians in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.