

# Successes and Challenges in Developing a Culture of Advocacy Among Patients and Staff of a Multicultural and Multiethnic Organization



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# Agenda Overview

- 1) About Asian Health Services
- 2) Why Advocacy at a Health Center?
- 3) What defines AHS' Culture of Advocacy?
- 4) AHS' Advocacy Vision & Goals
- 5) Capacity Building Among Staff
- 6) Capacity Building Among Patients
- 7) Successes and Challenges

# About Asian Health Services



- Health Education
- Insurance Counseling
- Medical Services
- Client Advocacy
- Serves 17,000 patients annually



# Why Advocacy at a Health Center?

- To ensure that local, state, and federal policies benefit the API communities it serves
- Empower our patients to voice their unique health needs to policymakers
- Building advocacy leadership among our staff who serve our patients

# The Question???



How do you embed a culture of advocacy based on community organizing principles within a health care organization?



# What defines AHS' culture of advocacy?



- Commitment to raising a \$1 Million Advocacy Endowment Fund
- Creation of an Advocacy Committee—committing resources and staff
- Establishment of Patient Leadership Councils (PLC)
- PLC participation and involvement as board members on AHS Board



# AHS' Advocacy Vision

- Build an advocacy infrastructure and leadership capacity internally & externally to:
  - Foster advocacy, leadership development, and research to educate policymakers
  - Enable our API community members to access health care and attain the highest possible level of health and well-being.
  - Working in coalition to promote the needs of the underserved

# AHS' Advocacy Goals

- Embed organizational mission and core values in all agency aspects
- Strengthen our capacity to provide advocacy leadership
- Build advocacy relationships
- Articulate a strong advocacy agenda





# Capacity Building Among Staff

- To assist with AHS' overall advocacy goals, the Advocacy Committee:

## #1 Held an Advocacy Kick-Off Retreat



# Capacity Building Among Staff



## #2 Established subcommittees:

- External policy
- Research
- Pipeline/Leadership
- Interdepartmental
- Compassionate Care and Cultural Competence
- AHS History and Advocacy Orientation

# Capacity Building Among Staff

## #3 Work with leadership to integrate advocacy throughout organizational practices

- Standing item during management and all-staff meetings
- Incorporation of advocacy interview questions during hiring process
- Implementation of staff orientation incorporating importance of advocacy



# Capacity Building Among Staff

#4 Hold educational sessions during lunchtime and all staff meetings



# Capacity Building Among Staff

#5 Providing opportunities for “unusual suspects” to participate in local advocacy events



# Capacity Building Among Patients

- AHS established Vietnamese, Korean, Cantonese, and Mandarin Patient Leadership Councils (PLCs)
  - Volunteer peer health advocates
  - Educate community members about key API health issues
  - Improve health care access within their communities
  - Provide direct input to AHS' leadership
  - Assist with mobilizing efforts



# Capacity Building Among Patients

## Immigrant Day in Sacramento



# Capacity Building Among Patients

## Proposition 86-Tobacco Tax Initiative





# Capacity Building Among Patients

**Local immigrant leadership exchange**



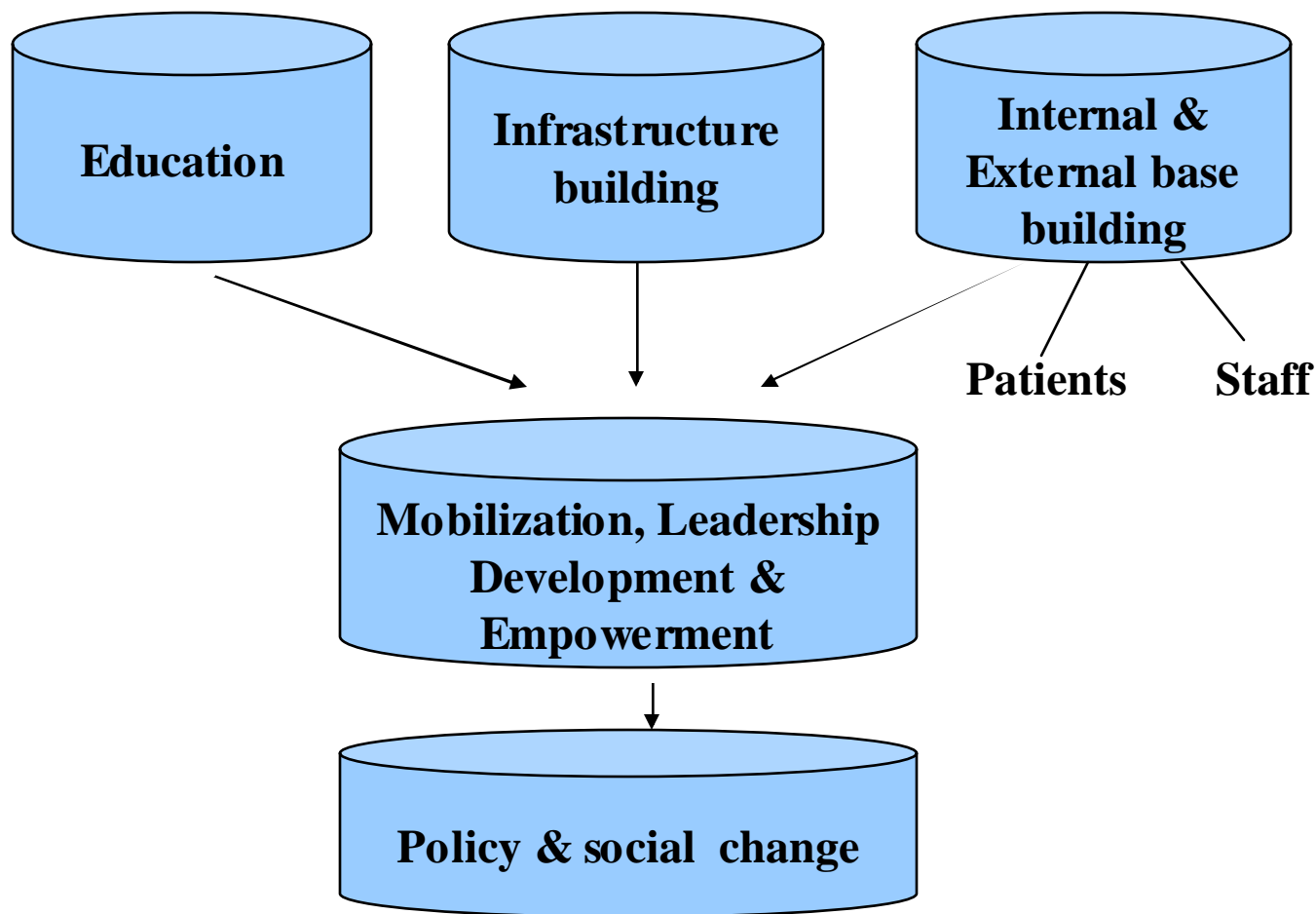
# Capacity Building Among Patients

## General Patient Meeting



# What's next?

Moving forward—  
Advocacy building blocks....





# Success and Challenges

## ■ Successes

- Capacity building
- Increased voice in advocacy (policymakers)
- Reconnected to mission
- Patient leadership development
- Pipeline

## ■ Challenges

- Capacity of staff
- Sustainability
- Time constraints
- Prioritization of need



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