

All Politics is Local

Strategy Session: Building Our Political Strength



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Strategy Planning

- **Discuss the importance of building long-lasting relationships with your state legislators.**
- **Make the link between your relationship locally with state legislators and action on Beacon Hill**
- **Strategize on how to get involved and build those relationships with your state lawmakers.**

Why we are here today

- **There is high turnover of the Legislature**

- More than 50% of the House of Representatives have served in office less than 5 years in office.
- ABH members must continually educate legislators about the services they provide

- **ABH Member leadership changes**

- ABH member leadership must work to build close relationships with their lawmakers . . . WHY?



Relationships with Our Legislators has brought us Successes

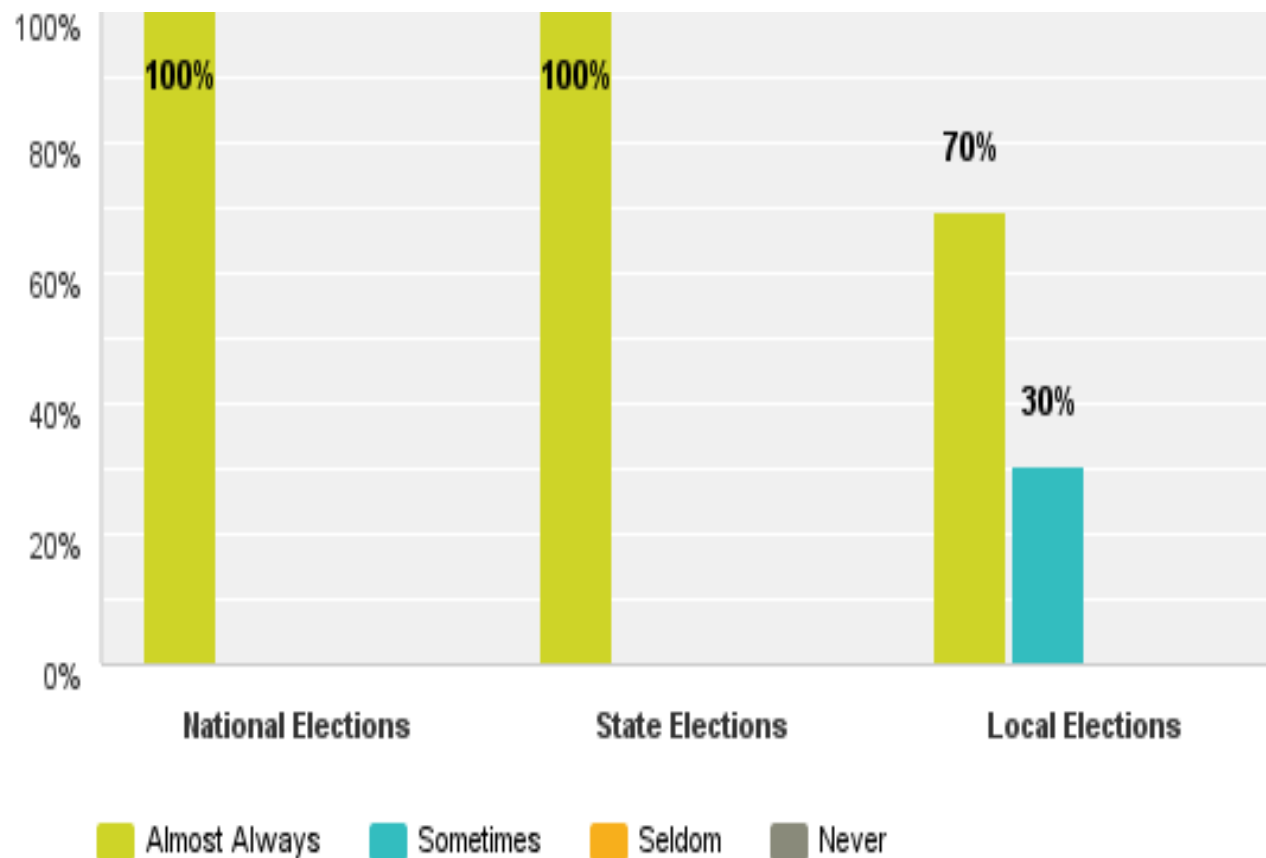
- \$20 billion in annual funding for health and human services
- Chapter 257 of the Acts of 2008 – Purchase of Service Reform
- Chapter 258 of the Acts of 2014 – Addiction treatment law
- Budget language establishing floor rates for MassHealth E & M codes



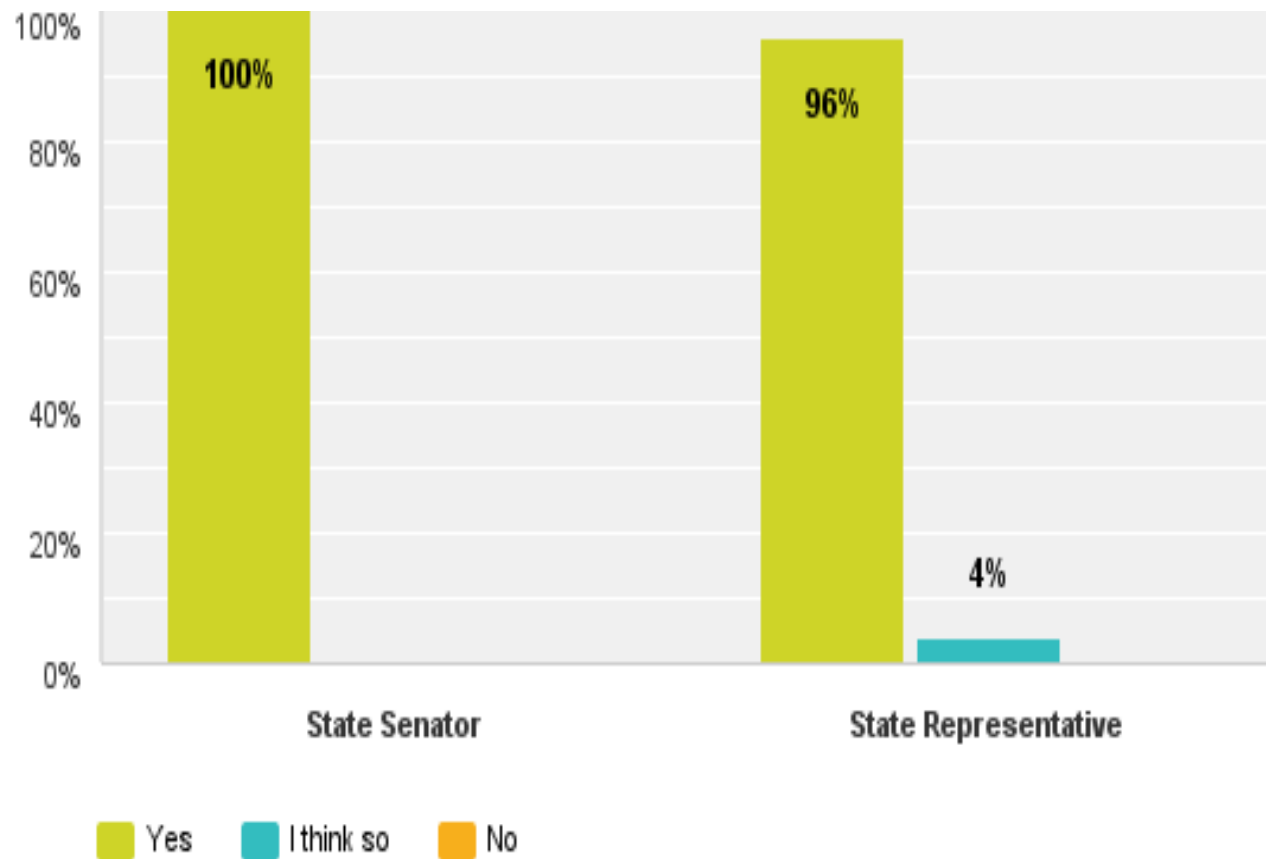
Video Segment of Elected Officials

Here's what
we heard
from you

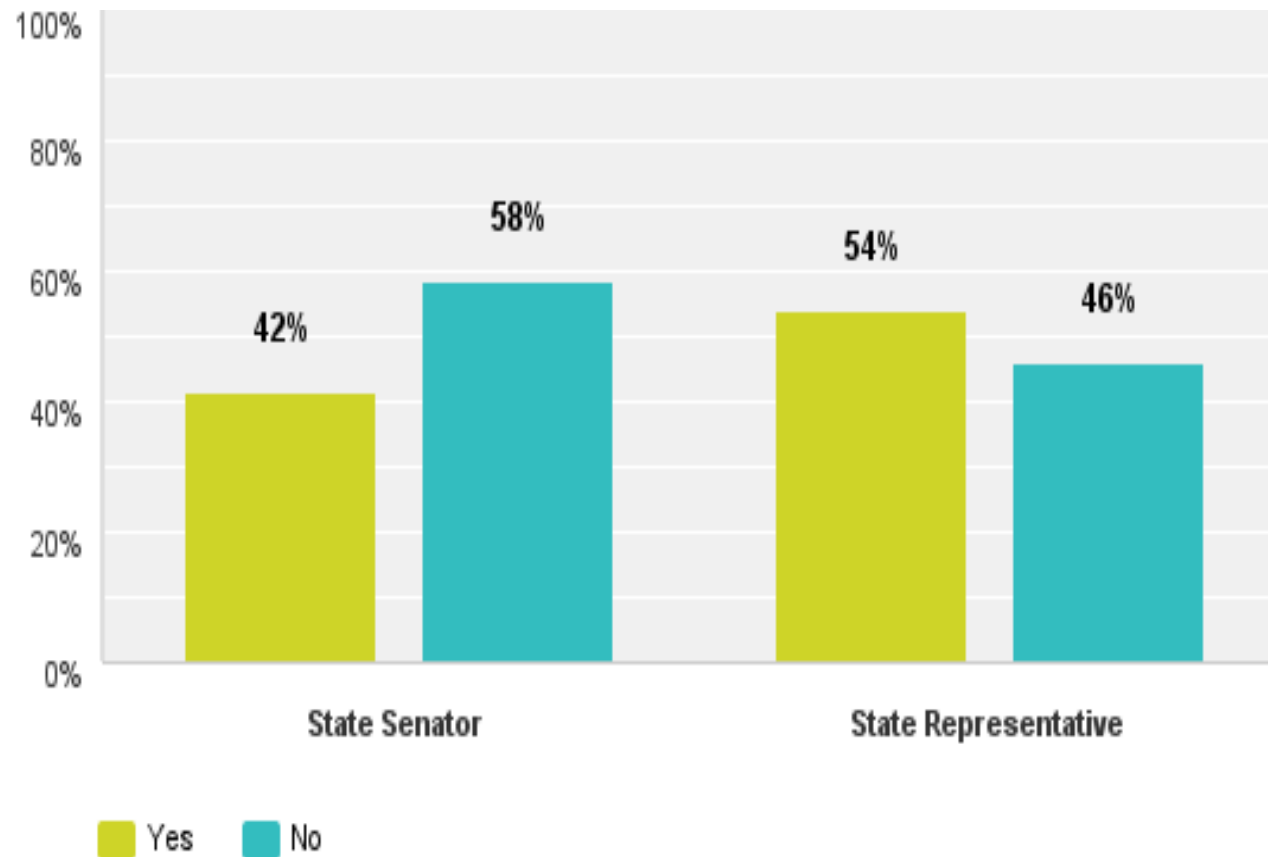
Q3: Do you vote on a regular basis?



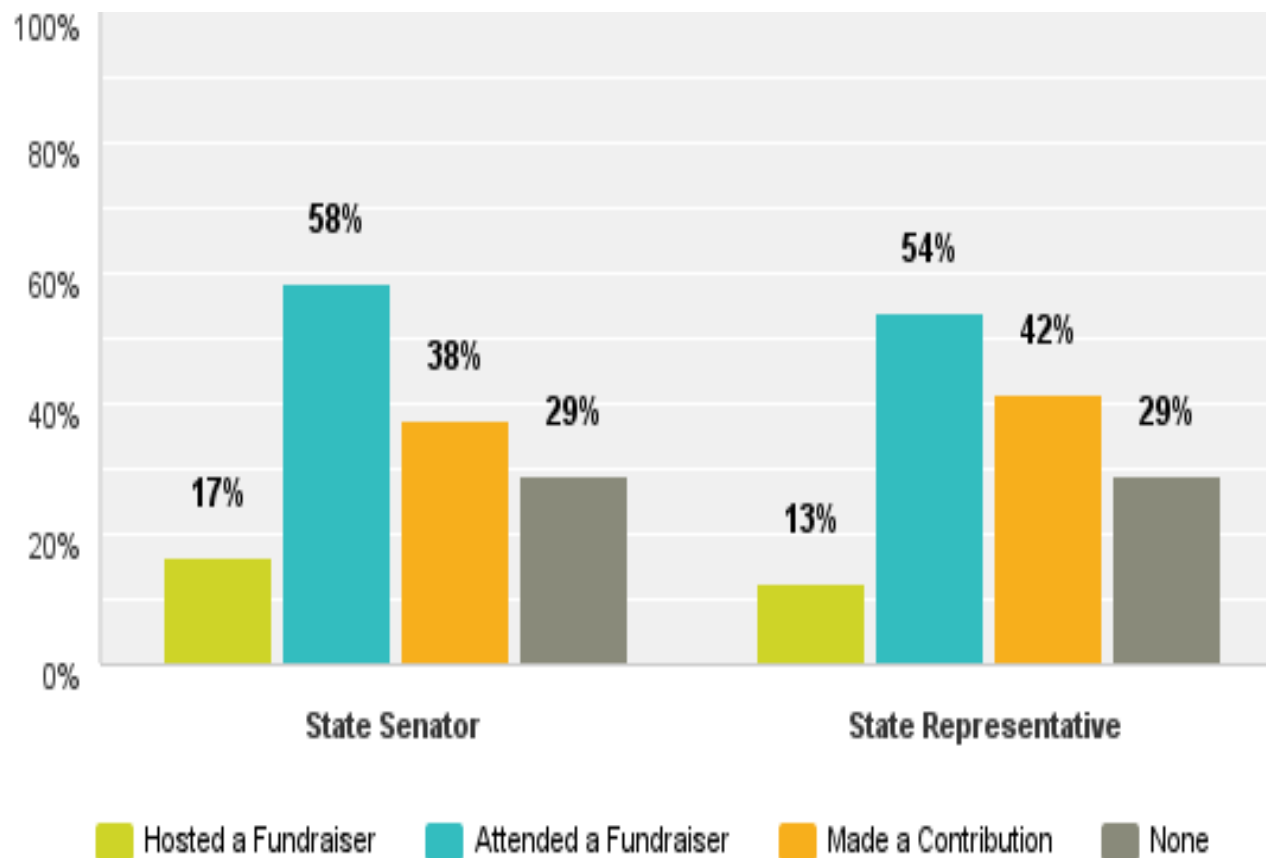
Q4: Do you know which State Legislators represent where you live and vote?



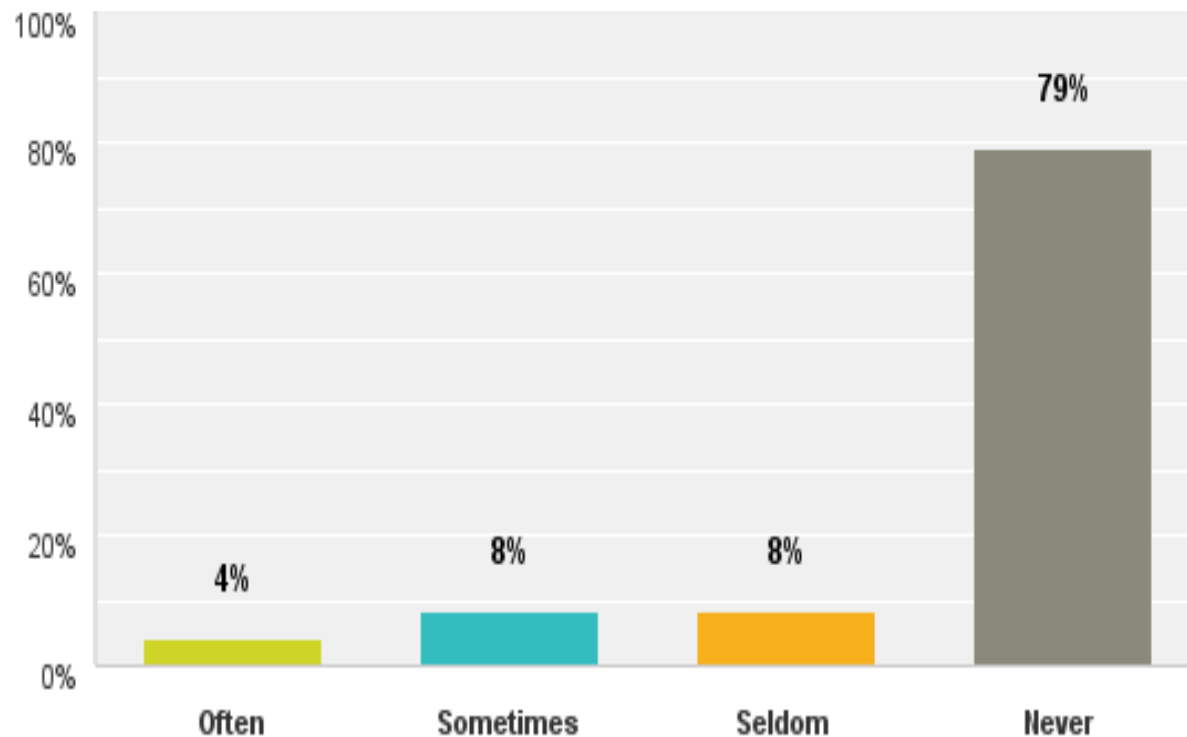
Q10: Do you have any of your State Legislators' cell phone numbers?



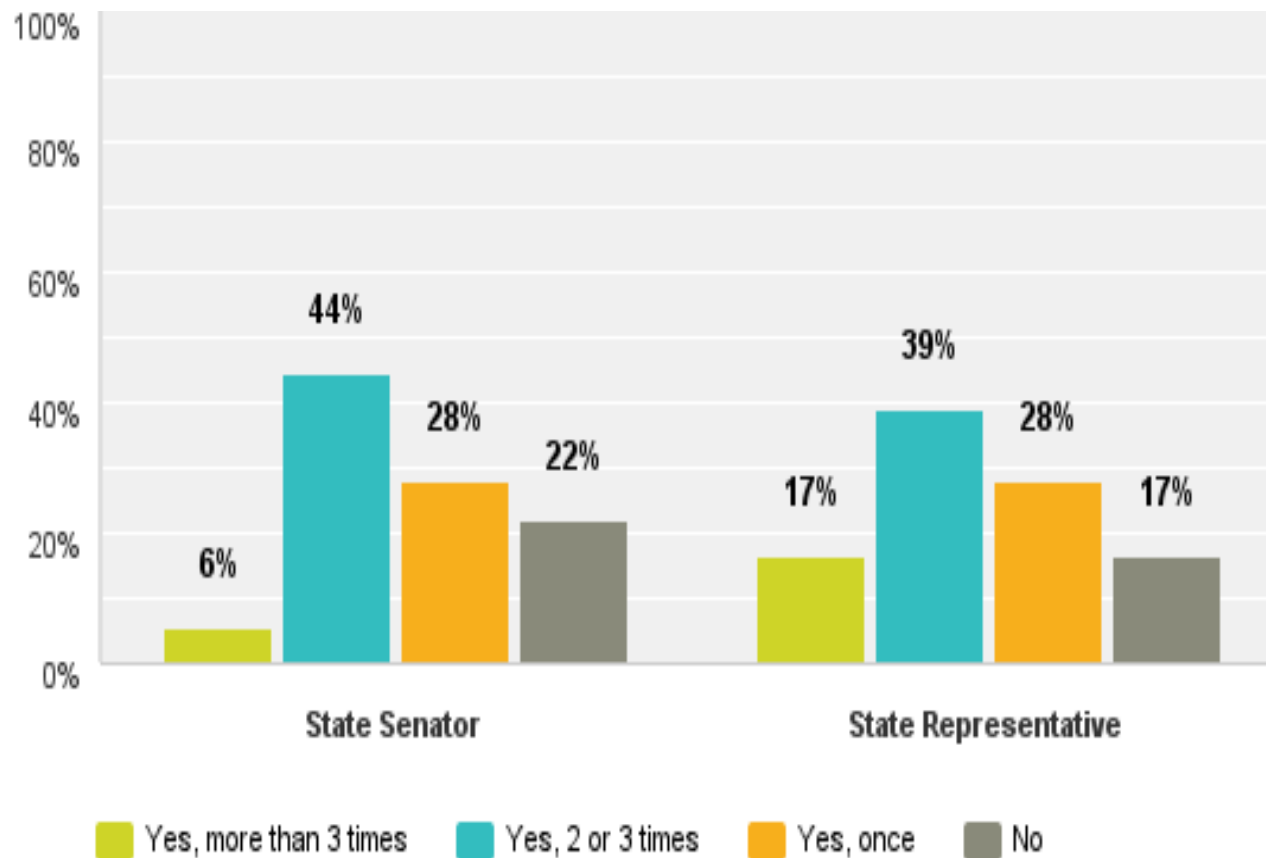
Q12: Have you been involved in fundraising for a State Senator's or State Representative's campaign in your organization's service area in the last 5 years? Check all that apply.



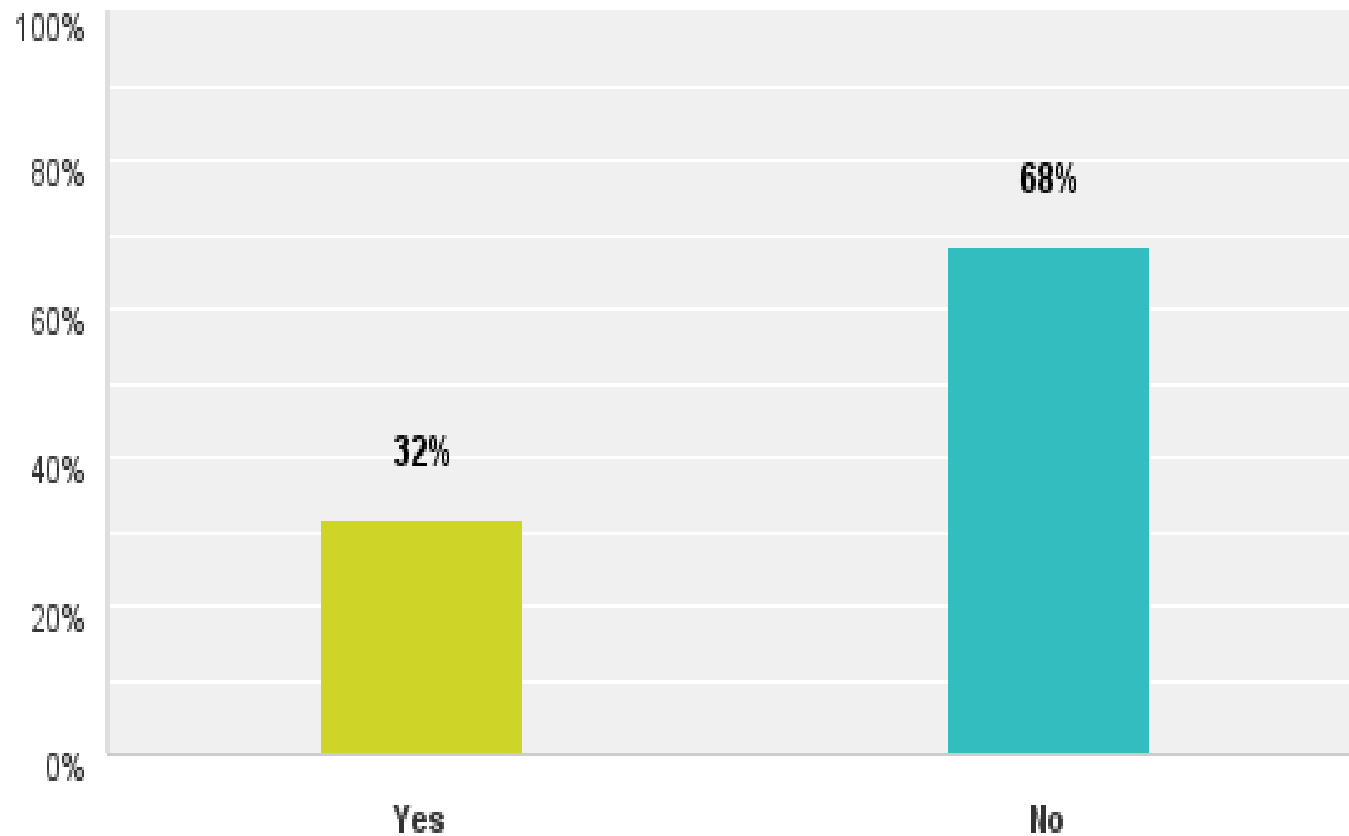
Q14: Have you campaigned for a State Senator or State Representative in your organization's service area in the last 5 years? (i.e. held a sign, worked the polls, helped at the campaign office, etc)



Q15: Have you had any State Senators or State Representatives visit one of your programs in the last two years?



Q19: Has your organization hosted a legislative breakfast in the past two years?



SOME BACKGROUND

The Process
The Budget
The Environment



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Your State Legislature

Massachusetts has a 2-year legislative session, running from January of the odd numbered year to December of the even numbered year (although formal sessions end earlier)

2017

2018

The image displays a grid of 24 monthly calendars for the years 2017 and 2018. Each month is represented by a small calendar grid with days of the week (Su, Mo, Tu, We, Th, Fr, Sa) and dates. The months are arranged in two columns: 2017 on the left and 2018 on the right. Below the 2017 calendars is a list of Federal Holidays for 2017, and below the 2018 calendars is a list of Federal Holidays for 2018. The holidays listed are: Jan 1 New Year's Day, Jan 2 New Year's Day (observed), Jan 16 Martin Luther King Day, Feb 20 Presidents' Day, May 29 Memorial Day, Jul 4 Independence Day, Sep 4 Labor Day, Oct 9 Columbus Day, Nov 10 Veterans Day (obs.), Nov 11 Veterans Day, Nov 23 Thanksgiving Day, Dec 25 Christmas Day, Jul 4 Independence Day, Sep 3 Labor Day, Oct 8 Columbus Day, Nov 11 Veterans Day, Nov 12 Veterans Day (obs.), Nov 22 Thanksgiving Day, and Dec 25 Christmas Day.

Your State Legislature

- 5,000 – 6,000 bills
- \$40 billion state budget
- 30+ Committees by subject matter

The Legislative Funnel

Members of the Legislature

Committees

Ways & Means Committee

Leadership Team

**Governor, Speaker &
Senate President**



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State Budget – The Environment

- Highly competitive for new funding
 - Shrinking piece of the pie
- New taxes/revenue is challenging
- There are a lot of great causes



The legislative environment

- **Countless number of issues** – interest groups pushing their agendas
- **Legislators are generalists** - We must educate members and their staff on issues
- **Legislators are good snapshots of their district**

The legislative environment

- **Legislators have multiple influences on their decision making process**
 - Speaker has a different set of influences than the freshman legislator
 - Political clout of each member
 - An interest group's political clout
- **Decisions impact YOU!** Virtually every issue that affects behavioral health providers is impacted by the decisions made by your elected officials.

What we need to build

3 TIERS of SUPPORT FROM YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS in YOUR SERVICE AREA

Informed – 200

Make sure every legislator has a baseline awareness of your issue— educate them. Easiest

Advocates - 50

Work to cultivate your area legislators to “Advocate” at the State House for your cause. Harder

Champions – 5-10

Try to make a legislator a “Champion” of your issue – that this becomes one of their major legislative priorities – they expend their capital for our issues.
Hardest!

Paths to becoming an Advocate/ Champion for our Issues

Personal connection

Personal/ family connection to the issue or impacted by the issue

The District

i.e. Cape – district ravaged by opioid epidemic – Rep. Randy Hunt becomes outspoken

Background/ prior career

Sen. Jen Flanagan trained as a mental health counselor

Someone educated them

Sen. Mike Rodrigues – mental health and substance disorder advocates reached out, built a relationship and made him an advocate

Influencing Legislators

Where Legislators Get Information From to Make a Decision



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The Legislative Funnel

**Voters, Constituency Groups,
Concerned Citizens, the Media, etc.
(i.e. YOU)**



Members of the Legislature

Committees

Ways & Means Committee

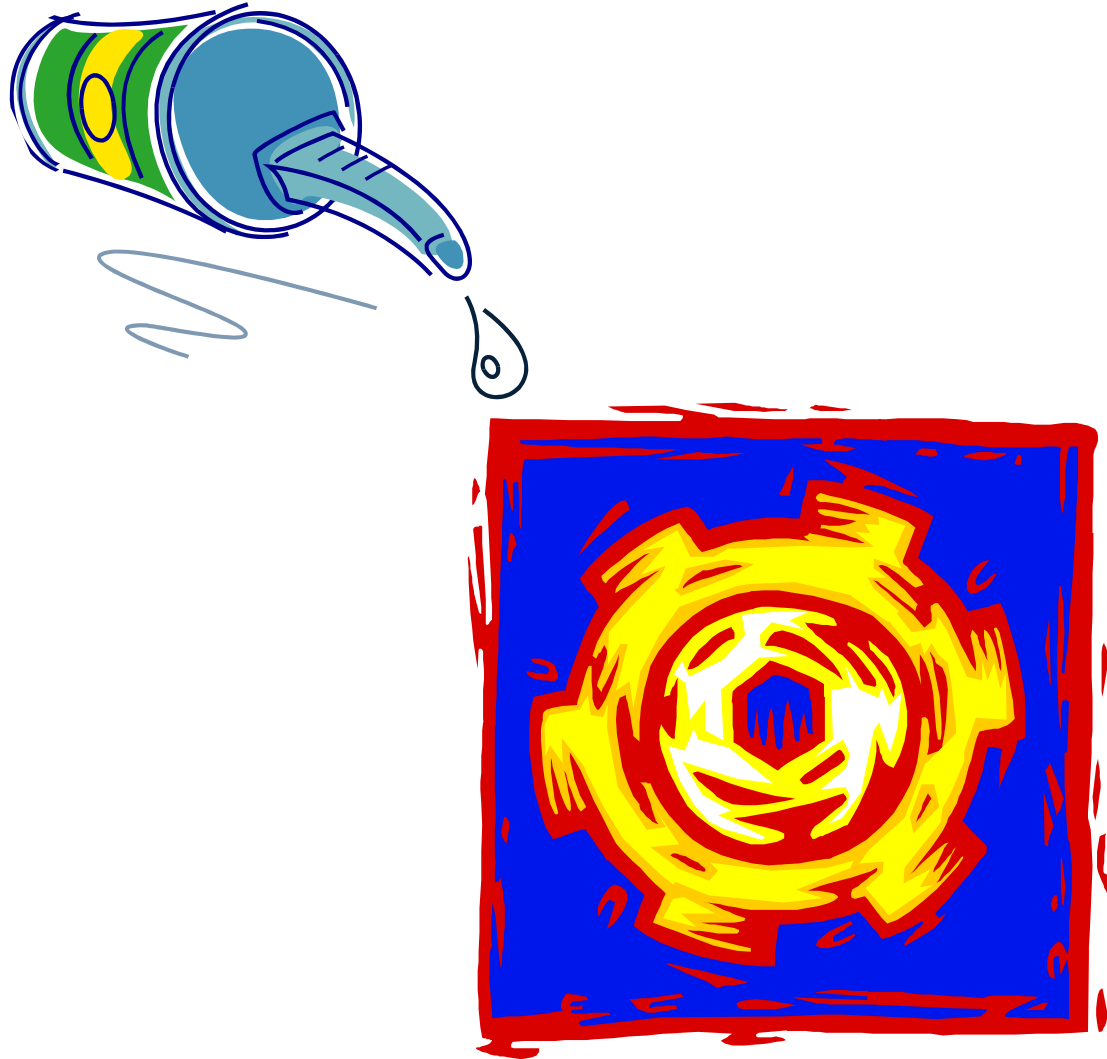
Leadership Team

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... The Squeaky Wheel Gets the Grease



Grassroots Lobbying



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Rules of Grassroots Lobbying

1. ABC

- Accurate
- Brief
- Concise

2. The more personal, the more impact

3. The squeaky wheel gets the grease





The more personal the contact the more impact it has:

- Postcard
- Email
- Write
- **Phone**
- **Visit**

Using your 46,000 employees for Grassroots lobbying



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A Checklist to Building those Relationships



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**You don't wait until the house has
burnt down to call the fire
department . . .**



Building a Relationship

**Our elected officials are every day people
– outreach, get to know them, invite
them to see your program**

**Election season – great time to educate
elected officials and candidates about
what you do**



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It may be on the cover of The
Boston Globe . . .

The Boston Globe

MassHealth reform must make behavioral health a priority

TREATING PEOPLE who suffer from [depression](#), [bipolar disorder](#), addiction, and other behavioral health conditions is frequently a losing proposition for the Massachusetts nonprofits that offer therapy, counseling, and related services. They, and their employees, are not compensated nearly enough for helping people to become stable and productive, and — critically — to stay out of the hospital. That's because the majority of community-based clinics serve large populations of patients insured by MassHealth, the state insurance program for low-income and disabled residents. MassHealth reimburses providers at rates substantially lower than what private insurers pay out — less than what it costs behavioral health centers to provide care.

. . . But it needs to be real back
home

A Checklist

- Know your own state legislators where you live and vote
- Know the legislators in your service areas
- Build a personal relationship with them



A Checklist

- Become a resource
 - Legislators will have constituents who need mental health and addiction treatment
 - Be the point person for your legislators when mental health and substance use issues come before them
- Engage your Board in advocacy
- Use technology – VoterVoice, Twitter, Facebook
- Register all your employees to vote

A Checklist

- Every legislator has district office hours or district office – visit them there/make appointment
 - Less pressure on time than in the State House
- Host a legislative breakfast on an annual basis
- It's a two-way street –
 - Attend their local political fundraiser
 - Help them politically



Fundraisers are part of the process



A Checklist

- Get involved in helping on a campaign
 - Hold a sign
 - Make phone calls
 - 'Dear Friend' cards
 - Canvass
 - Lawn sign
 - Bumper sticker

- Attend candidate forums and ASK a question!

- Earned Media
 - Write an Op-ed and Letter to the Editor



Have Legislators Visit Your Program



THE most effective and influential thing you can do.

- Have a small group of program leaders give a tour and describe the program and how it makes a difference.
- Have different people describe different aspects of the program.
- After the tour, have a brief meeting with the legislators, emphasizing the key messaging about the importance of what you do and who you serve.
- Talk about what more good could be done with better resources.



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Our challenge to you

- **Have every state legislator in your service area visit one of your programs** – Now to Spring 2017, the next state budget cycle
- **Host an annual legislative breakfast** – Spring 2017
- **Build personal relationships with the state legislators in your area**
- **Introduce yourself to newly elected legislators**

Our challenge to you

- **ABH will recognize at our annual meeting all member organizations that host at least 5 legislative site visits before May 2017**
- **ABH will honor at our annual meeting the member organization that hosts the most site visits before May 2017 as our “All politics is local” champion**

It's a marathon



Not a sprint



