

University of Massachusetts Medical School

Community Health Clerkship  
**Health Advocacy**

**HEALTH CARE ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

<b>Advocacy Organizations</b>	
What are some Local organizations that do advocacy work?	Center for Living and Working
What are some State level organizations that do advocacy work?	NSCIA – Healthsouth affiliate and MA Rehab Commission
What are some National level organizations that do advocacy work?	Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation and NSCIA
What are some International organizations that do advocacy work?	Spinal Research
<b>Advocacy Issue</b>	
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.	Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation has put together the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Act which aims to promote more research to be conducted for cures, treatments, and rehabilitation and to improve quality of life and services for people with disabilities. Essentially this bill is looking to establish a framework and guidelines to advance science at the federal level for research development for people with mobility impairments. They are projecting that two million people would be able to benefit from this bill if passed.
What specific law, policy or appropriation is being advocated for?	Advocating for an increase in research funds and services to improve quality of life.
Who is doing the advocating? (Which organizations?)	Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, NSCIA, and support from the following Senators: Tom Harkin (D-IA), Arlen Specter (R-PA), Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Lindsay Graham (R-SC), Hillary Clinton (D-NY), and John McCain (R-AZ); and Representatives Michael Bilirakis (R-FL), Sherrod Brown (D-PA), Mary Bono (R-CA), and Jim Langevin (D-RI).
Who is being lobbied?	The public, other organizations at all levels, White House, and Congress
Whom will this issue affect?	This bill could benefit the population with mobility impairments.
Were they or will they (in your opinion) be successful?	Not likely to be successful.
Why or why not? What do they need to be more successful?	This bill has been first introduced in 2003 at the 108 <sup>th</sup> Congress. At the 109 <sup>th</sup> Congress, the House passed the Bill. However, since this time there has not been any movement with the Bill. Even though this Bill does not mention any involvement of stem cell research, many conservative law makers still have some issues with passing this Bill

	<p>because of the stance for stem cell research that Christopher Reeve's has been associated with.</p> <p>There needs to be more support from law makers and from the general public to push this through.</p>
What are the consequences if they are not successful?	The advances in research and services available for people with mobility impairments will not change and the disparity in accessibility to healthcare will remain the same. If the disparity in access does not decrease, it is likely that these people will not receive the services needed to prevent secondary conditions which can ultimately lead to death if left untreated without services.
If they are not successful, what other strategies can be used to achieve the same goal?	Continue to work on establishing more relationships and partnerships for advocating and promoting awareness in the public to generate more support.
How can physicians and/or nurses be involved in this advocacy issue?	Physician and Nurses can help with the promotion of the awareness of these issues by speaking with other colleagues and lobbying with your state to push for state and federal support.