CHANGING LAWS TO CHANGE CULTURE
Legislative Advocacy for Breastfeeding Coalitions
Michigan Breastfeeding Network

SHANNON POLK

• Shannon Polk is the executive director of the Michigan Breastfeeding Network. She was the founding co-chair of Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy-Michigan Chapter and a Connecting Leaders Fellow with the Association of Black Foundation Executives. She also created the Passing the Leadership Baton workshop which became a statewide program of the Council of Michigan Foundations. Shannon has served on the Council of Foundations' Next Gen Task Force and the National Philanthropy Committee of The Links, Inc. She most recently served as an associate program officer at the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.
MAC GRAMBAUER

• Since joining McAlpine Consulting in 2008, Mac has taken a lead role in MCFG marketing initiatives, policy advocacy campaign work, and strategic planning facilitation. As part of her advocacy work, Mac helps to plan and lead education and lobbying activities, including legislative meetings, web-based advocacy initiatives, and design and implementation of advocacy trainings. Blending her work and passion for supporting youth-based organizations with her love of music, Mac also serves on the Junior Board of Foundations of Music, a former MCFG Strategic Planning client. Mac is a year-round biker and supporter of Chicago’s Active Transportation Alliance, a frantic knitter, and an avid fan of superheroes—both real and imagined.

OBJECTIVES

• Explain the history of our legislative advocacy process
• Discuss our challenges and successes in implementation
• Share resources and strategies for effective advocacy campaigns

Michigan Breastfeeding Network
Changing Laws to Change Culture
OUR WORK

• **Advocacy**
  MIBFN works to improve the legislative, workplace and cultural breastfeeding climate in Michigan through advocacy activities and events.

• **Coalition Building**
  MIBFN organizes, supports and activates local and community breastfeeding coalitions in their efforts to encourage, educate and support breastfeeding mothers in Michigan.

• **Education**
  MIBFN provides resources for health care providers, employers and breastfeeding mothers to aid in fostering breastfeeding success in Michigan.

GOALS

• To advocate on behalf of breastfeeding mothers, babies and their families.

• To educate society on the importance of human milk and breastfeeding for infant and maternal health.

• To provide opportunities for networking, collaboration, and resource sharing among breastfeeding advocates in Michigan.
WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

“Advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcomes that directly affect people’s lives – including public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems.” --The Advocacy Institute

- Trying to get the government to make decisions that makes peoples’ lives better
- Educating people about how the government can do that
- Telling our stories & making our voices heard
- Supporting each other

Our Money.  
Our Government.  
Our Say.

EXAMPLES OF ADVOCACY

- **General policy advocacy**
  - Organizing & educating people through research reports, trainings, & conferences; building relationships with legislators, etc.
  - 501(c)3 nonprofits can do as much of this as they want

- **Lobbying** (to get support for a specific bill)
  - Direct vs. Grassroots
  - Regulated, but NOT prohibited for 501(c)3 nonprofits

- **Electioneering**
  - National Voter Registration Day—September 23, 2014
  - Voter education (GOTV) = ok for 501(c)3
  - Influencing outcome of election (i.e. endorsing a candidate) = NOT ALLOWED for 501(c)3
WHAT IS LOBBYING?

• **Direct Lobbying** – Communication (phone call, letter, email, or meeting) *with a legislator* that expresses an opinion *about an existing or proposed piece of legislation*
  - If you are meeting with a legislator to educate him/her, but are NOT expressing a view about legislation, that visit is NOT lobbying

• **Grassroots Lobbying** – Communication (ads, letters, emails, etc) *with the general public* that expresses a view about a specific piece of legislation, AND asks them to take action

RULES TO REMEMBER

• Nonprofits can do as much advocacy work as they want, but there are restrictions on LOBBYING

• Generally, a nonprofit organization can spend 20% of overall expenditures on lobbying activities

• 20% is a lot of money, so don’t let the restrictions prevent your organization from lobbying

• Educate yourself about lobbying rules

• Visit [www.allianceforjustice.org](http://www.allianceforjustice.org) for information about rules
MAJOR WIN
Passed the Breastfeeding Antidiscrimination Act
June 24, 2014

“AN ACT TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES, POLICIES, AND CUSTOMS IN THE EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT TO BREASTFEED; TO PROVIDE FOR ENFORCEMENT OF THE RIGHT TO BREASTFEED; AND TO PROVIDE REMEDIES.”

Michigan Breastfeeding Anti-Discrimination Act
KEY COMPONENTS OF THE LAW

• A mom can breastfeed in a place of public accommodation. For example, a restaurant, school, courthouse, library, bus, train, and/or retail store

• A breastfeeding mom cannot be denied service because she is breastfeeding. Also, the business cannot ask moms not to breastfeed or ask a mom to leave the premises because she is breastfeeding.

• If someone violates this law, the aggrieved mom can bring a claim in civil court for damages of $200.00

TIMELINE

• Began the work in November 2013
• Created an advocacy committee in December 2013
• Held an Advocacy Day in May 2014
• Received Republican and Democratic Support
• Signed into law by Republican Governor in June 2014

Bill was passed in less than 40 days after the Advocacy Day
PROCESS

Made advocacy a priority in our strategic plan
Assessed the landscape by reviewing state and national breastfeeding laws
Dialogued with other maternal and child health organizations to determine the historic perspective and current legislative climate

"Plan your work...

- Included a workshop on advocacy at the Michigan Breastfeeding Conference
- Drafted an agenda
- Recruited for the committee
- Outlined the advocacy possibilities in Michigan
- Created the charge:
  - The charge of the Michigan Breastfeeding Network (MIBFN) Advocacy Committee is to lead the Network’s advocacy work to promote the MIBFN advocacy agenda. The Advocacy Committee is responsible for determining the network’s specific strategies, as well as tracking and responding to policy work that holds implication for the MIBFN agenda items.

"...then work your plan"
ADVOCACY

• Webinar in January for members of advocacy committee
• Consistent contact via email and phone
• Advocacy Day May 2014
• Attended legislative committee hearings to offer additional support
• Continued information in our monthly newsletter and advocacy alerts
• Continued media presence around the bill

ADVOCACY DAY

• 50 people attended
• Over 100 legislators
• Education of participants included:
  • Overview of state and national legislation
  • Understanding of Michigan’s maternal health laws
  • Asked bill sponsors to come and speak about the bill and other related topics
• Excellent media coverage of the event
ADVOCACY DAY FOLLOW UP

• Follow-up with participants and additional instructions
• Continued media presence
• Continued information and advocacy alerts from our newsletter
• Attending legislative hearings

#WINNING

• And then the bill became a law
WHAT’S NEXT

• Still paying attention to what’s happening
• Looking at ways to partner with the safe sleep community
• Encouraging more hospitals to become baby-friendly

LEADERSHIP

The Michigan Breastfeeding Network is governed by a dedicated board of ten healthcare and nonprofit professionals.

MIBFN Board of Directors:
Mary Dubensky
Nancy Heyns
Barb Jammer
Lisa King
Karen Koss
Julie Lothamer
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Shannon Polk