



**ADVOCACY**  
DEA NATIONAL FAMILY SUMMIT ON FENTANYL  
KEVIN MEARA | CHAIRMAN – CITY OF ANGELS NJ

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Advocacy Session:

- ▶ The Session will cover the importance of engaging with Congress to raise awareness, enact legislation, and effect change.

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Objectives:

- ▶ About City of Angels.
- ▶ Advocacy Defined
- ▶ Simple Steps To Advocacy
- ▶ COA Today
- ▶ Q & A

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About City of Angels NJ:

- ▶ City of Angels NJ was created in 2008 in response to the tragic overdose death of our son KC.
- ▶ We formed as a non-profit 501 (c)(3) in 2009.
- ▶ Our Mission then was to "Help People Get Help".
- ▶ Before we created COA, there was none.



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## About City of Angels NJ:

- ▶ We never considered that much of what we were about to do would actually be called advocacy, as we just wanted to help people get help.
- ▶ Very quickly we came to realize that the opioid epidemic was growing exponentially and we needed support from other parents, medical professionals, law enforcement, people in recovery, our legislators and the community in general.



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## Advocacy Defined:

- ▶ The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines advocacy in this way... The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal:
- ▶ At City of Angels we learned that Advocacy means getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and help you stand up for your rights. Someone who helps you in this way is called your advocate and COA certainly needed more advocates!

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## Simple Steps To Advocacy:

- ▶ Meeting with your representatives (local, state and federal) can be one of the most effective means of securing their commitment to protect the issues that are important to you.
- ▶ Public officials need votes to remain in office, it is in their interest to meet you and to try and accommodate your political needs whenever possible.

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## Simple Steps To Advocacy:

### Clear And Simple Message

- Needs To Resonate With The Audience
- Easily Communicated And Understood
- The "Change" Needs To Be Clear And Achievable
- Don't Make A "Mess" Out Of Your Message

### Passion And Credibility

- Have Passion
- Do Your Research And Know Your Facts
- Have Evidence To Demonstrate The Difference The Change Will Make
- Passion Without Evidence Isn't Effective And Evidence Alone Is Insufficient

### Hear From People

- Build Your Base Of Support
- Hear From People Who Are Affected By Your Issue
- Representatives Who Have Been Impacted Personally Are More Likely To Listen

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## Simple Steps To Advocacy:

### Focus On Issues

- Identify Your Issue
- Focus On Your Issue Rather Than An Organizational Brand
- Advocacy Should Concentrate On The Results

### Work In A Coalition

- Working With Similar Groups Strengthens Your Message.
- A Broad Coalition Means Representatives Are Likely To Listen
- Include The Media In Your Coalition

### Know The Process

- Learn The Legislative Process Of Your Target Representatives
- Plan Your Approach To Each Representative And Key Staff
- Introduce Yourself As Written Materials Alone Cannot Make Your Case

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## City Of Angels Today:



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City Of Angels Today:

- ▶ In 2008, COA volunteers were going to Hospital EDs and assisting drug overdose victims to get treatment. Today, you call them peer recovery specialists.
- ▶ In 2009, the State of NJ referred to COA as a community recovery center
- ▶ In 2012, COA began CCAR Recovery Coach Academy training classes for volunteers. COA has been training longer and trained more recovery coaches than any NJ agency. In 2016 COA accredited the first Recovery Coach Professionals in NJ.
- ▶ In 2008 COA partnered with local police to assist kids with substance-use problems and in 2012 officially called for PD standard operating procedures for drug and alcohol arrests. It was not until 2015 that the Police Chief of Gloucester, MA was nationally recognized for his ANGEL program.
- ▶ COA has partnered with the NJ Narcotics Enforcement Officers Association to train law enforcement throughout the state.
- ▶ In May 2014, COA met with the Massachusetts Dept of Health to discuss their groundbreaking work with Narcan and worked locally until November 2014 when Narcan was authorized for Mercer County first responders.
- ▶ In 2017, COA brought ODMAP, an overdose reporting system, to NJ and now it is in every NJ county and nearly every state.

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City Of Angels Today:

## ONDCP



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## WHITE HOUSE



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City Of Angels Today:

Notable Advocacy

- ▶ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act \$1 billion
- ▶ Narcan Emergency Responders
- ▶ NJ Good Samaritan



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City Of Angels Today:

Newest Initiative



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City Of Angels Today:



## Trenton Thunder gives away Narcan on Addiction Awareness Night

By: News 12 Staff | Aug 14, 2022, 3:51pm | Updated on: Aug 14, 2022



The New Jersey Department of Human Services and Trenton Thunder collaborated on Saturday night to provide a unique give away to fans – the overdose antidote naloxone, known by its brand



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# Advocacy

## Resources:

- ▶ The Guardian: Effective Advocacy 101...Jan 12, 2016
- ▶ HFNV.org 6 Steps To Grass Roots Advocacy
- ▶ Muster.com –Muster Blog 5 Advocacy Examples To Inspire Action
- ▶ American Humanist.org –Lobbying Tips
- ▶ ACLU.org -Tips On Meeting With Your Elected Officials
- ▶ FCNL.org -How To Lobby Congress Virtually: A Step By Step Guide
- ▶ The Citizens Guide To Lobbying Congress –Donald E Kieffer pub 1997

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## Q & A:

- ▶ Questions & Answers?

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