Legislative Trends and Challenges for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists North Carolina’s Advocacy Efforts

What In the world happened?
National Economy
- Banks/Mortgage Companies Failed Causing Panic
- Joblessness
  - 12 Million Unemployed
- Reduced spending
- Balanced budget required

State Economy
- Joblessness
- Decrease in NC industry, manufacturing and agriculture (particularly tobacco)
- State tax plan from the 1950s based upon a manufacturing and agricultural economy. We are now a service-oriented economy.
- Reduced payroll taxes, sales taxes, gasoline taxes, etc.
- Requirement to ‘balance the budget’ without borrowing.

How NCSHLA responded: Analysis of the Obstacles
- Accessibility to licensed SLPs/Auds
- Disbelief, lack of understanding
- Staggered awareness among licensed clinical staff
- “Healthcare is immune”
- Misunderstanding that ‘this only affects people who bill Medicaid’
- Lack of awareness among related professionals, community leaders and elected legislators of ‘what we do’

Action Plan
- Mobilize SLPs / Auds
- Provide information, education and strategic actions necessary
- Encourage responsiveness and distribution of critical info via ASHA and NCSHLA.
- Engage PR professional to write and distribute Press Release to all media outlets
- Engage Attorney to research viability of program elimination under Federal law
- Rally in Raleigh and Town Hall Meetings
- THOUSANDS of phone calls, visits, meetings and emails!

Rally In Raleigh, June 15, 2009
SLPs from every work setting represented the largest group in attendance at the Together NC Rally held outside the legislative building.
What was ‘on the line’?
Who/What was really in jeopardy?

Everyday Advocacy, Advocacy Everyday!

What can you do in your community to educate, inform and create understanding of and respect for your profession and the services you provide?

Larger Audiences
- State Advocacy
  - Get to know your Legislators!
  - Public Service Announcements
  - Chamber of Commerce Groups & Mayors
  - Community Healthcare Groups
- National Advocacy
  - Get to know your State Representatives and Senators!
  - Follow the ASHA grassroots advocacy actions online

EVERY Month Should Be....Better Speech and Hearing Month!
- COMMIT: Devote one hour each month to advocacy (over and above your everyday moments)
  - Send postcards
  - Call the local talk radio or TV station
  - Send a personal letter

EVERYTHING and EVERYONE
- in the profession, in our communities, in NC
- Private Practitioners
- University Programs
- Healthcare Settings
- Clients
- Communities
- State of NC and JOBS in all settings

Everyday Opportunities – take them!
- INTERACTIONS WITH:
  - Physicians and physician office staff
  - School personnel
  - Hospital and SNF administrators
  - Families, parents, caregivers
  - Physical Therapists & Occupational Therapists
  - Social Workers, DSS, Nurses
  - Daycare directors and staff
  - Early Intervention and Preschool evaluation/services

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  - Get to know your Legislators!
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