

Voices from the Field

*Safety-Net Health
Clinics and Policy
Advocacy*

What do we mean by 'advocacy'?

- *Advocare: "to call to aid"*
 - Rally around a cause
 - Engage stakeholders
 - Promote social change
 - Address root causes
 - ≠ Just lobbying, or just Topeka

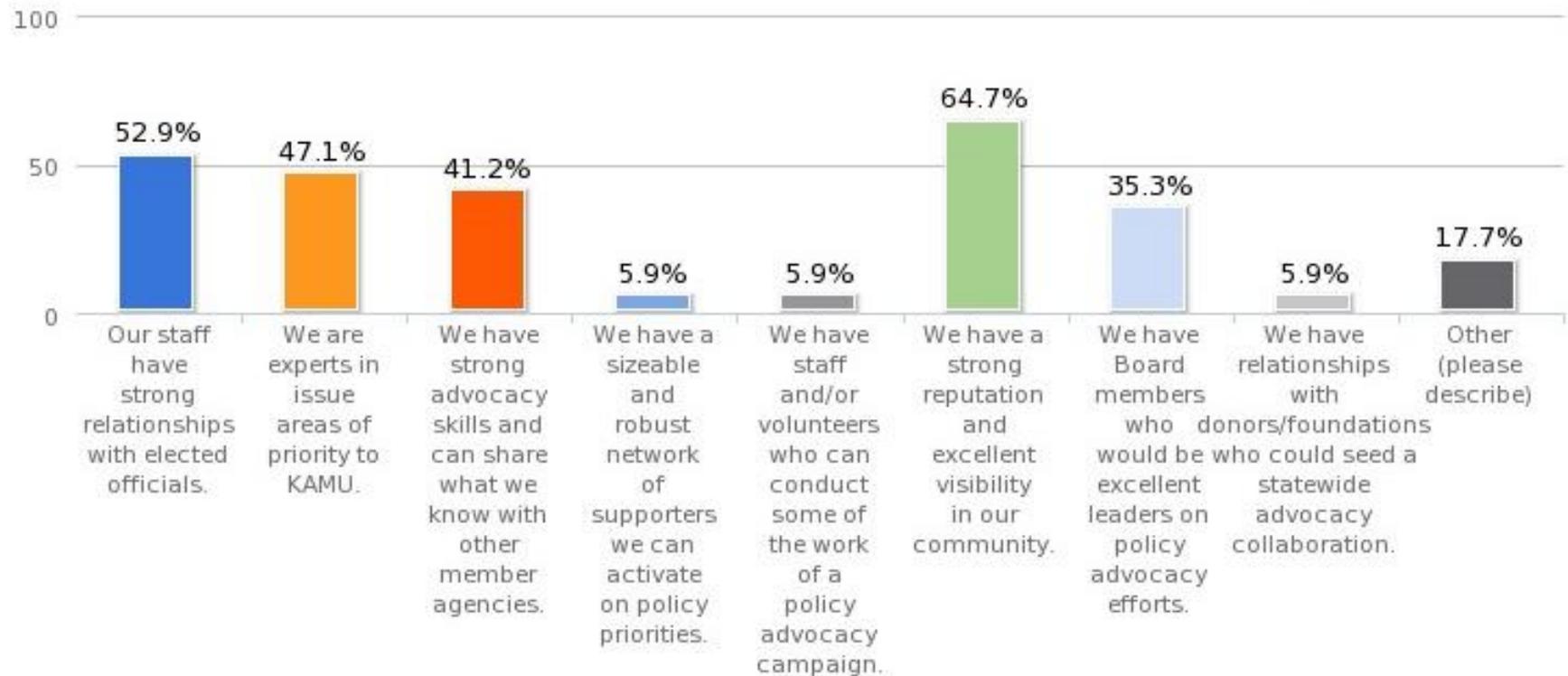
Why Advocacy? Why Now?

- Safety-net clinics' essential role in the health care system is evolving. Clinics—and the patients they serve—need supportive public policies now more than ever, in this changing landscape.
- Medicaid expansion and protection of funding for safety-net clinics are the two most important issues for clinics' advocacy priorities.
- Clinics are almost evenly split on the greatest benefit of increased advocacy: raising the profile of clinics' work and winning tangible health care policy victories.

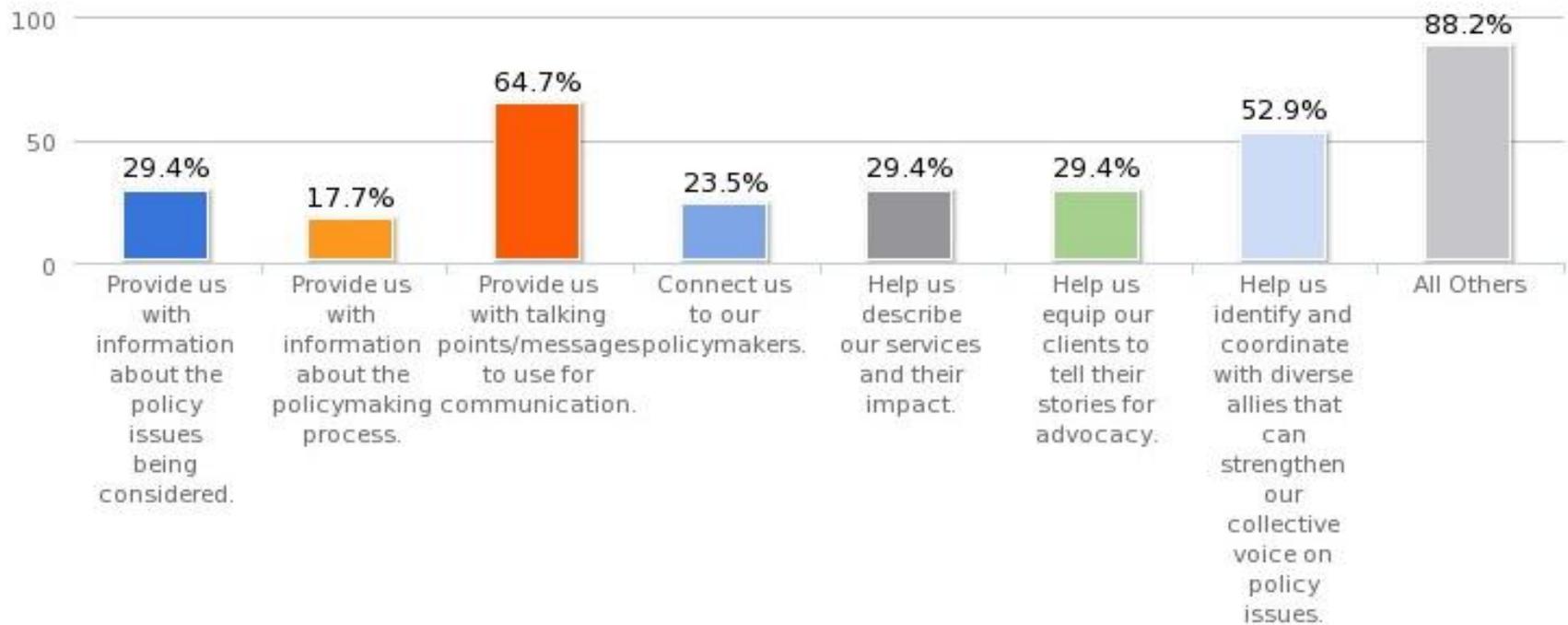
Clinics and KAMU's Advocacy

- KAMU as conduit of relationships, information, and will, among clinics and policymakers
- More than 60% of respondent clinics report getting good policy information from KAMU
- Almost 60% of respondent clinics depend on KAMU to conduct media advocacy on their behalf.
- Clinics perceive that KAMU's most valuable contributions are providing information about policy developments and equipping clinics with messages.
- Clinics most want policymakers to understand:
 - Safety-net clinics provide quality health care
 - Safety-net clinics are the most cost-effective health care delivery system in Kansas

Clinics Bring Many Capacities to Advocacy



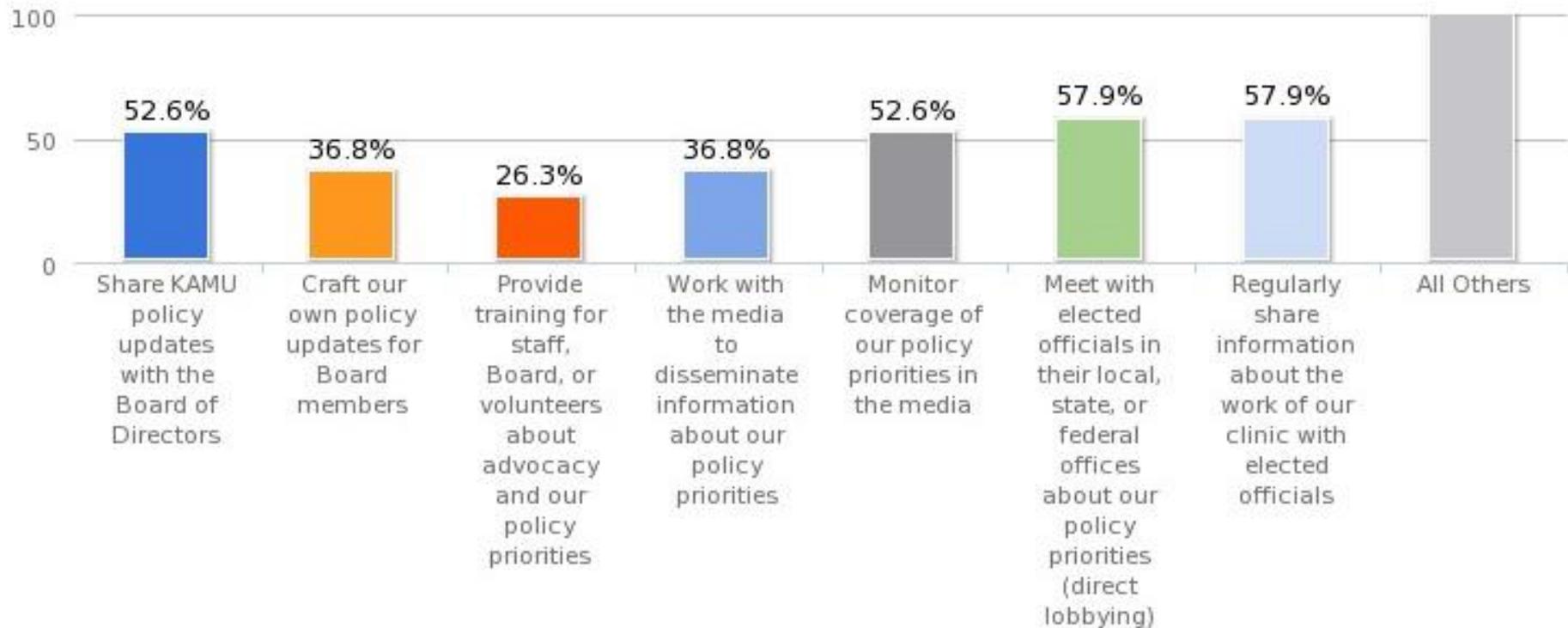
What clinics want from KAMU



State of the Field Today

- Some clinics very engaged in advocacy, but some look to KAMU to lead these efforts and others rely on coalitions.
 - Deep, then, but how to broaden?
- Clinics share their work with policymakers and express their positions on issues directly.
- Clinics are less engaged in building advocacy capacity through training or development of their own policy resources.
- Only a few clinics are actively deploying a range of media strategies to tell the stories of their work and its impact.

Current Advocacy Activities



Clinics and Policy Leadership

- Clinics are not afraid of advocacy; the overwhelmingly greatest barrier to more engagement is just staff resources.
- Few clinics have strong Board engagement in advocacy, and some experience some Board resistance to advocacy.
- Very few clinics have advocacy objectives within their strategic plans.
- Only two clinics report a well-functioning structure where Board, staff, and volunteers take on some responsibility for supporting advocacy work.
 - But more than 40% of respondents report that developing a clinic-specific advocacy agenda is part of their plans.

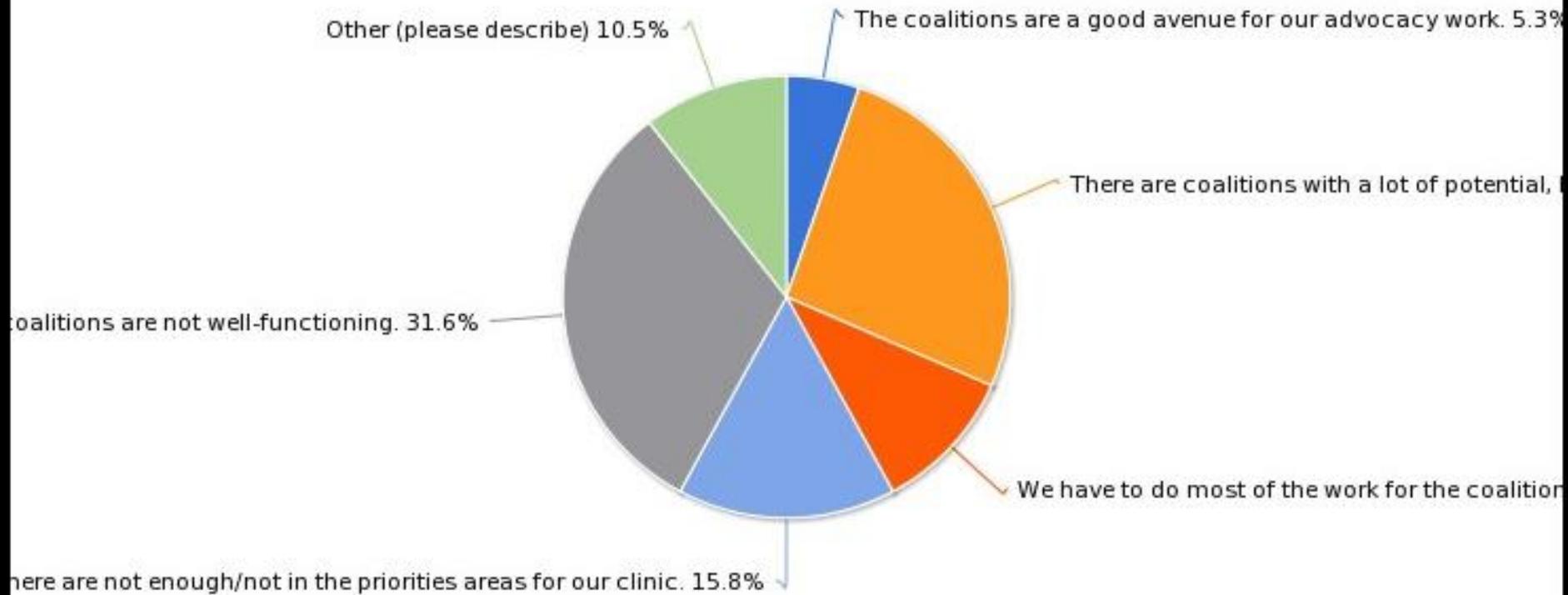
Latent Advocacy Capacity

- More than 60% of clinics have some regular communication potential with their supporters, which could be activated for advocacy.
- Many clinics have strong or emerging relationships with elected officials, who could become safety-net clinic champions.
- Some clinics are proximate to coalitions that, with development, could be more potent advocacy forces.
- Clinics report that they get relatively little help from KAMU in activating clinic patients and supporters as safety-net health care advocates.
 - More than 50% have good access to retrievable information about these constituencies.

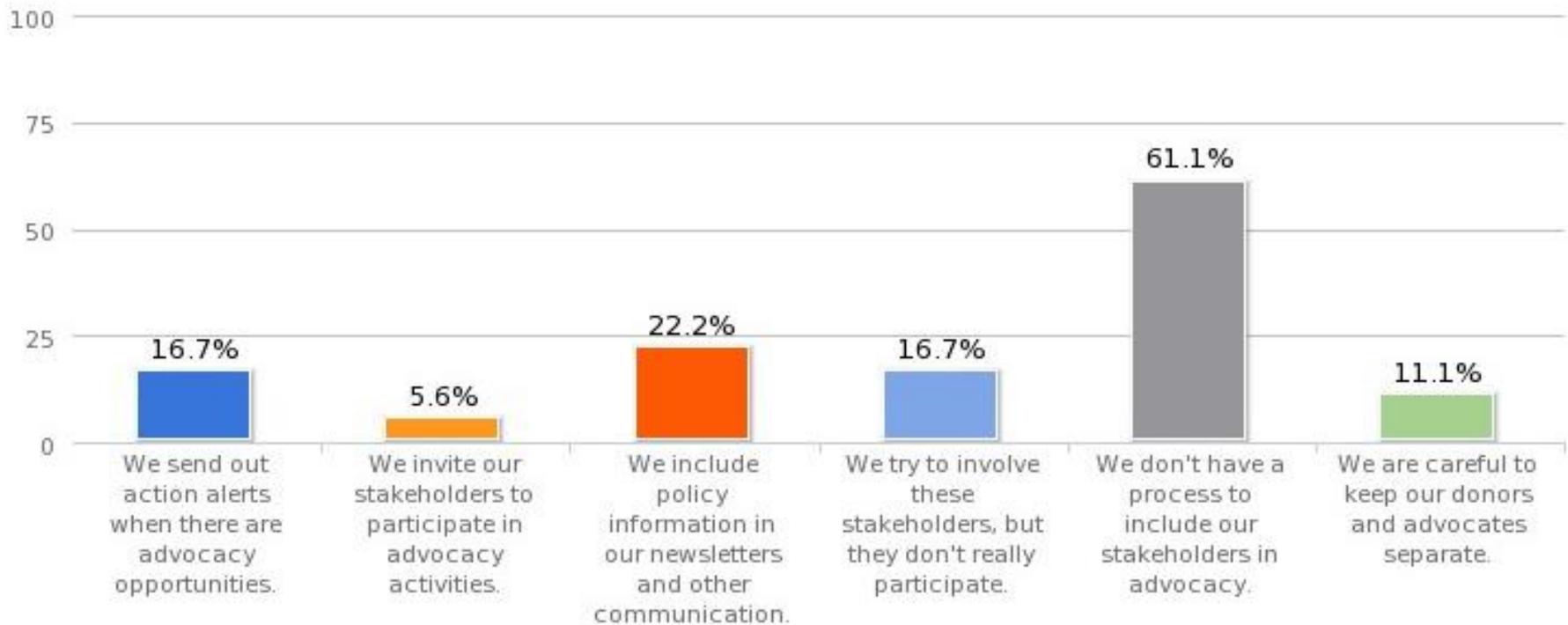
Relationships with Electeds



The Coalition Context



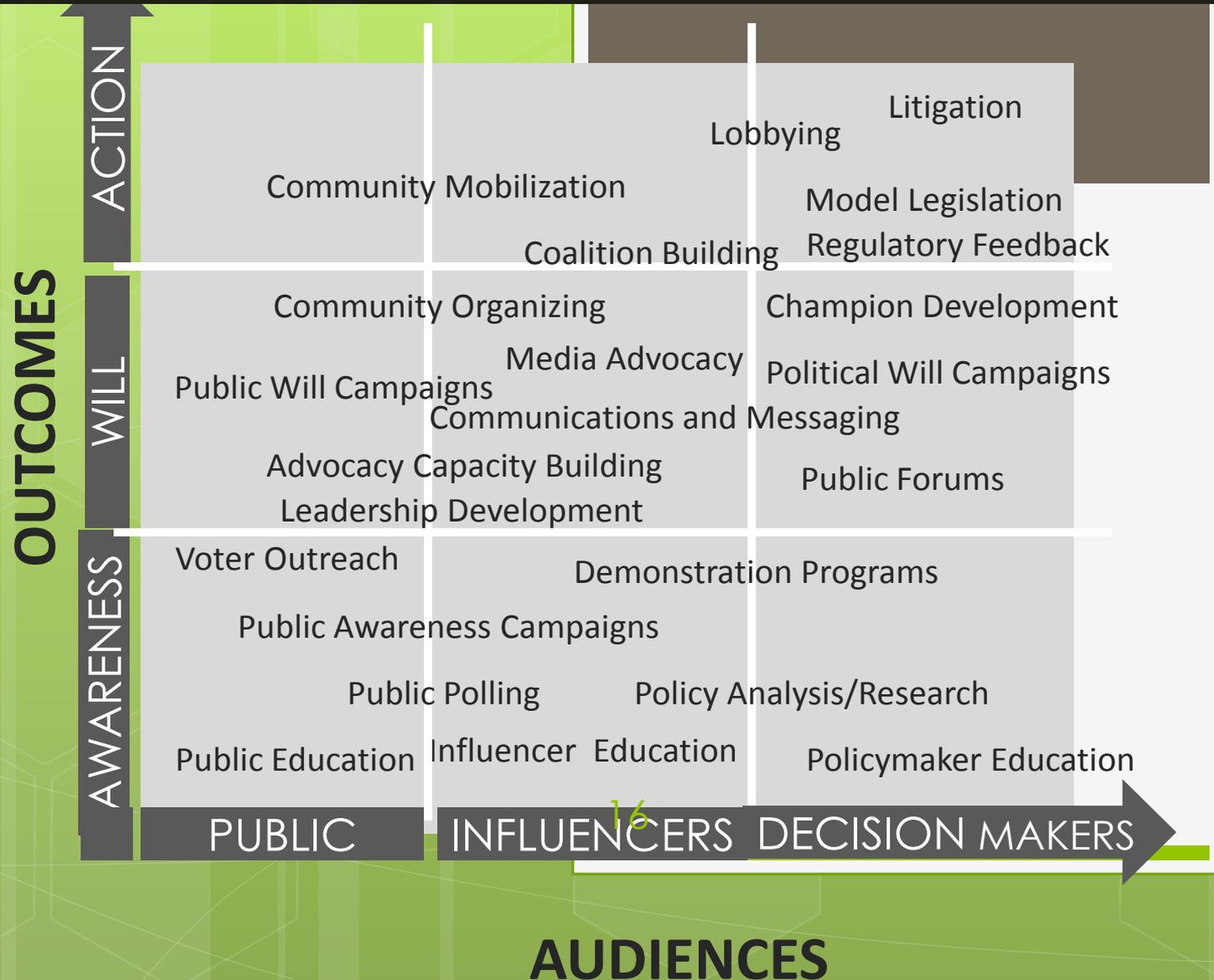
Using Your Whole Team



Your Place in a Strong Field

- What strategies do you already employ? How can you weave KAMU's advocacy priorities—and your clinic's policy needs—into these activities?
- Where are you connected with organizations employing these strategies? How can you build your relationships with them, to advance your priorities?
- Where do you look to KAMU for leadership, and where do you need additional support to complement your efforts?

Many Strategies for Advocacy Effect



Ideas to Get Started—Clients

- Voter Registration
- Story banking
- ‘Virtual lobby day’
- Postcard campaign
- Policymaker tours/forums

Ideas to Get Started—Direct-Service Staff

- Case-to-Cause sessions
- Voter Registration
- Story banking (why work at a clinic?)
- Message development and delivery

Ideas to Get Started— Volunteers

- Letters to the editor
- ‘Virtual lobby day’
- Advocacy evaluation (media tracking, for example)
- Quantifying ROI of services

Ideas to Get Started—Donors

- Advocacy as leveraging financial contribution (increasing ROI)
- Root cause information in special events
- Letters to the editor
- Relationship matrix mapping

Telling Your Story

- Why stories?
 - Help people connect to your journey and imagine their own
 - Invite others and inspire engagement
 - Reduce defensiveness
 - Complement data
- Good stories are:
 - Focused
 - Positively charged
 - Crafted and framed
 - Practiced!

Interim Indicators of Success

- Increasing engagement (quantity and intensity and reach)
- Changing conversation/frame
- Improved media coverage (quantity and quality)
- Building advocacy capacity
- Increasing visibility
- Building political will
- Stronger coalitions

Supporting KAMU

- Intelligence about policymaker positions (especially champion development)
- Insights about policy effects in the field (analysis)
- Grassroots pressure
- Stories of impact and need
- Evidence of outcomes
- Reputation and political will among local influentials

Support *from* KAMU

- Legislative updates
- Introductions to legislators
- Development of messages and materials
- Strategy timing and deployment
- Best practices and model programs

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