



EVIDENCE-INFORMED HEALTH POLICY

USING EBP TO TRANSFORM POLICY IN NURSING AND HEALTHCARE

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TIPS FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED TESTIMONY

Using evidence-based practice (EBP) to transform clinical practice is the emerging norm in healthcare settings. Nurses and other healthcare providers are becoming ever more skilled in the use of EBP to improve quality and safety in patient care. But to transform health policy, using evidence is less straightforward; the process is complicated by the ever-changing political environment. As a result, policy is said to be “informed” by evidence rather than “based” on the evidence. Often, the best we can hope for is to synthesize the evidence in a way that can be useful for informing and influencing policymakers and other stakeholders, and for leveraging dialogue.

One way to influence lawmakers is to provide testimony during a public hearing. Giving testimony is an opportunity to educate lawmakers and other stakeholders, both proponents and opponents, about the impact that proposed legislation may have. Testimony should be short, deliver your message clearly, and embed a message based on the best possible evidence. Here are some tips for preparing and giving testimony:

- Do your homework. Anticipate questions that might be asked and practice answering them.
- In your written and oral testimony, use lay terminology. Do not use jargon.
- Make sure you have based your testimony on a body of the best possible evidence. The evidence should be relevant to the issue and should consider both examples from other states or around the globe and local data, which is particularly important for persuading lawmakers and for practical policy implementation.
- In your written testimony, cite the evidence used. Use a simple citation system; numbers are suggested. Include an appendix with a reference list and access information.
- Bring enough copies of your written testimony for the entire committee or policy body and provide them to the committee clerk or appropriate administrator.
- Rehearse your oral testimony.
- Arrive early and sign in as required.
- Greet the committee or policy body by its full and correct name.
- Identify yourself and the organization you represent.
- Identify the bill or regulation about which you are testifying by its name and number.
- State your position as for or against the proposed bill or regulation.
- Begin by providing an overview of your recommendations. Then explain them, point by point.
- In your point-by-point explanation, be clear about which recommendations have been specifically gleaned from evidence.
- Restate your position at the end of the testimony.
- Thank the committee or policy body for the opportunity to speak and offer to respond to any questions. If questions are asked to which you do not know the answer, indicate you will get the answer to the chair of the committee as soon as possible, and keep your word.



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