



## Sharing Across the States: Strategies for Story Banking

---

Families USA • September 2011

**O**ne great way to help people relate on a deeper level to health care policy issues is to share the health care stories of others with them. For far too long, opponents of health reform have tried to misinform the public about health programs and the Affordable Care Act. Their goal is to drastically cut funding for Medicaid and Medicare and to thwart the implementation of the health care law. The consumer story is one of the most powerful tools that health advocates can use to cut through these falsehoods, improve rapid response in the media, and strengthen public education efforts.

Experts at the Herndon Alliance and the Goodman Center urge advocates to use consumer stories to help broad audiences understand and relate to complex issues. A compelling story can give life to proposed budget cuts or emphasize the importance of new consumer protections in ways that cannot be communicated by health policy experts and data alone. And consumer stories are often poignant and therefore more memorable.

As important and powerful as sharing consumer stories can be, it is also time consuming and challenging work. For advocates who already manage full schedules with numerous responsibilities, story banking can seem like a daunting task. In an effort to assist advocacy groups that have limited time and resources, we asked experienced state-based advocates to share their best practices for story banking—from building the infrastructure in their organization and finding consumers to share their stories, to publicizing the stories, and much more. (For brief biographies of these advocates, see page 11.)

## Build an Effective Infrastructure

The first step to building an effective story bank is to develop an infrastructure that allows your organization to seamlessly collect stories, work with consumers, and coordinate story distribution. Based on our interviews, creating a system that is consistent with organizational strengths and overall goals might be the most challenging aspect of this work.

### ■ Devote Staff Resources

To establish and manage an effective story bank, it's best to designate one primary coordinator, involve everyone in collection of stories, and hire new staff. While this approach is the most successful, for capacity and funding reasons, advocates also acknowledged it is impractical for many groups to implement it. That said, here are some options to consider as your organization thinks through how best to expand this important work.

#### ■ Designate a coordinator

Advocates highlighted the importance of having one person coordinate collection efforts and circulation of stories for media and other related purposes. Not all organizations we spoke with have a coordinator or have the capacity to designate a coordinator, but Virginia Organizing found it invaluable to have their communications director, Julie Blust, devote a portion of her time to managing their story bank. Julie is able to streamline the database, ensure that other staff members pitch in, and quickly follow up with story leads. Her expertise as communications director also puts her in a unique position to proactively place stories in media and monitor what types of stories would be most helpful in publicizing their message.

#### ■ Get everyone involved

Campaign for Better Health Care (CBHC) in Illinois has mastered the art of team work. All staff members contribute to story collection. In particular, they all pitch in on their helpline. By sharing this responsibility, policy analysts and organizers alike increase story banking capacity and cultivate a work environment where stories are an organizational priority. If you do have multiple staff members talking to consumers, Nellie Price of Health Access California suggests tracking staff contacts with each consumer to help manage and foster strong relationships.

#### ■ Hire new staff

If possible, consider hiring additional staff to expand your story banking capacity. If bringing on new, dedicated full-time or part-time staff isn't an option, another option is to hire a temporary consultant, fellow, or intern. Tennessee Health Care Campaign recently hired intern Rachel Kelley. She spends the majority of her time reconnecting with consumers in their database and scheduling in-person meetings with new consumers identified through their helpline. Florida CHAIN has another model to consider in lieu of hiring a staff member: They hired a part-time consultant to work at a community health center as a navigator, identifying consumers willing to share their health care stories.

### ■ Train your staff

Whether you can hire new staff or you are simply asking existing staff to pitch in, it's crucial to train them effectively. Talking with consumers is not something that comes naturally to everyone, and many advocates emphasized the need to train interns and temporary hires, in particular. Judi Hilman of the Utah Health Policy Project recommends that you first explain how story banking enhances overall advocacy work, provide a brief overview of the basics of health care in your state, and then instruct them on the best way to approach consumers. When possible, have new staff observe a seasoned story banker. Also, provide new staff with a series of questions to help guide their conversations as well as a list of key phrases that consumers might say that suggest they have a health care story to share.

### ■ Prioritize the work

To make story banking a priority, some advocates build story banking activities into their weekly work plans. For example, Stefanie Rubin of New Jersey Citizen Action devotes one day a week to collecting new stories, following up with consumers who have previously shared their story, or cleaning up the database. By designating a specific day, she ensures that the work gets done each week. Their up-to-date and robust database has made New Jersey Citizen Action able to quickly respond to media requests. Advocates we spoke to also found that managing other areas of their work was easier when they maintained an up-to-date database.

### ■ Integrate story collection into existing work

While it's critically important to designate specific chunks of time for this work, advocates we spoke to emphasized the need to incorporate story banking throughout all areas of their work. To do so, advocates include requests for stories at community forums, coalition meetings, monthly conference calls, and anywhere health care consumers may be. Rachel Kelly of the Tennessee Health Care Campaign (THCC) attends in-person meetings that THCC's social workers set up in order to identify consumers who may want to share their story. When Brian Rothgery of Citizen Action of Wisconsin meets with people in the community, he actively listens for key phrases that indicate that a consumer has a compelling health care story. Asking open-ended questions and listening carefully can make finding good consumer stories easier than one might think.



Find links to these resources on page 15.

- Consumer Consent Form (Campaign for Better Health Care)
- Story Bank Brochure (Campaign for Better Health Care)
- Story Bank Questionnaire (Campaign for Better Health Care)
- Consumer Consent Form (Utah Health Policy Project)
- Service Provider Story Bank Survey (Utah Health Policy Project)
- Small Business Questionnaire (Utah Health Policy Project)
- Story Bank Flyer (Utah Health Policy Project)
- Uninsured Story Form (Utah Health Policy Project)
- Medicaid Story Form (Utah Health Policy Project)

### ■ Set goals

Breaking up long-term goals, like growing your story bank by 50 stories this year, into smaller goals is a great way to keep on track. Kathleen Gmeiner of the Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio (UHCAN Ohio) says that setting monthly goals has been very useful to her work. Kathleen notes that each field staff at UHCAN Ohio aims to identify three new stories a month that reflect three different campaigns. Nevertheless, Kathleen also notes that many of the best stories are found when a story is urgently needed and one staff member remains on the phone until the right story is found.

### ■ Add it to the database

Maintaining an up-to-date and well-organized database is not necessarily a glamorous job, yet it is an essential component to quality story banking. Groups can purchase software to organize their stories. Programs like E-Tapestry, Filemaker, Databank, Track Via, and Salsa allow groups to quickly search for consumer stories using status markers, such as “pre-existing condition,” “uninsured,” or “Medicaid beneficiary,” as well as demographic markers. In the absence of specialized software, advocates can use Google Doc spreadsheets, which enable all staff, wherever they are, to quickly find and update stories in real time.

### ■ Keep track of what stories are placed

To prevent oversaturation of a particular consumer story, monitor when and where you share stories. By doing so, you can also ensure that you don’t overextend consumers, and you can keep track of what types of stories particular outlets are likely to run.

## Collect the Best Consumer Stories

To develop a solid story bank, experts find it is important to entrench themselves in the community. Advocates have employed a variety of tactics to gather stories, from starting a helpline to building strong partnerships to reach new audiences. Whatever the strategy, it is critical that the work be done on an ongoing basis and that it feed into all areas of work.

### ■ Go to the consumer

Everyone we spoke to agreed that the best strategy for finding consumers was getting out of the office and into the community. By organizing community forums and setting up a booth at Minnesota’s state fair, Sarah Greenfield of Take Action Minnesota was able to identify many new consumer stories. By increasing their visibility in the community, groups can make new connections and interact with people one on one, both of which are invaluable to building a story bank.



### Consider Setting Up a HelpLine

Helplines not only provide free assistance to consumers who need help finding coverage, filing an appeal, or coping with high medical debt, but they also serve as a great way to identify consumers willing to share their story. To find out more about designing a consumer assistance helpline, see the Resources section on page 15.

### ■ Stay on the look out

Make sure you don't miss opportunities to get stories. Advocates in Florida and Utah recommend incorporating story collection into your everyday interactions. By actively listening to friends, neighbors, your children's teachers, or your parent's home care worker, you can find some of the strongest consumer stories. Other groups, such as Citizen Action of Wisconsin, make sure to attend rallies and congressional town halls to gather petition signatures and names of engaged consumers. It's key to have a quick, easy form to capture their information in a timely manner and then follow up later.

### ■ Make the most of online tools and technology

Advocates have many online tools at their disposal: Facebook, Twitter, Google ads, email, etc. According to Athena Ford of the Pennsylvania Health Access Network, asking for stories via email has gotten the largest online response. Athena recommends asking for specific types of stories and urges advocates to frame the story request around a particular campaign or direct it at a key decision maker who is attempting to take away important services or consumer protections. If people on your email list or social media networks are given context and a reason to share their story, they are much more likely to do so.

### ■ Make the most of key partnerships

Some advocates advised spending time engaging coalition partners, direct service organizations, national partners, and the broader progressive community. Sue Berkowitz of South Carolina Appleseed and Brooke Hisle of Maryland Health Care for All Coalition say that partnerships are the most fruitful when you work with the right person, who can be anyone from a story bank coordinator to a local organizer or an executive director. Whoever the person, it's critically important that they value story banking and are willing to devote time and resources to it. Sue added that partners are most helpful around specific and time-sensitive story requests—for example, when the request is for a reporter or legislative hearing. All advocates agreed that partnerships were also most successful when they were mutually beneficial. When possible, provide partners with resources, technical policy advice, and other capacity assistance.



**Find links to these resources on page 15.**

- Best Practices and Tips for Sending Email (Echoditto)
- Story Bank Web Page (Families USA)
- Facebook Story Bank Page (Florida CHAIN)
- Story Bank Web Page (Maryland Health Care for All)
- Adult Basic Action Email (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)
- Affordable Care Act 1st Birthday Email (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)
- Horizon Story Project Blog Post (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)
- Debt Ceiling Action Email (Tennessee Health Care Campaign)
- Story Bank Web Page (UHCAN Ohio)

### ■ **Target your outreach**

To garner support for public programs and enhance the effectiveness of legislative campaigns, increase efforts to collect certain types of stories. According to Sherry Prowda of the Herndon Alliance, it's important to think through what type of story is best for the media or specific audiences. Generally speaking, the best stories come from small business owners receiving tax credits or those eager to use the exchange to bring down cost; people with pre-existing conditions; young adults who are able to stay on their parents' plan until age 26; people of color; women; and seniors, people with disabilities, or kids receiving Medicaid coverage. Sherry added that uncomplicated stories work best because the worst health stories are often too extreme for the general public to relate.

### ■ **Diversify your story bank**

A robust story bank has consumers with a broad array of issues as well as consumers with different economic backgrounds, age, health status, ethnicity, and geographic areas. Nellie Price of Health Access California suggests partnering with groups that work to address inequality, such as disability coalitions, women's groups, and multicultural organizations. These nontraditional partners will help you reach more diverse constituencies who have valuable health care stories and who can provide insight on ways policies can be more effective for all populations.

### ■ **Vet consumer stories**

According to many advocates, it is best to start with broad questions first when vetting a story. Open-ended topics prompt the consumer to do most of the talking. Once you have a general idea of their story, ask follow-up questions to identify additional details, get a sense for how the consumer talks about their story, and clarify any inconsistencies. After you've gathered all the necessary information, advocates suggest ending the conversation by reminding the consumer of the unique importance of their story and telling them how you'll proceed. Reiterate that you will call again to ask permission before releasing their information to an outside party, such as a reporter or an elected official.

## **Use Story Banking to Find Health Care Leaders**

Advocates can use the story bank to locate consumers who are interested in becoming health care leaders. When consumers are given skills, training, and guidance, they feel empowered to pursue leadership roles within the health care justice movement.

### ■ **Hold one-on-one meetings**

Nearly all advocates we talked to continue to engage consumers who shared their story by setting up one-on-one meetings. At these meetings, advocates are able to forge a deeper relationship, learn more about the consumer's story, and figure out how they might get involved. Sarah Greenfield of Take Action Minnesota says these meetings should happen shortly after an advocate first meets the consumer and continue on a regular basis. Meeting in person also provides the opportunity to capture videos, photographs, and to have consumers sign consent forms. If in-person meetings aren't possible, it is essential to set aside plenty of time for a phone conversation.

### ■ Gauge the consumer's comfort level

Some consumers will be ready on day one to meet with an elected official or speak at a press conference. However, most are not. For consumers who are a little wary of sharing their story or becoming a health care leader, Adam Searing of the North Carolina Justice Center encourages them to do something within their comfort zone, such as submit a letter to the editor or record a video testimonial. As consumers successfully complete their first actions, they will gain the confidence and experience to engage in advocacy in new ways.

### ■ Organize leadership development trainings

To build the advocacy skills of storytellers and other consumers who want to become leaders, Virginia Organizing and many other groups organize leadership development trainings where they educate consumers on health care issues and the role of advocacy in their state. Julie Blust says they also develop specific skills such as lobbying, crafting a message, working in coalition, and much more. Depending on your organization's mission and resources, trainings can vary in size and formality. In some instances, it might make sense to partner with other organizations interested in training consumers and other volunteers. If your organization doesn't have the expertise to hold such trainings, you could seek scholarships for potential leaders to attend trainings organized by Wellstone Action, the New Organizing Institute, or Midwest Academy.



Find links to these resources on page 16.

- Wellstone Action Website
- The New Organizing Institute Website
- Midwest Academy Website

### ■ Plug consumers into overall work

Once consumers have indicated that they want to do more than share their story, it's critically important that you provide them with thoughtful advocacy opportunities, such as writing blogs, designing materials, or organizing a house party. Antoinette Kraus and Athena Ford of the Pennsylvania Health Access Network (PHAN) created a statewide grassroots messaging committee made up of many traditional volunteers and consumers who have previously shared their health care stories. Members of the committee call radio programs, write letters to the editor, and help identify trends in what the opposition is saying. By creating this committee, PHAN has increased their rapid response capacity and provided leaders with the opportunity to enhance their media and messaging skills.

Whatever activity you ask consumers to do, it should be tailored to their interests, not take more time than they are willing to commit, and help them develop the skills they want to strengthen.



Find links to these resources on page 16.

- Messaging Committee Website Hub (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)
- Messaging Committee Email Invitation (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)
- Volunteer Appreciation Video (Tennessee Health Care Campaign)
- Letter to the Editor Tips (Virginia Organizing)

### ■ Create a special network

Suzanne Schlattman of the Maryland Health Care for All Coalition creates a sense of community for consumers by including them in coalition meetings, calling them, and sending thank you notes and holiday cards that let them know how their story has had an impact. Through their conversations with Suzanne and other staff members at Health Care for All, consumers understand how their involvement fits into the greater advocacy community, and they get the opportunity to meet other consumers who have also struggled to find quality, affordable health coverage. Creating a sense of community should not be overlooked—it's a great way to retain leaders and ensure consumers are always eager to share their story.

## Think Broadly to Distribute Your Stories

To make the hard work of story banking worthwhile, advocates should think outside of the box when it comes to distributing stories. Consumer stories can be used in public education efforts, media work, meetings with elected officials, and much more.

### ■ Include consumer stories in your materials

Consumer stories can break down complex policy issues in your organization's reports and media materials. Maryland Health Care for All Coalition and the Tennessee Health Care Campaign both compiled booklets with dozens of stories to illustrate how proposed cuts and new laws affect health care consumers across their state. The organizations pushed the booklets out to media contacts, which helped them get media coverage and strengthened the relationship between participating consumers and the advocacy organizations.

### ■ Integrate stories into all conversations with the media

To ensure reporters cover issues that are important to consumers, Anthony Wright of Health Access California reaches out to media outlets to explain and provide context to complicated policy proposals. When doing so, he incorporates stories to help reporters better understand the issues. Anthony finds that reporters will often use a story to frame a pending article or news special they are developing. Using consumer stories to give reporters context to policy issues helps you develop a relationship with reporters, who will see you as a resource for stories.



### Prepare Consumers to Share Their Story

Without adequate preparation, consumers may become flustered and the important message they are delivering could get distorted. To make consumers feel comfortable sharing their story with a reporter or elected official for the first time, advocates suggest developing talking points for them to use and scheduling a time for them to practice telling their story. However, it is equally important not to prepare them too much—the more authentic and natural the storyteller comes across, the better the result. By being in the room or on the phone when a consumer first shares their story, especially when it's with a member of the media, you can help guide the conversation and reassure the consumer that they are doing a great job. If you ensure their first experience goes smoothly, it's more likely that the consumer will want to do it again.



### ■ Anticipate and respond to media requests

Connecting consumers to reporters not only helps advocates succeed in getting coverage on important issues, but it also strengthens relationships with the media by establishing advocate groups as a credible resources. To build these relationships, Virginia Organizing and Pennsylvania Health Access Network anticipate reporter requests. Weeks in advance of an important milestone, these groups search their story banks and their community for consumers who are willing to share their stories.

### ■ Bring consumers to media events

Asking consumers to speak at rallies, press conferences, and other media events is a great way to proactively get stories in the media. Every advocate agreed that events are most successful when they are newsworthy. To make your event compelling, confirm noteworthy public officials or release new data that the media will want to cover. Julie Blust of Virginia Organizing suggests including a one-page document that highlights consumer stories with your press materials and encouraging consumers to arrive early so reporters can have one-on-one conversations with them.

### ■ Add a human perspective to other events

Sharing consumer stories during community forums about the benefits of the Affordable Care Act can help engage the audience in ways statistics and general talking points don't. Some groups incorporate consumer quotes into presentations, while others use videos. Advocates agreed that the most effective method is to have consumers share their stories in person. These stories engage the audience and increase their understanding of what they or their loved ones stand to gain from progress being made at the state and federal level.

### ■ Engage the online community

Online advocacy can create an echo chamber with the media as well as activists and volunteers. Pennsylvania Health Access Network dedicated a website to consumer stories, and they also write blog posts about consumer stories that relate to campaigns or milestones. Adam Searing with the North Carolina Justice Center considerably expanded their blog readership and garnered media attention by periodically posting video testimonials of consumers. Also consider cross-promoting blogs with other groups, tweeting, and using Facebook to generate more coverage.



**Find links to these resources on page 15.**

- Using Stories as an Effective Way to Get Your Message Out (Families USA)
- Unwilling Volunteers (Families USA & Tennessee Health Care Campaign)
- Guide to Using Stories (Herndon Alliance)
- Faces of Maryland's Newly Insured (Maryland Health Care for All)
- Consumer Video Training Manual (North Carolina Justice Center)

### ■ **Build relationships with decision makers**

Similar to working with the public and the media, adding a personal dimension to meetings with elected officials can be very compelling. Stefanie Rubin of New Jersey Citizen Action asks consumers and small business owners to share their stories on a variety of issues ranging from budget cuts to establishing a consumer-friendly exchange. An in-person meeting with an elected official not only strengthens overall advocacy efforts, but also helps build the confidence of the consumer and encourages him or her to become a health care leader.

### ■ **Feed stories to champions**

In legislative battles, it's important to support elected officials who are champions for Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act. According to Nellie Price, Health Access California arms legislative champions with stories of real consumers to help raise public awareness, educate their colleagues, and get media attention.

## **Conclusion**

Stories help illustrate an important narrative, address misinformation, and rally support around a campaign, public program, or law. Effective story banking requires substantial commitment, time, and resources. Advocates need to think strategically about their story banking infrastructures, outreach tactics, and means of dissemination. However, when done well, story banking can be both an invaluable tool for organizations and extremely rewarding for consumers.

Building and managing effective story banks is not only an investment in the capacity of advocacy organizations, but it is also a demonstration of respect for consumers who come forward and share their stories. It is our hope that the tips and strategies from advocates in this guide provide you with the information you need to enhance your story banking capacity and that it serves as a catalyst for further communication across states.

## Acknowledgments

This guide is dedicated to consumers who have the courage to share their stories and to the advocacy organizations that help develop these individuals into health care justice leaders. We would like to particularly acknowledge and thank all of the advocates who took the time to share the lessons they've learned from building and strengthening their own story banks. Without them, this guide would not have been possible. If you want to learn more about the work of any of the organizations highlighted in this guide or want to share your own story banking strategies, please contact us at [stateinfo@familiesusa.org](mailto:stateinfo@familiesusa.org).

### California Health Access

#### **Anthony Wright, Executive Director**

Anthony Wright has served as executive director for Health Access since 2002. Before joining Health Access, he worked for Citizen Action of New Jersey, the Center for Media Education, *The Nation*, and in Vice President Gore's office in the White House. Anthony graduated from Amherst College with degrees in English and sociology.

### Campaign for Better Health Care

#### **Kathleen Duffy, Communications and Events Organizer**

Kathleen Duffy has served as the communications and events organizer for the Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care since September 2007. She creates messaging tools and manages press outreach. Kathleen previously worked extensively with arts organizations and artists as a business manager, administrator, and grant writer in Chicago and her hometown of New York. She graduated from the University of Buffalo with a degree in English.

### Citizen Action of New Jersey

#### **Stefanie Rubin, Small Business Organizer**

Stefanie Rubin is the former North Jersey regional and small business organizer for Citizen Action of New Jersey. Stefanie was responsible for identifying and recruiting small business owners across the state to join the New Jersey Main Street Alliance, a coalition of more than 850 New Jersey small businesses. Stefanie received her bachelor of arts degree in social work in 2009.

#### **Crystal Snedden, Health Care Campaign Coordinator**

As the health care campaign coordinator, Crystal Snedden coordinates a broad statewide alliance composed of health care, labor, senior, student, women's, social justice, civil rights, and faith-based organizations. She graduated from the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey with a bachelor of arts degree in political science in 2006.

## Citizen Action of Wisconsin

### **Brian Rothgery, Wisconsin Voices Budget Project Communications Coordinator**

Brian Rothgery joined Citizen Action of Wisconsin in June of 2008 as the coordinator of the Health Care for America Now campaign. Recently, Brian has taken a new position working with Citizen Action of Wisconsin's partner organization, Wisconsin Voices, where he is now the budget project communications coordinator. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in arts in history in 1999 and later received his master's degree in communications from the University of Wisconsin in 2008.

## Florida CHAIN

### **Laura Goodhue, Executive Director**

Laura Goodhue is the executive director of Florida CHAIN. She provides policy assistance and communications tools to the policy makers and allied partners in addition to helping consumers navigate Florida's health system. Before joining Florida CHAIN, Laura worked on issues such as farm worker rights, immigration, and fair wages in New York, Washington, D.C., and Florida. Laura also sits on the Florida Health Insurance Advisory board and is on the Florida Covering Kids and Families board.

## Herndon Alliance

### **Sherry Prowda, Communications Director**

Sherry Prowda is the communications director for Herndon Alliance, a coalition of more than 200 state and national organizations working on health care policy. Prior to working at the Herndon Alliance, she was the founding executive director of two nationally recognized nonprofit literary arts organizations, including Literary Arts in Portland and the Oregon and Seattle Arts & Lectures in Washington. She was also a consultant for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, and Global Partnerships.

## Maryland Health Care for All Coalition

### **Brooke Hisle, Coalition Coordination Director**

Brooke Hisle joined the Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition in June 2009. As their coalition coordination director, she educates and conducts outreach to stakeholder groups in Maryland. Brooke supports the coalition by monitoring federal and state health care activity, providing consumers with much-needed assistance and conducting media outreach. Brooke received her master's degree in social work from the University of Maryland in Baltimore.

### **Suzanne Schlattman, Community Outreach and Development Director**

Suzanne Schlattman first joined Health Care for All as a student fellow in 2006 and has since become the director of community outreach and development. Her duties include working with volunteers, managing and coordinating public education campaigns, and maintaining a strong internship program. Suzanne received her a master of social work from the University of Maryland as well a master of public health from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in 2009.

## North Carolina Justice Center

### **Adam Searing, Director of the North Carolina Health Access Coalition**

Adam Searing joined the Justice Center as director of the North Carolina Health Access Coalition in 1997. The project advocates both for more comprehensive and effective public health care programs and on behalf of average consumers in the private market. Adam received his graduate degrees in law and public health from the University of North Carolina in 1994.

## Pennsylvania Health Access Network

### **Athena Ford, Health Care Organizer**

Athena Ford is the statewide health care organizer for the Pennsylvania Health Access Network and Philadelphia Unemployment Project. She engages the grassroots base across the state and helps craft winning legislative strategies. Athena graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Kenyon College.

### **Antoinette Kraus, Project Director**

Antoinette Kraus is the project director for the Pennsylvania Health Access Network. Antoinette also serves as the head organizer for the Philadelphia Unemployment Project, which is the lead partner of the Pennsylvania Health Access Network. She helps develop campaigns to advocate for economic and social justice issues facing low-income communities in Philadelphia. Antoinette received a bachelor of arts degree in political science and public policy from Allegheny College.

## South Carolina Appleseed

### **Sue Berkowitz, Executive Director**

Sue Berkowitz is an attorney and director of the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center a non-profit organization that fights for social, economic, and legal justice for low-income people. Sue works with a number of state agencies on policy issues including mortgage lending laws, Medicaid, and unemployment insurance. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina and a law degree from Western New England School of Law.

## Take Action Minnesota

### **Sarah Greenfield, Health Care Organizer**

Sarah Greenfield is an organizer on Take Action's Quality, Affordable Health Care for All campaign. Prior to joining Take Action, Sarah spent three years as a community organizer with a union of public school employees, SEIU Local 284. She also spent several years as a massage therapist working at the Center for Victims of Torture. She received her undergraduate degree from Hampshire College.

## Tennessee Health Care Campaign

### **Rachel Kelley, Story Bank Intern**

Rachel Kelley worked at the Tennessee Health Care Campaign in the spring of 2011. She travelled across the state to interview clients and capture their stories. Rachel is an undergraduate at Stanford University and plans to go to medical school after graduation.

**Beth Uselton, Executive Director**

Beth Uselton is the executive director for the Tennessee Health Care Campaign (THCC), a nonpartisan, nonprofit, statewide consumer advocacy organization working toward affordable access to high-quality health care for all Tennesseans. Prior to her new role, she served as the organizing director for THCC, presenting information on current health care policy, coordinating volunteers to work on local issues in health care, and training individuals and groups to participate in the legislative process. Beth received her bachelor of science degree in cultural anthropology from Appalachian State University.

**Utah Health Policy Project****Judi Hilman, Executive Director**

Judi Hilman is executive director and co-founder of the Utah Health Policy Project. Her work covers a broad range of policy issues that have an impact on the uninsured, low-income medically underserved, people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities. She received her master's degree in history from Cornell University and bachelor of arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Kimberly Myers, Community Engagement Director**

Kimberly Myers is the community engagement director of the Utah Health Policy Project (UHPP). She is passionate about health care justice and spends her time strengthening and making new partnerships with stakeholders. Prior to joining UHPP in 2010, Kim worked as a social worker in a community-based setting, mobilizing people to take action for positive change. Kim received a bachelor of science degree from Weber State University and a master of social work from Portland State University.

**Virginia Organizing****Julie Blust, Communications Director**

Julie Blust joined Virginia Organizing in 2009. Julie's responsibilities include media outreach and external communications for the organization. Prior to joining Virginia Organizing, Julie worked as press secretary for Americans United for Change. She received a bachelor's degree in political science and American studies from Temple University.

**UHCAN Ohio****Kathleen Gmeiner, Director of Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage**

Kathleen Gmeiner has worked in the field of health care advocacy, planning, and policy analysis for more than 20 years. Kathleen presently is employed by UHCAN Ohio where she directs Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage, a coalition of consumer organizations building the voice of consumers in Ohio. She has a master's degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Michigan School of Public Health and a juris doctor from the University of Cincinnati.

## Resources

### Build an Effective Infrastructure: List of resources on page 3

**Consumer Consent Form** (Campaign for Better Health Care)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/IL-Consumer-Consent-Form.doc>

**Story Bank Brochure** (Campaign for Better Health Care)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/IL-Story-Bank-Brochure.doc>

**Story Bank Questionnaire** (Campaign for Better Health Care)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/IL-Story-Bank-Questionnaire.doc>

**Consumer Consent Form** (Utah Health Policy Project)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/UT-Comsumer-Consent-Form.doc>

**Service Provider Story Bank Survey** (Utah Health Policy Project)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6P3QF66>

**Small Business Questionnaire** (Utah Health Policy Project)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/UT-Small-Business-Questionnaire.doc>

**Story Bank Flyer** (Utah Health Policy Project)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/UT-Story-Bank-Flyer.pdf>

**Uninsured Story Form** (Utah Health Policy Project)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/UT-Uninsured-Story-Form.doc>

**Medicaid Story Form** (Utah Health Policy Project)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/UT-Medicaid-Story-Form.doc>

### Collect the Best Consumer Stories: List of resources on page 5

**Best Practices and Tips for Sending Email** (Echoditto)

<http://familiesusa2.org/conference/health-action-2011/tool-kit/pdfs/Email-Best-Practices.pdf>

**Story Bank Web Page** (Families USA in English and Spanish)

<http://www.familiesusa.org/tell-us-your-story.html>

**Facebook Story Bank Page** (Florida CHAIN)

[https://www.facebook.com/FloridaCHAIN?sk=app\\_4949752878](https://www.facebook.com/FloridaCHAIN?sk=app_4949752878)

**Story Bank Web Page** (Maryland Health Care for All)

<http://healthcareforall.com/get-involved/tell-your-story/>

**Adult Basic Action Email** (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/PA-Adult-Basic-Action-Email.doc>

**Affordable Care Act 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday Email** (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/PA-ACA-Birthday-Email.doc>

**Horizon Story Project Blog Post** (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)

<http://www.pahealthaccess.org/blog/guest-post-phan-launches-health-horizon-story-project-show-importance-need-affordable-care-act>

**Debt Ceiling Action Email** (Tennessee Health Care Campaign)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/TN-Debt-Ceiling-Action.doc>

**Story Bank Web Page** (UHCAN Ohio)

<http://uhcanohio.org/content/tell-us-your-dental-story>

## Use Story Banking to Find Health Care Leaders: List of resources on page 7

**Wellstone Action Website**

<http://www.wellstone.org/>

**The New Organizing Institute Website**

<http://neworganizing.com/>

**Midwest Academy Website**

<http://www.midwestacademy.com/>

**Messaging Committee Website Hub** (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/PA-Messaging-Committee-Website-Hub.doc>

**Messaging Committee Email Invitation** (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/PA-Messaging-Committee-Email-Invitation.doc>

**Volunteer Appreciation Video** (Tennessee Health Care Campaign)

<http://youtu.be/lzcGyqqJMfs>

**Letter to the Editor Tips** (Virginia Organizing)

<http://www.virginia-organizing.org/speakout>

## Think Broadly to Distribute Your Stories: List of resources on page 9

**Using Stories as an Effective Way to Get Your Message Out** (Families USA)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/pdfs/Winter2002ImPRESSive.pdf>

**Unwilling Volunteers** (Families USA & Tennessee Health Care Campaign)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/pdfs/tenncare-book-intro-1.PDF>

**Guide to Using Stories** (Herndon Alliance)

<http://herndonalliance.org/resources/personal-stories/the-why-when-what-how-to-use-stories-in-your-advocacy-work.html>



**Faces of Maryland's Newly Insured** (Maryland Health Care for All)

<http://healthcareforall.com/faces-of-marylands-newly-insured/>

**Consumer Video Training Manual** (North Carolina Justice Center)

<http://www.ncjustice.org/sites/default/files/NCJC%20Video%20Manual%202011.pdf>

## Additional Resources

**Story Bank Guide** (Campaign for Better Health Care)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/IL-Story-Bank-Guide.doc>

**Story Bank Tool Kit** (Community Catalyst)

<http://www.communitycatalyst.org/resources/storybank>

**Sharing Across the States: Strategies for Organizing Young Adults** (Families USA)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/pdfs/health-reform/Across-the-States-Young-Adult-Strategies.pdf>

**Designing a Consumer Assistance Program** (Families USA)

<http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/Designing-Consumer-Health-Assistance-Programs.pdf>

**Story Bank “Dos” and “Don’ts”** (Families USA)

<http://familiesusa2.org/conference/health-action-2011/tool-kit/pdfs/Media-Story-Bank-Dos-and-Donts.pdf>

**Consumer Story Example** (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)

<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/PA-Consumer-Story-Example.doc>  
<http://familiesusa2.org/assets/docs/states-story-banking/PA-Consumer-Story-Example.doc>

**Consumer Video 1** (North Carolina Justice Center)

<http://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2011/03/25/the-affordable-care-act-malvola-harvins-story/>

**Consumer Video 2** (North Carolina Justice Center)

<http://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2011/03/22/the-affordable-care-act-leslie-boyds-story/>

**Consumer Video 1** (Tennessee Health Care Campaign)

<http://youtu.be/iR9nk3-YT18>

**Consumer Video 2** (Tennessee Health Care Campaign)

<http://youtu.be/hbu1viCKQZE>

**Consumer Video** (Utah Health Policy Project)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvu1-A3tFYg&feature=player\\_embedded#at=17](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvu1-A3tFYg&feature=player_embedded#at=17)

### Families USA Story Bank

For more than a decade, Families USA has maintained its own story bank to connect consumers with local and national opportunities to share their stories. In addition to maintaining our database, our story bank coordinator provides direct assistance to advocates interested in starting or strengthening their own story bank project.

Our story bank coordinator can provide a one-on-one advice session with staff at your organization, do a how-to training with your volunteers, or do a presentation to your coalition about the immense importance of this work.

If you have questions about story banking, please e-mail [storybank@familiesusa.org](mailto:storybank@familiesusa.org) or call 202-628-3030 and ask for our story bank coordinator.

**This guide was written by:**

*Elizabeth Perry  
Field Associate*

*and*

*Elizabeth Prescott  
Story Bank Coordinator*

**The following Families USA staff contributed to the preparation of this report:**

*Jessica Larochelle, Field Director*

*Maryellen Barreca, Director of Special Initiatives*

*Tara Bostock, Editor*

*Nancy Magill, Senior Graphic Designer*

*Special thanks to all the state advocates for their contributions to this publication.*

**Sharing across the States:  
Strategies for Story Banking**

© September 2011 by Families USA

*This publication is available online at [www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org).*

*A complete list of Families USA publications is available online at  
[www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications](http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications).*



1201 New York Avenue NW, Suite 1100 ■ Washington, DC 20005

Phone: 202-628-3030 ■ Email: [info@familiesusa.org](mailto:info@familiesusa.org)

[www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org)