Health Care Administrators have a responsibility for legislative involvement based on the connection the field has with both state and federal funding. This career responsibility is crucial with the Health Care Reform. Legislative involvement is developmentally impressed upon students. This study will further explore how they may coordinate a legislator facility visit; or participate in a related health care; coordinated meeting with ombudsmen; invite or participate in a related legislative activity or event for the organization. The students on practicum this year will be surveyed on which legislative activities they participated in, and why. A past survey of practicum students showed that students participation is driven by personal interests, course expectation and preceptor guidance. This study will further explore these factors and how they may influence the degree of current student involvement in a variety of legislative experiences. We will also report on the number and type of student engagement in legislative activities during their practicum experience.

### Background

The legislative activity checklist (required activities) did not show that many students do not take a political science class, which could be encouraged. Resources such as ACHCA’s Grassroots Advocacy Guide are provided to students in courses, but could be emphasized even more. Practicum students also have leadership projects that they must create and implement. One of these leadership projects or activities could be focused on legislation and advocacy. The development of politically aware and active students must start earlier in the process. The main focus was to further the process to encourage and assess legislative advocacy and standardize it for Practicum students. This year the use of a required set of activities, along with a list of potential activities with a minimum completion has seemed to produce greater participation. Some other future recommendations include more involvement on campus before students get out to practicum.

### Methodology of Study

The following approaches have established the foundation of significant results towards improving and enhancing legislative advocacy amongst practicum students. The survey conducted had been previously used, just with a little different emphasis.

An initial extensive literature review, and feedback from focus groups helped us frame our approach and put forward the initial three core connection areas.

A survey was conducted with the current practicum student population to assess the three core factors significant of legislative advocacy and their level of involvement.

This survey was also shared with the health care associations and the UW-Eau Claire political science department for additional feedback.

### Preliminary Recommendations

The first concept was creating politically aware and active students by starting earlier in the development of students. On-campus students should be exposed to the process, influence, and priority of legislative advocacy. The survey showed that many students do not take a political science class, which could be encouraged. Resources such as ACHCA’s Grassroots Advocacy Guide are provided to students in courses, but could be emphasized even more. Practicum students also have leadership projects that they must create and implement. One of these leadership projects or activities could be focused on legislation and advocacy. The development of politically aware and active students must start earlier in the process. The main focus was to further the process to encourage and assess legislative advocacy and standardize it for Practicum students. This year the use of a required set of activities, along with a list of potential activities with a minimum completion has seemed to produce greater participation. Some other future recommendations include more involvement on campus before students get out to practicum.

### Next Steps and Conclusion

Currently we only have two different samples. In order to further this study, there may need to be surveys for the next few cohorts to find out how much the legislative activity benefits practicum students, and how much more activity they chose to participate in. Overall this follow up survey showed that the legislative activity increased over this year. The legislative activity checklist (required activities) did indeed work, and created more involvement with practicum students.

The findings of this project and developing profile are useful in understanding what conditions prepare practicum students for legislative involvement, and how the HCAD department can better prepare students to become more involved. It also suggests that there is no one standard approach to encourage legislative advocacy for students and their respective settings. In conclusion, the research suggests that there are factors based on students perceptions that encourage advocacy. We can produce more effective and out reaching administrators by considering these factors in student’s development.

### Funding Sources and Endorsements

- The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire provided support for student researchers
- Center for Health Administration and Aging Services Excellence at UW-Eau Claire

### Acknowledgments

- State affiliated LTC association legislative directors.
- Resources of ACHCA and other legislative guides in the field.
- Matt Tobalsky, Undergraduate Research Assistants, UW-Eau Claire, who was also involved in this project.
- Nicholas Weight, a previous UW-Eau Claire, who helped develop a legislative guide for HCAD practicum students.
- Andrew Sedrak, a previous UW-Eau Claire student.