

Convene.
Strategize.
Activate.

Advocacy and Collaboration: Advocacy through Collaboration

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Ann Schwindaman Rodriguez, Executive Director



insight to innovation

A little about me and the i2i Center for Integrative Health:

Ann Rodriguez
Executive Director of i2i

Policy Wonk by Career: Worked in US Senate, 27 years of policy analysis work in North Carolina, lobbyist for membership association

Advocate at Heart: I believe everyone lives on the mental health continuum, needing varying levels of supports and services in their life.

Firm believer in the benefits of partnerships, collaboratives and coalitions!

i2i is a convening agency and we work within the behavioral health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance use care and support service systems to progress a comprehensive system of whole person care. We accomplish this through convening, strategizing and activating change as well as through information sharing and advocacy building.

*"Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much."*

- Helen Keller

Definitions

col·lab·o·ra·tion

To work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor.

co·a·li·tion

A body formed by the coalescing of originally distinct elements.

co·op·e·ti·tion

collaboration between business
competitors, in the hope of mutually
beneficial results

Advocacy by Building Community Collaboration and Coalitions

Advantages to Collaboration and Coalition Building

- Pool resources
- Broaden your network
- Share in the legwork
- Share strategies, experiences and connections
- Develop relationships that can be important for future issues
- Show your capacity to partner
- Increase respect and awareness of your organization and message

Ensuring Every Voice is Valued

- Thoughtfully consider the membership in a collaborative or coalition and the perspectives that are at the table. Is there a perspective that is strategically important and hasn't been included in the past?
- Take time before getting into the policy substance to understand each perspective and the goals/objectives of each representative. What does each individual want to accomplish by participating?
- Consider options for compensating individuals who are willing to participate, but are not being compensated through an organization to do so.
- Provide resources and educational tools to level the knowledge base for all participants.
- Create an atmosphere and group expectation of "thinking outside the box" and going beyond historical ways of doing things.
- Periodically check-in with participants to ensure the collaborative/coalition is meeting their needs.

Challenges to Collaboration and Coalition Building

- Entails clarity about your bottom line. You may not get everything you want so you need to know what the most important things are to you and your organization.
- Necessitates a different kind of vetting and process within your organization to ensure your voice is representing your organization.
- Assumes your organization, and particularly the leadership, will support the final product/recommendations of the collaborative or coalition.
- Requires ongoing participation to ensure that your voice/position is heard and incorporated.
- Involves periodic evaluation to ensure that the collaboration and coalition is serving the right purpose.



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Why is this Important Now?

Your Opportunity is to Translate Policy Discussions to Your Perspective—Peer Voice is Getting Stronger:

- You hold a valuable perspective in legislation and policy discussions! BUT--
- Legislative and policy discussions are often focused on the business perspective.

How can you TRANSLATE the topic into the perspective of the consumer, family member and individuals with lived experience in mental illness?

TIP: When you do translate that, collaboration in conveying that message will expand your voice and help key players understand your perspective in the same context as business and workforce voices.

Let's Use Legislation to Create an Example of Collaboration

Current Legislation We Can Impact

- [H. 786](#), Enhance Local Response/Mental Health Crises, an Act to create a pilot program that will provide grants to local law enforcement agencies in order to enhance responses to mental or behavioral health crises.

Current status: introduced on 5/4/21, sponsored by Reps. Autry, Lambeth, White and Ball, referred to Committee on Health, Lambeth and White chair the Committee on Health

How do we TRANSLATE policy priorities into what is important to individuals with lived experience in mental illness?

- Identify the policy priority (ies) this addresses, e.g. crisis services, partnering with key community players such as law enforcement on assisting and supporting individuals with mental health needs, reducing racial disparities.
- Identify the policy shifts that this aligns with, e.g. Medicaid Transformation focusing on Social Determinants and Racial and Health Equity and mitigates the risk of payors and providers by a pilot allows us to collect meaning data and conduct evaluation for how to replicate it statewide.

Here's the translation:

How do you define success in this pilot for individuals with lived experience in mental illness?

- What is your top goal in getting this pilot in place? Articulate that message clearly and concisely. You need this before you seek partnerships. You do not want your position to be lost because other stakeholders already have their position ready.
- What other perspectives will speak or be asked to speak on this issue? Ex: law enforcement, LME/MCOs, Standard Plans, hospitals
- Where does your message align with their perspectives? Can you collaborate with them to expand your voice? You don't have to have the same exact message—they can complement each other. For example, have points of benefit/impact that address the same issue but from each perspective.

Possible Strategies:

- Create a long-term strategic plan for action that includes both legislative and policy actions. This may not happen the first time it's introduced in the legislature but there may be things you can do with State leaders that create a greater momentum for legislation.
- Connect with law enforcement associations, LME/MCOs, Standard Plans or other identified interest stakeholders to inform them about the bill, educate them on your position and scope out the possibility of partnerships.
- Grab opportunities to talk about this initiative to other groups. TIP: Use the policy priorities and those discussions to educate people on this legislation and how it can be a part of the solution.
- Look at communities where this pilot may be most viable and begin collaborating with the communities to gain their support—if we have time, let's look at example through Laurie's community...

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Resources are Available for Collaboration and Coalition Building

[PCI: Resource Guide for Building Effective Collaboration and Integrated Programming](#)

[National Council of NonProfits: 5 Tips for Nonprofit Collaboration](#)

[Stanford Social Innovation Review: Collective Impact](#)

[Utah State University Center for Persons with Disabilities: Evidence-based Practices for Coalition Building](#)



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To reach me:

Ann Schwindaman Rodriguez
Executive Director
i2i Center for Integrative Health
ann@i2icenter.org
919-744-7937