

Advocacy strategy development template: Planning to achieve DMPA-SC policy change, including self-injection

Policy advocacy has an important role to play in ensuring your country's policies and funding support a broad mix of contraceptive methods, including new options like injectable subcutaneous DMPA (DMPA-SC[†]) and self-injection. Because there are so many methods of influencing policy—and usually limited resources to pursue them—PATH has designed a 10-part framework that can support individuals and organizations in developing a high-impact, outcome-oriented, evidence-based policy advocacy strategy.

Policy advocacy is a deliberate process that requires planning—it is not effective if done haphazardly. Developing an advocacy strategy is important in setting a clearly defined goal and objectives for your advocacy efforts, identifying decision-makers with the formal power to make a change, and selecting an evidence-based policy solution. It also requires that you determine your decision-makers' key interests, and tailor messages and advocacy tactics that will inform and influence them to act. Finally, your strategy should include clear milestones that help you track the progress of your advocacy efforts.

Program implementers, health professionals, private-sector leaders, researchers, and members of civil society each have a critical role to play as advocates. You can find the full [workbook for policy advocacy strategy development online](#) with worksheets that correspond to each of the 10 parts. The following template is an easy-to-use summary document to help identify advocacy goals and objectives, decision-makers, partners, and other critical parts of an advocacy strategy.

10 parts of a policy advocacy strategy

1. Advocacy issue
2. Advocacy goal
3. Decision-makers and influencers
4. Decision-makers' key interests
5. Advocacy opposition and obstacles
6. Advocacy assets and gaps
7. Advocacy partners
8. Advocacy tactics
9. Advocacy messages
10. Plan to measure success

[†] DMPA stands for depot medroxyprogesterone acetate. Sayana[®] Press is the current brand name, and a registered trademark of Pfizer Inc.

Issue, goal, and objectives

The advocacy issue is a brief statement of the main problem you hope to address through policy advocacy. It should be based on evidence, and the problem should be realistically addressed through a policy change or implementation of an existing policy.

Example: Inclusion of DMPA-SC self-injection in the country's national family planning program is acceptable to users and is likely to facilitate expanded contraceptive options for women and adolescent girls, as demonstrated by recent pilot studies. However, current policy does not allow for full integration of self-injection in the national family planning program. Self-injection should be included in national clinical guidelines and other national policy documents to foster nationwide scale-up of this access option.

The advocacy goal is the focus of the advocacy strategy and describes the overarching policy change or policy-related outcome the project seeks to achieve. It should include four elements: **who** has the power to make change (i.e., which decision-making individual or institution); **what** is the change you would like to see relative to your advocacy issue; **how** will the specific action taken by a decision-making institution accomplish the change (i.e., what is the policy vehicle your decision-maker can use); and **when** should the change occur.

Example: The ministry of health will approve inclusion of DMPA-SC self-injection in the national clinical guidelines to enable national scale-up of the self-injection program by December 2026.

Advocacy objectives are milestones or intermediate steps necessary to reach the overarching goal and focus on what the advocacy outputs will seek to achieve. Think of objectives as actions your decision-makers, influencers, or key stakeholders might take to demonstrate their commitment to change.

Example: The Reproductive Health Department establishes the Self-Injection Advocacy Group to perform an advisory role and provide strategic guidance to the Ministry of Health and implementing partners by November 2025.

Advocacy issue

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Advocacy goal

_____ will _____ to ensure
(WHO) (HOW)

_____ by _____.
(WHAT) (WHEN)

Related objectives

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Decision-makers and influencers

Decision-makers are those with the power to give you what you want—the people who can say yes or no to the advocacy goal. Categories of decision-makers often include ministerial representatives, parliamentarians, and district health committee members, among many others. Oftentimes, you will need to persuade decision-makers across sectors and levels of governance to make your desired change, even if only one institution has the ultimate authority to act.

Influencers are persons or groups that can have a compelling impact on the actions, opinions, or behavior of decision-makers. Categories of key influencers may include, but are not limited to, professional or business association representatives, civic leaders, academics, journalists, community action groups, celebrities, and research institutions.

These groups combined are the primary targets of your advocacy strategy. It may be helpful to think through decision-makers and influencers for each advocacy objective noted above. Remember, it is good to be as specific as possible—include names and/or titles as possible. There may be more than one decision-maker and multiple influencers.

Example: In the example above, the Minister of Health is the key decision-maker. Influencers might include health ministry senior management, the Self-Injection Advocacy Group, and the leader of the national nurses association.

Decision-makers

Key influencers

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Opposition and obstacles

There may be pockets of resistance to your policy advocacy goal, for reasons extending from competing priorities and/or agendas to concerns about funding, timing, ability, and capacity. It is critical to identify potential **opponents** (persons or groups) or **obstacles** (conflicting agendas, lack of funding, etc.) that may have a real impact on the outcome and to define strategies to mitigate their influence.

Potential opponents and/or obstacles

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Mitigation strategies

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Allies and partners

Allies and partners are critical interest groups, nongovernmental organizations, private-sector entities, multilateral organizations, and coalitions that are currently working on and/or supportive of the issue and can help further progress toward your objective through coordination and collaboration.

Allies and partners and anticipated roles

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Advocacy work plan

Once you have developed your objectives, you can determine your advocacy activities or tactics and develop a full work plan. When designing advocacy activities, ensure the activities directly contribute to achieving your objectives and overall advocacy goal. The strongest activities will address the interests of your target decision-makers and influencers and will move them to take action.

Objective 1

Activity	Responsible organization(s) [†]	Partner organization(s) [†]	Resources needed	Timeline

[†]As possible, list an individual's name.

Objective 2				
Activity	Responsible organization(s) [†]	Partner organization(s) [†]	Resources needed	Timeline
Objective 3				
Activity	Responsible organization(s) [†]	Partner organization(s) [†]	Resources needed	Timeline

[†] As possible, list an individual's name.

Additional resources

- For more information about PATH's advocacy tools and resources, please visit PATH's Advocacy Resource Hub: <https://www.path.org/programs/advocacy-and-policy/advocacy-resource-hub/>.
- The Stronger Health Advocates, Greater Health Impacts advocacy capacity-strengthening curriculum and associated tools can be found here: <https://www.path.org/resources/stronger-health-advocates-greater-health-impacts-tools-trade/>.
- If you would like to guide a group through the development of an advocacy strategy, you can find the facilitator's guide that corresponds to this workbook here: https://media.path.org/documents/Advocacy_Impact_Facilitators_Guide_Final_JPL_1.pdf.
- PATH has an eLearning course in policy advocacy strategy development that can be accessed online. This tool introduces users to the 10-part framework and can serve as a complementary resource to help you design your advocacy strategy. To access the course, please email FPoptions@path.org.
- To access Advance Family Planning's Advocacy Portfolio, which includes AFP SMART: A Guide to Quick Wins, please visit: <https://www.advancefamilyplanning.org/advocacy-portfolio>.