

SDAN

Self-Directed Advocacy Network of Maryland, Inc.

WELCOME!

Presentation
by Heather
Sachs

DD Day
Advocacy

SDAN
Updates

Advocacy
Prep

SDAN Meeting - January 10, 2025

Effective Advocacy Training with Heather Sachs

Please Mute.

Use Chat Box for questions. Please keep side conversations to a minimum.

We will be recording.

Close captioning available.



MEETING AGENDA

- Guest Speaker Heather Sachs - Co-Director of Policy & Advocacy for the National Down Syndrome Congress
- Advocacy Session Q&A with Heather Sachs
- SDAN Advocacy Committee update on DD Day (February 13th)
- SDAN legislative advocacy and OCR updates





Self-Directed Advocacy Network of Maryland, Inc.

BUILDING
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
ELECTED OFFICIALS
FOR EFFECTIVE
ADVOCACY

with guest speaker
Heather Sachs



Using Your Voice to Connect with Policymakers

Heather Sachs, J.D.

NDSC Policy & Advocacy Co-Director



Agenda

- Introduction
- Maryland basics
- Building relationships with elected officials – why, when, with whom, how
- Advocacy – what it is and how to do it
- Telling your story – the One-Pager
- NDSC's advocacy resources
- Q&A

Maryland State Legislature

- Maryland General Assembly – <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov>
- 90-day session – January 8 – April 7, 2025
- Bicameral – Senate (47) and House of Delegates (141)
- Meets annually; not full-time career
- Find your state legislators - <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/members>



MARYLAND
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



NATIONAL
DOWN SYNDROME
CONGRESS

MD Legislature Leadership

- Are your reps in leadership in their party or on key committees? Are they members on key committees?
- Key Committees for Disability Issues
 - Senate – Budget & Tax; Energy, Education & Environment (EEE),
 - House – Appropriations; Health & Gov't Operations (HGO), Ways & Means

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Committees/Index/senate>

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Committees/Index/house>



MD State Administration

- Governor Wes Moore
- Cabinet Secretaries - <https://governor.maryland.gov/leadership/Pages/default.aspx>
- Not elected and political positions
- Work closely with legislature (especially when same party)



Building Relationships – Why?

- You are the constituent
- Your legislators work for YOU
- They are real people with (mostly) good intentions
- They want to put faces to issues and get to know you - it is their job!
- They often turn to their well-informed constituents for advice and guidance.

Building Relationships – When?

- NOW, and year round
- Do not wait until session begins
- Your child is never too young!
- Make contact when things are going well, not only when you have a complaint
- Keep in touch



Building Relationships – with Whom?



- In MD: State Delegates and State Senator
- Their STAFF
- People who work in the Governor's office or a key Cabinet in MD (e.g., Aging, Disabilities, Health, Budget)
- Also good to build relationships with federal elected officials, local officials (city council, school board, etc)

Building Relationships – How?

- Get to know them outside of legislature
 - Church/synagogue, kids' sports, neighborhood parties, etc.
 - Do not accost them in stores, etc – they are normal people like us and do errands!
- Send them holiday cards and keep in touch when something really good happens
- Meet in person in Annapolis or local office; virtual is another option

Building Relationships – How?

- Invite them to community events (e.g., Down syndrome walks) and show them around
- Thank them publicly when they do something good – social media (X, TikTok) – tag them on your post (conversely – do not publicly slam or shame them when you disagree!)

What is Advocacy?

advocacy
to change “what is”
into “what should be”

- Dictionary: *the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal*
- Grassroots advocacy: collective action at the local level by individuals (“ordinary citizens”) to effect change
- Telling your personal story to try to turn “what is” into “what should be”; putting a real face on the issues
- Providing education and information to elected officials and the broader community about issues, problems and concerns
- Is it the same as lobbying? NO. But lobbying can be a part of advocacy efforts
- Continuum of advocacy activities depending on comfort level, time, passion for the issue

Who is an advocate? YOU ARE!

How can I advocate? Reach Out

- Calls – answer action alerts
- Emails – find individual emails, not forms
- Social Media – LIKE everyone, tags and hashtags, beware of negativity!!!
- Submit written testimony and, if appropriate, verbally testify at hearings
- Keep in touch regularly



How can I advocate?

Show Up



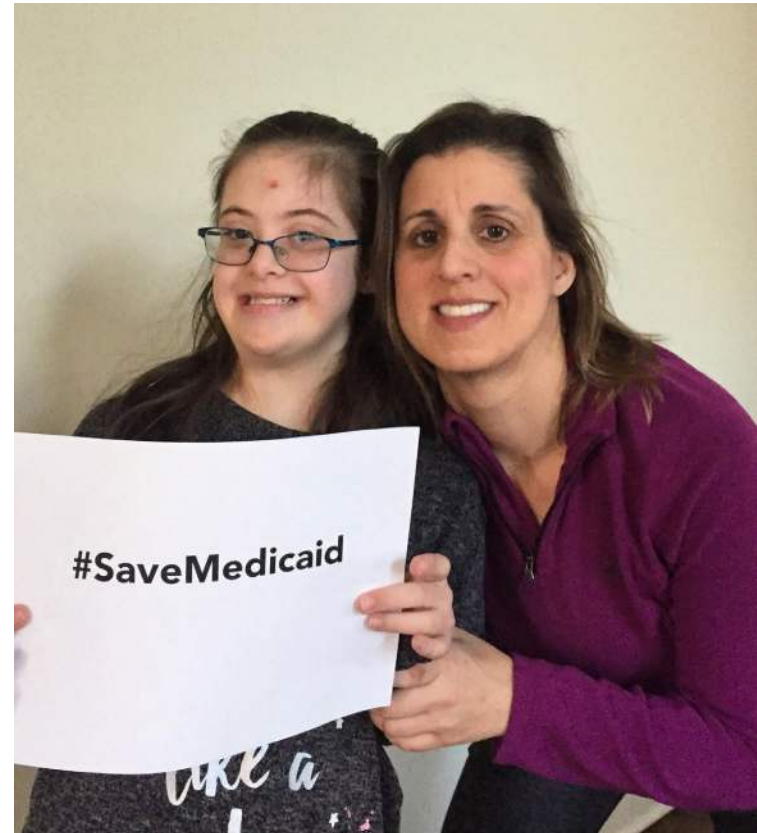
- Meet with legislator and/or staff in person* or virtually
- Hearings & Briefings
 - Testify?
- Town Hall meetings, legislator breakfasts, forums
- Rallies at the Capitol
- Structured advocacy days (like DD Day in MD)

Power of Self-Advocates

- Self-advocates are THE MOST EFFECTIVE advocates
- Engage them in all aspects of advocacy
 - Should bring one-pager about themselves to meetings
- Provide necessary tools and trainings so they can meaningfully participate
 - Public speaking workshops
 - Participation in advocacy trainings, conferences, Hill Days
- Remember to create and include opportunities for those who use alternative or augmentative communication

TELL YOUR STORY!!!

- Create a One-Pager
- Short video clip -
<https://youtube.com/shorts/f4e7koMFj-Y?si=v7aLwFHYAYh2rIUH>
- Op-Eds/Letters to the Editor in local papers
- Podcasts, YouTube, Tik Tok
- Blogs, online publications, local TV & radio



Tell Your Story: The One-Pager

Tell Your Personal Story

- Your most powerful tool is your story! Telling an elected official how something will impact your life is powerful.
- A one-page leave-behind can be used in many situations
- A one-page leave-behind can be used for in-person meetings and you can send to your legislator for virtual meetings
- Update it regularly with new information and new legislative asks

SAMPLE LEAVE BEHIND BIOGRAPHY TEMPLATE

Dear Representative/Senator _____.

Opening

My name is _____, and I am from [NAME OF HOMETOWN]

_____.

Introduction of yourself and a few sentences about yourself. You might include:

- Age
- Where you work or go to school
- Hobbies
- Interests
- Goals

The Ask

- I am asking you to sponsor XXXX and why.

Always say thank you!

Your name and contact information including:

Address
Phone
Email

TIP:
**ALWAYS INCLUDE
AT LEAST ONE
PICTURE OF
YOURSELF**

One-Pager Template for Legislative Meetings

<https://www.ndscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/SA-One-Pager-Template-2.pdf>



March 2024

My name is Jessica Smart. I am 34 years old and live in Olive Branch, MS. I graduated from Lewisburg High School with an Occupational diploma and attended two semesters at Northwest Mississippi Junior College. I am presently employed as a bookkeeper for a local Landscape Company. I prepare monthly invoices, receive customer payments, and reconcile monthly bank statements. I am completing my third Lay Servant Training class, and I hope to someday serve in the ministry. I enjoy using my actions and my voice to advocate for those with disabilities.



I worked with a group of local and state representatives from Mississippi to rewrite the language for the ABLE Act bill and was with Mississippi Governor Bryant as he signed the bill. I have served on the Board of Directors for DSAM, National Down Syndrome Congress, and I am presently on the board for the ARC of NW Mississippi.

Would you please support House Bill 315? This bill would replace the word mentally retarded (the R-word) with intellectual disability in all Mississippi Statutes. As a person with Down syndrome, I feel it is inappropriate to use the R-word to refer to people with disabilities. It embarrasses me when people use this language.

If you have questions, my contact information is below.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jessica Smart
Address
City, State Zip Code
Phone
Email

Jessie's One- Pager



Policy Advocacy Toolkit for Self-Advocates



The National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to an improved world for individuals with Down syndrome. Founded in 1973, we are the leading national resource of support and information for anyone touched by or seeking to learn about Down syndrome, from the moment of diagnosis, whether prenatal or at birth, through adulthood.



**NATIONAL
DOWN SYNDROME
CONGRESS**



**NATIONAL
DOWN SYNDROME
CONGRESS**

Action Alerts

Sign up at:

<https://www.ndsccenter.org/political-advocacy/take-action-stay-informed/>

Subscribe to Action Alerts!

Simply enter some basic information and we will send you action alerts whenever policy issues arise in our community. Our policy team will provide you background on the issue and how it will affect people with Down syndrome and other disabilities. You will receive a targeted email that allows you to easily contact your legislators. Making policy change only takes a moment!

Email Address*	First Name*	Last Name*
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address, line 1		
<input type="text"/>		
City	State	Zip Code
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Choose one..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Sign Up"/>		



National Down Syndrome Congress Convention

Registration opens
March 11, 2025



Advocacy Training Boot Camp at the NDSC Convention

Friday, July 25

8:00 – 11:30 AM

Whether you're a beginner advocate or a seasoned pro looking to elevate your advocacy efforts, the **NDSC Advocacy Training Boot Camp** is the perfect opportunity to gain valuable skills and knowledge.

NDSC Advocacy Training Boot Camp features:

- **Expert Insights:** Learn from self-advocates making a difference, parent advocates, elected officials, and disability policy experts, including the NDSC Policy & Advocacy Team.
- **Hands-On Training:** Gain practical tools and strategies to influence policy change effectively.
- **Inspiration and Empowerment:** Leave energized and equipped to take your advocacy to the next level.

This session is tailored for parents, professionals, and self-advocates. Whether you're just starting or looking to deepen your advocacy impact, there's something for everyone!

Advocacy Training Boot Camp is **free** with all General Conference and Youth & Adults Conference registrations.

2024 Advocacy Training Boot Camp Resources:

Find all of the training resources including the presentations and handouts from the 2024 NDSC Advocacy Training Boot Camp NDSC at <https://www.ndsccenter.org/political-advocacy/advocacytrainings/>





A member service of NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME CONGRESS

The National Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition (NDAC) is the National Down Syndrome Congress' (NDSC) grassroots advocacy program designed to educate individuals with Down syndrome, their family members, and other allies about policy issues and give them the advocacy tools and techniques they need to effectively engage with lawmakers, agencies, and other key decision makers to advocate for policy change.

NDAC works to involve and engage more advocates, including individuals with Down syndrome, their family members, and other allies who support our Down syndrome community. If you or someone you know wants to impact change for individuals with Down syndrome, NDAC is for you!

NDAC membership grants access to:

- Quarterly webinars, resources, and information
- Private Facebook group
- Networking opportunities and more!



Ready to Join or Learn More?

Scan the QR code or visit www.ndsccenter.org/political-advocacy/national-down-syndrome-advocacy-coalition for the NDAC FAQ and online application.



Follow NDSC on Social Media!



@thendsc



@ndscongress



@NDSC



National Down Syndrome Congress



@NDSCCENTER



**NATIONAL
DOWN SYNDROME
CONGRESS**



**NATIONAL
DOWN SYNDROME
CONGRESS**

Heather's Favorite Advocacy Mantras



"Nothing About Us
Without Us"



"No Permanent Friends,
No Permanent Enemies"



"Don't Let the Perfect Be
the Enemy of the Good"



"One Person Can Make a
Difference, and
Everyone Should Try"



Heather Sachs,
heather@ndscenter.org



Advocacy Session
Q&A – please put your
questions in the chat.

Thank you, Heather!

Advocacy through the year!

Attend DD Day

Meet your legislators and stay
in touch.

Prepare your “story” in
writing or video

Contact Your Legislators

Report Concerns

Thoughts on preparing “Your Story”

2025 Strategy Pivot

The logo for SDAN (Self-Directed Advocacy Network of Maryland, Inc.) features the letters 'SDAN' in a bold, stylized font. Each letter is filled with a pattern of red, yellow, and black, resembling the Maryland state flag. The letters are set against a white background within a black rectangular border.

SDAN

Self-Directed Advocacy Network of Maryland, Inc.

Developmental Disability Day at the Legislature

Save the Date - Feb 13

- **One day event sponsored by the Developmental Disability Council**
 - Held at the Graduate Hotel on West Street in Annapolis
- **Opportunity to be part of a 600+ person event**
 - Really makes a statement to legislators!
 - Wonderful networking opportunity
- **Hear from your legislators and other advocacy organizations**
 - [Maryland Developmental Disability Council website](#)
 - When the registration link is available, we will send an email to membership.
- **Schedule appointments with your legislators NOW**
 - SDAN will have a booth in the lobby of the Graduate Hotel to gather and meet up
 - We will have materials to guide people wanting to talk to their legislators
- **Arrange for parking in advance**
 - [Garages and Lots | City of Annapolis, Maryland \(MD\) Parking Guide](#)



NEW! SDAN Meeting

“Writing your 1-Pager”

January 17, 2025

12:00-1:00pm

Save the date!

Registration link to come.



The most effective advocacy tool is your personal story and your relationship with your legislators

Identifying your most compelling issues

Expressing those issues in a concise way (“Elevator Speech”)

Avoiding jargon and the “weeds”

How to make an appointment with your legislators

PREPARING FOR DD DAY at the LEGISLATURE

Sign up for one-on-one sessions with the SDAN DD Day Committee to help you write your story

Contact your on key committees NOW to make appointments - can be another day, to avoid the crowds on DD Day



SDAN LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY & OCR UPDATES:

- SDAN written response to December's Joint-Briefing
- Possible new bill on self-direction
- Request for Legislative Audit on the Self-Direction Act
- SDAN has retained an attorney (limited scope)
- Training and support on filing OCR complaints coming later this month!
- Please consider donating to SDAN to support these important work and all our ongoing advocacy eff



Unresolved Issues?



Self-Directed Advocacy Network of Maryland, Inc.

- Use your CCS and Support Broker
- Contact the Regional DDA Office
- Write to the DDA Deputy Secretary and Secretary of Health
- Write your legislators**
- Fill out Governor's Survey
- Contact Office of Constituent Services to go "on the record"

QUESTIONS? THOUGHTS?

Put your questions in the chat box or if you are unable to do that, use the “raise your hand” function.

We will answer as many questions as possible!

Reminder: Please feel free to email any private/sensitive information to info@marylandsds.org

The logo for SDAN (Self-Directed Advocacy Network of Maryland, Inc.) features the letters S, D, A, and N in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is filled with a pattern of yellow, black, and maroon colors, resembling a stylized flag or a mosaic.

Self-Directed Advocacy Network of Maryland, Inc.

Thank you!



Donate

Write us
info@Marylandsds.org

Volunteer

JOIN