

# Legislative Trends and Challenges for

Speech-Language Pathologists  
And Audiologists  
North Carolina's Advocacy Efforts

CSAP May 2010

## What In the world happened?

### National Economy

- ▶ Banks/Mortgage Companies Failed Causing Panic
- ▶ Joblessness
  - 12 Million Unemployed
- ▶ Reduced spending
- ▶ Balanced budget required

## State Economy

- ▶ Joblessness
- ▶ Decrease in NC industry, manufacturing and agriculture (particularly tobacco)
- ▶ State tax plan from the 1950s based upon a manufacturing and agricultural economy. We are now a service-oriented economy.
- ▶ Reduced payroll taxes, sales taxes, gasoline taxes, etc.
- ▶ Requirement to 'balance the budget' without borrowing.

## How NCSHLA responded: Analysis of the Obstacles

- ▶ Accessibility to licensed SLPs/Auds
- ▶ Disbelief, lack of understanding
- ▶ Staggered awareness among licensed clinical staff
- ▶ "Healthcare is immune"
- ▶ Misunderstanding that 'this only affects people who bill Medicaid'
- ▶ Lack of awareness among related professionals, community leaders and elected legislators of 'what we do'

## Action Plan

- ▶ Mobilize SLPs / Auds
- ▶ Provide information, education and strategic actions necessary
- ▶ Encourage responsiveness and distribution of critical info via ASHA and NCSHLA.
- ▶ Engage PR Professional to write and distribute Press Release to all media outlets
- ▶ Engage Attorney to research viability of program elimination under Federal law
- ▶ Rally in Raleigh and Town Hall Meetings
- ▶ THOUSANDS of phone calls, visits, meetings and emails!



**What was 'on the line'?**

**Who/What was really in jeopardy?**

- EVERYTHING and EVERYONE**  
In the profession, in our communities, in NC
- › Private Practitioners
  - › University Programs
  - › Healthcare Settings
  - › Clients
  - › Communities
  - › State of NC and JOBS in all settings

**Everyday Advocacy,  
 Advocacy Everyday!**

What can you do in your community to educate, inform and create understanding of and respect for your profession and the services you provide?

- Everyday Opportunities - take them!**
- › **INTERACTIONS WITH:**
  - › Physicians and physician office staff
  - › School personnel
  - › Hospital and SNF administrators
  - › Families, parents, caregivers
  - › Physical Therapists & Occupational Therapists
  - › Social Workers, DSS, Nurses
  - › Daycare directors and staff
  - › Early Intervention and Preschool evaluation/services

- Larger Audiences**
- |   |   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› State Advocacy           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Get to know your Legislators!</li> <li>◦ Public Service Announcements</li> <li>◦ Chamber of Commerce Groups &amp; Mayors</li> <li>◦ Community Healthcare Groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› National Advocacy           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Get to know your State Representatives and Senators!</li> <li>◦ Follow the ASHA grassroots advocacy actions online</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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- EVERY Month Should Be....Better  
 Speech and Hearing Month!**
- › **COMMIT:** Devote one hour each month to advocacy (over and above your everyday moments)
    - Send postcards
    - Call the local talk radio or TV station
    - Send a personal letter