



## Examples of Successful Advocacy Strategies

- Working with the **Department of Health** to ensure proper enforcement of regulations.
  - Requesting Dear Administrator Letters from the Department of Health to nursing homes on topics such as visitation and discharge/transfer to ensure nursing homes are following the law correctly.
  - Pressuring the Department of Health to conduct a midnight survey on a nursing home in which few citations had been issued, but which repeatedly had complaints from family members. Midnight survey resulted in numerous citations.
  
- **Grass roots advocacy** – Engaging our members in petition signing, letter writing and trips to Albany has resulted in the successful passage of laws, such as the Family Healthcare Decisions Act.
  
- **Family Council Coordination**
  - New York Family Councils successfully wrote and ensured passage of the Family Council Law with FRIA’s coordination.
  - A Family Council was able to have a poor performing administrator replaced with FRIA’s assistance.
  
- Facilitation of **individual advocacy skills** through our free telephone helpline
  - Example case: Sister A lived in Nursing Home A. Sister B lived in Nursing Home B. Sister A was capacitated and well enough to move, and wanted to live in Nursing Home B with her sister. Nursing Home A was refusing the transfer. Several advocates who were friends of Sister A called FRIA’s helpline. They were given information and language to use regarding residents’ rights, advance directives and capacity, ombudsman assistance and safe discharge/transfer versus false imprisonment. After several weeks of conversation in which Nursing Home A attempted to continue to create obstacles to transfer, the advocates were able to get Sister A safely transferred to live with Sister B in the same nursing home.
  
- **Coalition Building Techniques**  
Building Family Council Coalitions – a brief case example
  - FRIA identified its own goals which were to build advocacy skills in nursing home caregivers and to gather information about the types of assistance needed to promote quality long term care in different nursing homes. Family members and friends are the eyes and ears in the nursing home.
  - FRIA did a needs assessment with family groups –did our goals and needs match what family members and friends were seeking? Family/friends did want to increase their advocacy skills and improve their nursing homes. Family and friends wanted a variety of

- methods to share information (face to face meetings with each other, a listserv, a newsletter, and collaborative projects).
- FRIA focused on positive projects that unite families even when there are not specific complaints in a particular nursing home (for example, person centered care projects). This empowers families, creates a less adversarial relationship between nursing homes and family/friends and allows the group to set themselves up for success. Following through on project components and evaluation of concrete outcomes provides a sense of accomplishment in the coalition.
- As group advocacy skills increase, balance of ownership transfers to the group from the founding organization, returning the investment in the collaborative work.