Top Ten Things To Know
AHA and Nonprofit Advocacy

1. The AHA’s efforts to translate the science of cardiovascular disease and stroke into meaningful public policy began in the early 1980s with an initial focus on increasing federal research funding.

2. Today the association’s public policy agenda extends across a broad spectrum of issues from research and prevention, treatment and access, and short-term cardiovascular and stroke care at the federal, state, and community level.

3. Authors conclude that the greatest asset of the AHA in public policy advocacy is the respect the organization has as a result of:
   - a steadfast commitment and ability to translate credible and robust science into public policy solutions
   - access to credible experts from its grassroots network
   - making these experts available to the media

4. Substantial resources are committed to developing scientific statements, guidelines, policy statements, and original reports based on rigorous, peer-reviewed research, which provides a trusted resource for policy makers that reinforces the AHA’s credibility and creates a solid foundation for its advocacy positions.

5. The paper outlines the AHA advocacy process, which includes policy research to translate science into policy that provides a foundation for legislative and regulatory advocacy activities.

6. The You’re the Cure network includes survivors, caregivers, researchers, medical professionals, and families who use their voices and expertise to influence heart- and stroke-related issues.

7. Authors explain that policy has the greatest impact when it optimizes the environments in which people live, work, learn, and play. Examples include smoke-free air, AED placement, CPR training, and nutrition and physical education standards in schools.

8. Policy work around smoking cessation and prevention is a remarkable example of the impact that advocacy can have on reducing cardiovascular disease and stroke in the United States.

9. The scope of advocacy activities and strategies should evolve in response to the policy environment and to the needs of the individuals who have heart disease and stroke.

10. Current AHA advocacy focus areas are:
    - increasing funding for heart disease and stroke research
    - promoting cardiovascular health through policies related to obesity, nutrition, physical activity, and clean air
    - supporting high-quality/high-value heart disease and stroke care
    - supporting timely access to heart disease and stroke care

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