
Taking Charge: How to Make a Difference

Introductory Remarks

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Dr. Michnich is assistant to the Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate, Washington, DC. The introduction is based on her

remarks at the National Conference on Women's Health, held in Bethesda, MD, June 17-18, 1986. Dr. Michnich served as the Moderator of the plenary panel session on "Taking Charge: How to Make a Difference."

I am very proud and pleased to moderate such a distinguished panel of individuals. My own representation is probably a political one, given my position as professional staff in the U.S. Senate. But my job here is to pull together, as is the job of Congress, the

three levels of input that you will see represented on this panel: national, professional, and local contributions to the health of women. I am very happy to have joined some old colleagues and others who are new friends.

Taking Charge: How to Make a Difference

The Volunteer—Agent for Action

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growing. With less discretionary time, volunteers have many more choices for their time and efforts.

Agencies competing for these resources can have the advantage if they are willing to review and tailor their programs accordingly. Meaningful training for the volunteer, an emphasis on collaboration, and a shift from direct service to advocacy will be as important as organizational flexibility and efficiency.

Synopsis

In every community, there are organizations and volunteers interested in and working in a wide variety of areas, and the demand for them is continually

The 266 Junior Leagues in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Great Britain have long worked toward these goals for their 163,000 members. The Leagues collaborate on local, State, national, and international levels to initiate model service programs, pursue public policy goals, and participate in broad-based volunteer endeavors. They are achieving significant change in legislative and government policy and are formulating new approaches to services for children and families, for women, and for the aged.

ALTHOUGH THE REPORT of the Public Health Service Task Force assigns many of its recommendations to public health agencies and officials, a substantial number of them are directed toward women, women's organizations, and concerned groups that are interested in women's health and well being. This latter group of concerned citizens is important—the committee volunteer.

Volunteers today are taking charge in ever greater numbers and making differences in ever more controversial areas. There are more than a million not-for-profit agencies in this country today, all testifying to our belief in the independent sector, what John Gardner calls "the private pursuit of public purpose." Without volunteers, there would not be not-for-profit organizations. Their volunteer boards of