



TIPS FOR LOCAL ADVOCACY

Your advocacy at the local level with your Members of Congress and their staff is critical to advancing the public policy agenda for nurse practitioners as well as ensuring appropriate inclusion of nurse practitioners in health care reform initiatives. The following are tips to enhance your advocacy effectiveness.

Attend Town Hall Meetings

During the August district work period when Members are in their home states, a number of public events will be held during which you can participate and share your comments and issues. Contact your Senator/Representative's local office to find out when these meetings or other public sessions will be held. Take the opportunity to participate in at least one town hall meeting and be prepared with your questions or comments. Be sure to introduce yourself to your Member and staff and follow up with an email or telephone call after the meeting. For more information on participating in Town Hall meetings, refer to "Effectively Using Town Hall Meetings" on the ACNP Advocacy Resources webpage.

Invite a Member of Congress or His/Her Staff to visit your clinical practice site: Inviting your Members of Congress, or congressional staff, to visit your clinical site and see you in action provides an ideal opportunity to educate them about the care you provide as a nurse practitioner and the issues you face. These visits could provide your Member of Congress with additional insight about the care needs in your particular district. Additionally, hosting a visit could provide for you valuable face-time with the Member of Congress or staff. Be sure to clear this activity with the appropriate persons at your worksite.

Offer your expertise as a healthcare provider resource: Contact your elected officials and their staff to identify yourself as a nurse practitioner and offer your services as an expert, knowledgeable resource about health care and especially the health care issues that are important in your district. With ongoing discussions about healthcare reform, volunteering as an expert healthcare resource could be vitally important to future Hill deliberations.

Additional advocacy opportunities:

Do your homework on the elected official: Review his/her voting record, read their bio, and spend a little time on their website. Familiarize yourself with their positions,

priorities, and orientation to issues regarding health care. For more information on particular NP related bills, refer to the Legislative Tracking Chart on the ACNP Advocacy Resources webpage.

Prepare your questions/comments in advance and bring materials to give to the elected official and his/her staff: Public speaking sometimes can be intimidating, so writing down the specific question you wish to ask, or jotting down a few notes to help you with your remarks, is advisable. Since you may only have a minute or two, it is best to focus your comments on one particular item and, “Cut to the chase.” Providing handout material to give to the policymaker and staff will give you the peace of mind that everything will be covered, especially in case you do not have the time to make (or you forget) some of your key points.

Sign-up for your Senators’ and Representative’s newsletters and mailing lists: Members of Congress like to keep in touch with their constituents to keep them up-to-date on key issues and inform them of their positions. They also send out notifications of town hall meetings and other events throughout the year. Sign-up for electronic newsletters through a portal on your elected officials homepages. When signing-up, make sure you provide contact information, such as; email, phone, or mailing address; always use your home/personal information.

Most of all – ENJOY participating in the process: Your voice will help elected officials understand the importance of nurse practitioners and the role they play in primary care.