



Advocacy 101

Tell your story. Advance our industry.



Elected officials were elected to represent **YOU**, the constituent, in the Illinois General Assembly or in Congress. When deciding how to vote on an issue, they look to the information they have at hand – be it from staff, from lobbyists, or their own background, but most importantly, they look to input from industry leaders. It is **YOUR** opinion that matters the most, so do not be afraid to share your thoughts with them.

Build a relationship. ● ***Maintain the relationship.***

Checklist

- Identify your elected officials. Visit www.ilhomecare.org to use our search tool.
- Call his/her district office to schedule a meeting.
- Meet with your elected official. Be sincere. Tell your story. Listen to their story. Share your challenges, success, facts and data. Be concise and respectful of his/her time. Invite him/her to visit your agency, meet your staff and go on a home visit.
- Get to know their staff.
- Follow-up with a thank you.
- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Maintain the relationship. Don't just call/email when you need something.
- Follow the elected official on social media. Attend events. Volunteer on a campaign.
- Register to vote. Vote in elections; mobilize your family, friends & colleagues to vote.

Top 10 Tips for Communicating with Elected Officials

1. **Don't be nervous.** Legislators were elected to represent you and the interests of other constituents in his or her district. They work for you and are human, just like you.
2. **Tell your story.** Connect on a personal level. The goal is to build a lasting relationship such that the legislator will come to you as a trusted source of information time and again.
3. **Connect on social media.** Most elected officials have a strong presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and/or Instagram which makes it easy to follow their activities in the district and in Springfield or Washington, D.C. In addition, sign up for newsletters or email updates to make sure you have the most up-to-date information on events and opportunities to connect in person with your legislator. When commenting on social media posts, be sure to be courteous at all times—remember, our goal is never to “call out” or embarrass an elected official.
4. **Invite your legislator on a home visit.** This is a good one-on-one opportunity for you and your legislator to show them the work that we do and meet the patients/clients we serve. If you are successful, make sure to arrange for a photo opportunity for the legislator, and make sure to send this on to IHHC!
5. **Attend events held by your elected officials.** This can be effective for both state and federal legislators. Let them know you value the work they do on your behalf, and if the opportunity arises, introduce yourself. Let them know you represent home care and/or hospice.
6. **Get to know their staff.** An elected official cannot do his/her job without their staff. They play an integral role and are as important as the elected official. Be courteous and treat them with respect.
7. **Learn their preferred method of communication.** Some of the Washington, D.C. staffers prefer email, while some may prefer a phone call or fax. It may be easier to connect personally with State legislators. Be respectful of their time and keep communication concise.
8. **Contact your legislator or his or her staff regularly.** Weigh in on issues regularly; communication on all aspects of health care and even other issues. Compliment them when it is appropriate...they work hard and deserve recognition for their efforts. When an issue of importance arises, they will remember you, and may be likely to hear you when you need attention.
9. **Be the expert!** Provide information to support your issue...articles, excerpts or data from trusted sources (cited) may be just what is needed to assist them in making a decision in support of our cause.
10. **Keep the relationship strong!** Make sure to maintain ongoing communication. Send them notes and place phone calls of support if they vote favorably on an issue that impacts our industry.