

How to Effectively Communicate with Your State Legislators



Every elected official is ultimately responsible to only one group of people - their constituents. Nothing is more powerful or important than communicating with your elected representatives. They need to hear from you, or they may not understand the physician's perspective on an important issue.

Communication is Easy!

There are a number of ways in which you can quickly and effectively transmit your thoughts and position on an issue. You can **CALL** and ask to speak to the Member. Do not be surprised if he or she is not available. Feel free to leave a message with a staff member. Or **SEND A LETTER**. It shows that you care enough about an issue to take the time to put word to paper. The methods of transmitting a letter are varied. You can mail it, fax it, e-mail it, or drop it off personally. Better yet, **MSSNY'S GRASSROOTS ACTION CENTER** provides direct electronic access to your representatives as well as sample letters on topical health care issues.



Even better, **MAKE AN APPOINTMENT** to see your lawmaker. It is best, and more convenient for you, to meet in the district. This will allow you 15-30 minutes of private "face" time with the lawmaker which will enhance the message you are conveying.



4 BASIC STEPS TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE YOUR MESSAGE



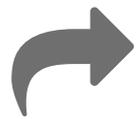
IDENTIFY

Identify yourself by name and the organization (if any) that you represent and/or the town in which you live or practice.



EXPLAIN

Explain what your message is: "I am calling to support/oppose Assembly bill #/Senate bill #." Be polite, respectful, and concise. Be calm, respectful, and prepare to educate by using examples.



REQUEST

Request a written follow-up response from your legislative representative if you did not speak directly to the member. If the legislator requires further information, provide it as soon as possible.



THANK

Thank the person you spoke to for their time and consideration and tell them that you will be contacting them in the next few weeks to follow-up on your conversation.

HINTS

Keep communication to one or two points



Make the message as personal as possible - relate real experiences



Follow up with a short thank-you note



Make sure you have the necessary background information. Contact MSSNY's Division of Governmental Affairs for more information at (518)-465-8085 or www.mssny.org