



Wound
Ostomy and
Continence
Nurses
Society®

Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society™ Advocacy and Grassroots Toolkit

Influencing Public Policy: Strengthening the Voice of the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Community

Originated By:

Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society™ (WOCN®) National Public Policy/Advocacy Committee

Date Completed:

February 15, 2012

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. WOCN[®] Society Grassroots Toolkit for State Advocacy
- III. The Basics: Communicating Directly with Your Legislator
- IV. Increasing Your Voice: Building a Relationship with Your Legislator
- V. About Congress: Resources to Help You Navigate the Legislative Process

I. Introduction

The future growth and vitality of wound, ostomy, and continence (WOC) nursing is largely dependent on the ability of our professionals to influence key decisions made in our state and nation's capitols. These policy decisions are essential to preserving the future of our practices, our health care facilities, and the patient populations that we serve. To protect our field of nursing, we must develop and deliver effective messages from credible messengers to our elected officials about the quality of our patient care and its importance to the community. This is the essence of advocacy, which can be implemented on many levels and take many different forms.

This toolkit will present a variety of options for incorporating advocacy efforts into your operations, from simply establishing regular communications with your elected officials to the more advanced efforts entailed in developing a grasstops or grassroots program to strengthen your influence in Washington, D.C. or in your state capitol. The WOCN[®] Society has prepared this toolkit as a resource for its members to enhance their own, individual efforts at public policy/advocacy. The WOCN[®] Society continues to conduct direct lobbying on Capitol Hill, provide advocacy support and training, and coordinate all of the Society's government relations activities.

II. WOCN[®] Society Grassroots Toolkit for State Advocacy

It is important for WOCN[®] Society members to recognize that to be an effective advocate for our profession, we need to become involved in every level of government, including state and local policy. While the bulk of this toolkit focuses on federal activities, state legislatures across the country are playing a bigger role in health care policy than ever before. Since the enactment of the “Affordable Care Act” (ACA) in 2010, states have been given broader authority and responsibilities with regard to health care policy decisions. Going forward, states will be largely responsible for the expansion of Medicaid authority, granted in the ACA, and the establishment of their state Health Insurance Exchanges. State legislators will be more involved in coverage and reimbursement decisions than in past years.

WOCN[®] Society members must be engaged at a state level because we are the eyes and ears of our profession and our patients. Policy decisions often happen quickly at the state level and can be made without the input of all stakeholders, if those stakeholders are not engaged in the process. So, how do you become engaged in the process at the state level? There are some simple steps that can be taken:

1. **Stay Alert** – Try to read about the activities of your state legislature in the newspaper or on health policy blogs that might be available in your state.
2. **Engage Other Stakeholders** – Reach out to patient group leaders in your state as well as the public policy representatives you might have at your institution and ask that you be kept involved and considered a resource on health policy decisions.
3. **Research** – Two great resources are listed below that can help you become well informed about state policy and your state legislatures. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has a wealth of information about state policy and state legislators, and has a dedicated Health Policy section. In addition, Project Vote Smart can help you identify who your state legislators are and how to contact them.
 - <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health.aspx>
 - <http://www.votesmart.org/>
4. **Reach Out** – The WOCN[®] Society encourages all of its members to reach out to their state representatives, just as they would with their federal representatives. Being engaged is the best way to protect both your profession and your patients.

III. The Basics: Communicating Directly with Your Legislator

Legislators are greatly influenced by what they know and what they hear – especially from the people they represent. By communicating with a state legislator or a member of Congress, you can have a profound impact on the government policies that most affect your practice and the field of wound, ostomy, and continence nursing.

Your elected officials need to hear from you. They hear from constituents and special interest groups about many diverse issues ranging from education to transportation to foreign policy. They need to hear from the nursing community as well. Do not assume they know all the facts about the important role that wound, ostomy, and continence specialty nurses play in delivering patient care in your community. It is incumbent upon you to provide them with the information they need to fully understand and appreciate the vital role of WOC specialty nurses.

Remember that you also should communicate with legislators from around your state and not just the elected representative from the district in which your facility or institution is located. Legislators from neighboring districts need to know that your WOC specialty nursing practice is essential and impacts their constituents.

Suggested Steps

Send an introductory packet to your Congressional delegation, especially new legislators.

The beginning of a new Congress is an ideal time to introduce (or reintroduce) wound, ostomy and continence nursing.

- If a new member of Congress was just elected from your state, send a congratulatory letter to the legislator.
- Send a letter of congratulations to those who were re-elected.
- Use this mailing as an opportunity to provide key information about your practice/facility to legislators from your state.

Provide information, such as the WOCN[®] Society's position statements, to educate or update legislators in your state about the important role WOC specialty nursing plays in your community.

Use this first mailing to develop or strengthen your relationship with the office.

- Follow up with a phone call to the legislator's office.
- Remind the staff to contact you as a resource for further information.
- Extend an invitation for a visit to your practice/facility.

Maintain regular contact with a legislator's office.

Keep your legislators informed about your practice and facility.

- Find opportunities to send positive articles and information about wound, ostomy and continence nursing (e.g., press clips, success stories, *WOCNews* [the official WOCN[®] Society newsletter]) at least a few times a year.

Communicate clearly about relevant legislation – do not assume that they know where you stand.

- Communicate if you are for or against a piece of legislation.
- Thank the legislator for supporting any relevant legislation.

Depending on the urgency of the situation, use one of the following methods of communications:

- **Fax** – Faxed letters are very effective as they are likely to be given to the legislative staff immediately.
- **Letter writing** – Use letters primarily to accompany information packets, articles, etc., because postal mail arrives very slowly to Capitol Hill offices.
- **Email** – Email is particularly effective if you communicate directly through a staff's individual email address, or if you are mobilizing a large number of people through the legislator's website.
- **Phone calls** – Phone calls are very effective because they provide an opportunity to talk directly to the staff, which reinforces your relationship with the office.

Writing a Letter

Constituent letters are a common way of communicating with a legislator and an effective advocacy tool.

- A personal letter will get more attention than a form letter or pre-printed postcard.
- Make sure you include your name and address. Some offices will not open a letter if it is not from his/her state.
- Fax the letter to your member's office. Mail takes a long time to arrive because of security concerns with mail sent through the postal service.

Your letter should be simple and direct.

- If possible, limit your letter to one page.
- State the purpose of your letter in the first paragraph, identifying a specific bill number, if applicable.
- Focus on one particular issue and request specific action from the legislator.
- Explain how the issue will affect your local community.

Letters should be addressed as follows:

To a Senator

The Honorable (Full Name)
United States Senate
(Room Number; Building Name) Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (Last Name):

To a Representative

The Honorable (Full Name)
House of Representatives
(Room Number; Building Name) House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative (Last Name):

Sending an Email

Email is an easy way to communicate with a legislator or staff member.

- If possible, **try to secure an email address of a particular staff member** (the health Legislative Aide or the District Office Director) and email him/her directly. This is highly effective.
- All legislators have a web page with a link to contact the legislator. While this is a very easy way to communicate, it is less effective unless you are mobilizing a large number of people. Remember, legislators receive thousands of emails a week, so one individual email can get lost.

State key information in the subject line.

- As it is easy to erase email, you want to communicate key information in the subject line.
- State that you are a constituent and reiterate the issue in the subject line (e.g., “Your constituent writing about _____ legislation”).

Keep your message brief and to the point.

- Do not forget your name and address in the text.
- Embed your message in the text. Attachments should be for background information, fact sheets, or endorsements.

Finding your legislator's website and email.

- You can find your legislator's email address by visiting either the House or Senate websites (www.house.gov or www.senate.gov) and searching for or selecting your legislator's name.

Telephone Calls to an Office

Phone calls are effective in delivering information quickly and directly, especially on days of key votes.

- State your position and ask what position the elected official is taking.
- Be prepared to explain how the issue will affect your practice and the legislator's constituents.

Calling the District Office.

- While the District staff may be less influential in terms of legislation compared to the D.C. staff, they are more accessible to constituents.
- Establishing a good relationship with the District Director is a very effective way to influence policy because the District office staff is responsible for constituent services.

Calling the Washington, D.C. Office.

- When you call the Washington, D.C. office, ask to speak with the health legislative aide.
- Remind the aide that you are a constituent and how many people your practice/facility serves in the state.
- Try to develop a dialogue that will allow you to call back in the future. Encourage your congressional staff contact to call you as a resource for information.

Sample Phone Script. Reference the legislator's website for the Washington and District Office phone numbers. You can locate his/her website by going to www.house.gov for House members and www.senate.gov for Senators. You also can call the Capitol operator at (202) 224-3121 and they will direct you to your legislator's office.

Sample Letter to a Legislator on a Key Issue. Constituent letters are an extremely effective advocacy tool. Your letter should be simple and direct. Ideally, it should not be more than one page since short letters tend to have the greatest impact. It should only address one issue and you want to be very clear about your position and request. Print your letter on personal stationery, if possible.

The Honorable (First Name; Last Name)
U.S. House of Representatives/Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515 (for House)/20510 (for Senate)

Sent via facsimile: (202) (fax number)

Dear Representative/Senator (Last Name):

Sincerely,

Tips for Writing a Letter to a Legislator

1. Fax Your Letter

- In light of security concerns on Capitol Hill, send your letter by fax rather than through the postal service.

2. Opening Paragraph

- Introduce yourself as a constituent and how you are connected to the district.
- Thank the legislator for any past support that is applicable.
- State the purpose for your contacting the legislator. If applicable, reference a specific bill number.

3. State the Facts

- Back up your position with facts.
- Provide information showing the impact of legislation on your practice/facility or on the legislator's district and constituents.

4. Explain Consequences

- Provide information on the impact of opposing your request.
- Explain the impact on your community.

5. Ask for a Response

- Restate your position.
- Ask for a response.

6. Close the Letter

- Be sure to provide your contact information.
- If applicable, include a professional or organizational affiliation so the legislator sees that you are connected to the larger community.

Common titles and job functions in a congressional office. Members of Congress rely on their staff to assist him/her during a term in office, so knowing and understanding the titles and roles of these staff members is critical to communicating effectively with Congress. These are some of the common staff members in a Congressional office:

Administrative Assistant (AA) or Chief of Staff (CoS). The AA or CoS is usually a person in charge of overseeing office operations and supervising key staff, but most importantly, this person reports directly to the Member of Congress. The AA/CoS typically has responsibility for evaluating the political outcomes of various legislative proposals in the member's district or state and constituent requests.

Legislative Director (LD). The LD is typically the staff member who monitors the legislative schedule according to the interests and committee assignments of the member, supervises legislative assistants, and makes recommendations to the CoS or the member based on the likely or expected outcomes of particular issues.

Legislative Assistant (LA). An LA is usually a staff person with specific interest and expertise on a particular issue or a number of issues. There are typically several LAs in a given member's office and they will usually vary based on the interests of the member and his/her constituency.

Press Secretary (Press Secy.) or Communications Director (Comm. Dir.). The responsibility of the Communications Director is to establish clear and open lines of communication between the member, their constituency, the media, and the public at large. This staff member must be able to effectively promote the views and positions of their member on specific issues to these parties as clearly and briefly as possible.

Personal Secretary. This secretary or scheduler is responsible for appropriating the member's time to accommodate the many demands on his/her time including congressional and constituent requests and staff requirements. These responsibilities may involve making travel arrangements, scheduling speaking engagements or visits to the district, or making appointments with the member.

Caseworker or Legislative Correspondent. This staff member typically deals with constituents' requests, addressed to the member or to a federal agency, and prepares replies to those requests for the member's signature. These staff people will also address or resolve constituents' concerns over the phone. There are usually several of these correspondents in any given Congressional office.

IV. Increasing Your Voice: Building a Relationship with Your Legislator

Over time, you will have a much greater impact on public policy by developing and sustaining relationships with your elected officials and their staff. As a starting point, it is important for legislators to be aware of your practice and the community that it serves. However, for you to affect their decision-making, they must come to know you, your hospital and clinics, the people you serve, and the other community leaders who form the backbone of your support.

Keep in mind that you also want to develop relationships with legislators from around your state, not just your elected representative. Legislators from neighboring districts need to know that wound, ostomy, and continence nurses are providing essential nursing care to their constituents – even if the actual practice is not located in their district.

People respond to people, and it is important to build personal relationships. These can be with legislators or with their key legislative staff. Building a relationship will take time and hard work, but if done well, it has the potential to yield significant results for the WOCN[®] Society and our practice. Ideally, you will be able to involve your stakeholders and build upon their existing relationships with legislators. Here are just a few ideas to get you started.

Suggested Steps

Get to know the district staff.

Building relationships with the district office can prove to be very useful.

- The district staff is responsible for constituent services. They will, therefore, be interested in meeting with you and learning about you and your practice.
- Begin by asking the District Director to meet with you and other leaders from your practice at the district office.

Use the first meeting to cultivate a relationship.

- At the first meeting, provide the staff with an overview of the practice/facility and the patient population that it serves.
- Invite the District Director to visit your practice/facility for a tour to learn first hand how the practice of wound, ostomy, and continence nursing impacts your community.
- Once you have developed a personal relationship with the District Director, it will be much easier to call him/her about a key piece of legislation.

Arrange for a visit to your medical or research facility by your legislator.

A first-hand tour of your facility is the most effective way to educate an elected official.

- Invite elected officials to visit your practice/facility by sending a letter or fax. Ideally, each legislator from your area, including those from neighboring districts, should visit your facility once a year.

- Follow up with a phone call to the office remembering that legislators are in the district offices during Congressional recess and on most Mondays and Fridays.

Prepare for the visit with clear goals.

- Prepare for the visit by coordinating closely with the legislator's staff, and determining the length of the visit.
- Develop a very clear agenda, identifying exactly who the legislator will be meeting, what departments you will be visiting, the message, press availability, and the purpose for each stop on the tour.
- Use the tour to demonstrate the needs of the practice/facility and not just the accomplishments; identify services that could be provided with additional funding.
- Identify your legislative request(s), if any.
- Prepare appropriate take-away materials for your elected official.

Encourage a tour of the entire facility, including clinics.

- Given the breadth and depth of many practices/facilities, consider inviting legislators to see one of your clinics or community centers (e.g., rural site, etc.).
- A visit provides an opportunity to develop a personal relationship with the legislator and senior stakeholders of the practice.
- Include opportunities for the legislators to meet with board members or other senior stakeholders. The goal is not just to educate the legislator but to build a relationship between the legislator and your leadership.

Visit your elected officials in Washington, D.C. Ultimately, you will want to schedule a personal visit to your members of Congress in Washington, D.C. Elected officials will take notice of your visit. Taking the time out of your schedule to travel to Washington, D.C. sends a very clear message to your legislators about the importance you place on public policy matters. Plan your visit carefully by being clear about what you seek to accomplish and whom you want to meet.

- The best days to visit a legislator in Washington, D.C. are Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.
- Make your appointments in advance. Ideally, you should contact the member's scheduler to seek an appointment a few weeks in advance.
- Call or fax a written request for a meeting with the legislator and his/her staff. Remind them if you are a constituent and how many constituents are served by your facility.
- Remember that a meeting with a member's legislative staff can be as important and productive as a meeting with the legislator.

Prepare for the meeting. Be prepared to state your specific request. Develop two or three well-documented talking points reinforcing your message.

- Use data if applicable to support your points.

- Be prepared to explain how your legislator's constituents benefit from this issue.
- If multiple people will be attending the meeting, determine in advance each person's role.

Follow up to the meeting.

- Send a thank you for the meeting.
- Include any information the legislator asked for and provide additional information to reiterate your message.
- Continue to cultivate the relationship.
- If the legislator acts positively upon your request, make sure you thank him/her and if possible, publicize his/her support within your local practice, hospital, or research facility.
- The WOCN[®] Society also publicizes government relations meetings and activities in the Society's newsletter.

Invite a legislator to one of your meetings.

Inviting an elected official to speak at a special facility, practice or hospital meeting is an opportune way to enhance the relationship. Take advantage of relationships that any of your leadership or board members may have with the legislator in arranging for the visit.

- Prepare for the visit by developing a clear presentation about your practice/facility and the services they provide to the community.
- If possible, incorporate senior leadership into the presentation.

Thank legislators and staff for their interest and support.

Take the time to thank legislators and staff whether it is for a meeting or support of legislation.

- Be certain to express your appreciation to a legislator following a meeting, practice/facility visit, or any other personal contact.
- Use the thank you as a way to continue building the relationship and as an opportunity to follow-up with additional materials on your facility or on a particular legislative issue.

Sample Meeting Request Letter to a Legislator

Meeting face-to-face with a legislator is an effective way to develop a relationship and to impress upon an elected official the importance that you place on particular issues. Your letter should be simple and direct about your request for a meeting. If you are proposing to meet in Washington, D.C. or in the legislator's district, be clear as to the specific date and time you will be available to meet.

The Honorable (First Name; Last Name)
U.S. House of Representatives/Senate
Washington, DC 20515 (for House)/20510 (for Senate)

Sent via facsimile: (202) (fax number)

Dear Representative/Senator (Last Name):

On behalf of (your facility's name) in (your city), I am writing to request a brief meeting with you on (day and date) anytime between (specific hours of availability). Representatives from our community, including (reference types of stakeholders; e.g., "nurses") will be in Washington, D.C. that day and would welcome the opportunity to talk to you about the essential role that wound, ostomy, and continence specialty nurses play in the local community.

As you may know, (your practice/facility's name) is a vital part of our community's health care delivery system. We provide quality, accessible health care to all segments of our community. (Insert information about your facility, including the number of patients you serve, the number of people you employ, and your areas of expertise in medicine.)

Thank you for considering our request for a meeting on (date). We would very much appreciate it if your scheduler would contact me (or name of your government relations director if signed by someone else) at (phone number) to schedule an appointment.

Sincerely,

Tips for Writing a Meeting Request Letter to a Legislator

1. **Fax your letter**
 - In the light of concerns on Capitol Hill, particularly since the anthrax scare, send your letter by fax rather than through the postal service.
2. **Open the letter**
 - State up front the purpose of your letter, which is to request a meeting with the legislator in his/her office.
 - Indicate if other people will be joining you and what subject you want to discuss.
 - Bold the sentence that specifies the proposed date and times for the meeting so that it stands out.
 - Be sure to reference the day of the week and the date (e.g., "Wednesday, March 3, 2005") and the specific times during which you will be available to meet (e.g., "between 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.").
3. **Provide facts on your practice**
 - Provide some background information on your practice/facility highlighting its role in the community and the number of constituents served.
4. **Specify follow-up steps**
 - Request that the legislator's scheduler call you to schedule the meeting or indicate that you will be following up.

- Provide contact information so the scheduler can follow up or call with any questions.
- 5. **Close the letter**
 - The letter could be signed by you, your practice or hospital leadership.
 - Be sure to provide the person's title.

Do's and Don'ts: Tips for Meeting Your Representatives

Meeting with your elected officials is often the most effective way of educating them on a public policy issue. A face-to-face meeting provides an excellent opportunity to convey and receive information and to develop relationships that will benefit your cause. You can simplify the process by following the tips and guidelines outlined below.

Before the meeting

- Request the meeting in writing and follow up by phone to confirm the date and time and who will be attending the meeting.
- If other people will be accompanying you to the meeting, decide in advance each person's role. Designate one person as the facilitator.
- Be clear about the purpose of the meeting and what you want to accomplish.
- Do your homework ahead of time; research the legislator's voting record and know whether he/she sits on any key committees that affect your issue. You should visit the member's website and search online for useful background information.
- Prepare materials to bring to the meeting both as "props" during your presentation and as a leave-behind for the legislator.

During the meeting

- Be sure to arrive on time and dress appropriately (business attire).
- All participants should introduce themselves and indicate their position with their institution, and be sure to specify that you are a constituent.
- Start the meeting by thanking the legislator for meeting with you and, when appropriate, for being supportive of your position on an issue.
- Present your issue in a clear and concise manner.
- Try to incorporate a personal reference or anecdote to make the issue more real to the legislator.
- Request specific action from your legislator (e.g., support for, or opposition to, a specific bill; floor remarks; talking to leadership).
- Do not argue.
- Do not lecture.
- After presenting your position, listen to the Legislator or Legislative Aide.
- If you do not know the answer to a question, do not be afraid to say you do not know and that you will follow up after the meeting.
- Thank the legislator or aide for his/her time.
- Give the legislator the leave-behind packet you prepared.

After the meeting

- Write a thank you letter to the legislator that summarizes your conversation and any commitments that were made.
- Follow-up and provide any additional information that was requested or offered.
- Please notify the WOCN[®] Society's Executive Director about the substance of your meeting if relevant to the WOCN[®] Society's membership at large.

V. About Congress: Resources to Help You Navigate the Legislative Process

This section contains background information on the United States Congress and the legislative process. Included are links to a variety of websites that will be useful to you in tracking the status of legislation and planning your advocacy activities in Washington, D.C.

For specific information about the WOCN[®] Society's advocacy efforts and federal legislation affecting the field of nursing, visit the WOCN[®] Society's website at: www.wocn.org and click on "About Us" and then click "Advocacy and Policy."

Congressional Calendar

The U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate maintain their own calendars of legislative activity. To obtain the most current calendar produced by each legislative body, you can visit their respective websites:

www.house.gov
www.senate.gov

Status of Legislation

You can track the status of a piece of legislation through an online service offered by the Library of Congress. This website offers you the option of searching by a bill number, if known, or by a word or phrase. You can also monitor committee action and floor votes by visiting:

<http://thomas.loc.gov>

Contacting Your Members of Congress

To obtain contact information for your Senator or Representative (i.e., phone number, fax number, or email address), you should access their website. The easiest way to get to a member's individual website is through the House or Senate sites:

www.house.gov
www.senate.gov

Congressional Committees

Each House and Senate committee has its own website with more detailed information on committee action and the status of legislation under its jurisdiction. Among the committees you may want to monitor are the following:

House jurisdiction relating to health care.

- **Committee on education and labor** – This committee deals with a number of health care-related education and labor issues including the access to quality health care for

working families, worker health and safety, programs and services for at-risk youth, child nutrition and poverty programs.

- **Committee on energy and commerce** – This committee and its subcommittees address issues pertaining to public health, hospital construction, mental health and research, biomedical research and equipment, Medicaid and national health insurance, food and drug regulation, drug abuse, and toxic substances.
- **Committee on ways and means** – This committee and its subcommittee on health addresses bills and matters related to programs providing payments for health care, health delivery systems or health research, programs under the Social Security Act, and tax credit and deduction provisions of the Internal Revenue Code dealing with health insurance premiums and health care costs. Specific programs addressed by this committee include Medicare, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) and Old-Age, Survivors & Disability Insurance.

Senate jurisdiction relating to health care.

- **Special committee on aging** – This special committee addresses matters pertaining to problems and opportunities of older people including health maintenance and issues to obtaining care and assistance.
- **Committee on health, education, labor, and pensions (HELP)** – HELP addresses matters relating to education, labor, health and public welfare, aging, biomedical research and development, occupational safety and health, and public health.
- **Committee on finance** – This committee concerns itself with issues of taxation and revenue, as well as insular possessions. More specifically, related to the concern for taxation and revenue issues, this committee addresses and has jurisdiction over most programs authorized by the Social Security Act and other health programs financed by a specific tax or trust fund. This includes Medicare parts A through D, Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), TANF, Maternal & Child Health Title XX Social Services Block Grant Program, Old-Age, Survivors & Disability Insurance, and the Physician Payment Review Commission.

House of Representatives

Appropriations

www.house.gov/appropriations

(202) 225-2771

H-218 Capitol Building

Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

(202) 225-3508

2358 Rayburn House Office Building

Energy and Commerce

<http://energycommerce.house.gov>

(202) 225-2927

2125 Rayburn House Office Building

Health Subcommittee

(202) 225-2927
2125 Rayburn House Office Building

Ways and Means

<http://waysandmeans.house.gov>
(202) 225-3625
1102 Longworth House Office Building

Health Subcommittee

(202) 225-3943
1136 Longworth House Office Building

Senate**Appropriations**

<http://appropriations.senate.gov>
(202) 224-7363
S-128 Capitol Building

Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee

(202) 224-7216
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Finance

<http://finance.senate.gov>
(202) 224-4515
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Health Care Subcommittee

(202) 224-4515
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

<http://help.senate.gov>
(202) 224-5375
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building

How a Bill Becomes a Law

For a quick review of the federal legislative process, visit the website below. This site will step you through the process beginning with the introduction of legislation by a member of Congress, the role of committees, floor action, and eventually the President's signature.

www.vote-smart.org/resource_govt101_02.php

Glossary of Legislative Terms

The vote-smart website also includes a brief glossary of basic legislative terms. For a more comprehensive listing, visit the following website:

www.thecapitol.net/glossary

Relevant U.S. Government Agencies

To fully follow the development of policy in our nation's capital, you may also want to contact or access the websites of several executive offices, including Cabinet departments and federal agencies. These offices play a role in developing legislative proposals, which the administration submits to Congress for consideration. Depending on the issue and the legislation being proposed, you may want to contact officials in these offices to discuss any concerns or recommendations.

The White House

www.whitehouse.gov

(202) 456-1414

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20500

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

www.dhhs.gov

(202) 690-7000

200 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20201

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

www.cms.hhs.gov

(410) 786-3000

4700 Silver Hill Road

Suitland, MD 20746

Food and Drug Administration

www.fda.gov

(301) 827-2410

5600 Fishers Lane

Rockville, MD 20857

National Institutes of Health

www.nih.gov

(301) 496-4000

9000 Rockville Pike

Bethesda, MD 20892

Office of Management and Budget

www.omb.gov

(202) 395-3080

725 17th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20503

Date Approved by the WOCN[®] Society Board of Directors: March 20, 2012