

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR
**Pain Management
Nursing**

P.O. Box 15473 ❖ Lenexa, Kansas 66285-5473 ❖ 913/895-4606 ❖ aspmn@goamp.com

Legislative Toolkit Overview

The key to awareness of ASPMN and our issues is grassroots support. This toolkit provides you with some helpful information to use when requesting and participating in meetings with elected officials. Wade Delk, ASPMN's Government Affairs Director, is available to talk with you about meetings, and to answer your questions. As issues of importance to ASPMN arise we will post detailed information about current issues in our website's advocacy section for your use.

The materials in this toolkit are intended to be a *general guide* for your advocacy activities on Capitol Hill and with state and local officials. It is important to remember that advocacy activities, as well as information discussed at meetings with elected officials, should be targeted toward the specific audience involved.

In addition to setting up meetings with elected officials on Capitol Hill, in the State House, or with local officials and/or contacting them directly through letters or email, there are other grassroots activities that can help our messages be heard. These include but are not limited to:

- Invite local elected officials to chapter events/meetings
- Ask a local elected official to "Tour your Facility" or observe a "Day in the Life" with an ASPMN member
- Present an award to a local elected official who has supported nursing legislation advancing the nursing profession or promoting patient quality and safety
- Arrange for meetings in district/state with key members of Congress when they are on Congressional recess.

Inside this toolkit you will find:

[Lobbying 101](#)

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[Sample Letter to Request Meeting](#)

[Sample Talking Points](#)

[Sample Meeting Agenda](#)

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Lobbying 101

The Importance of Communicating with Congress, State and Local Officials

Votes on issues are determined by input from the constituents and this is where you can make a difference. While you cannot change core beliefs, your input can have an important impact on what officials know about an issue.

By nurturing relationships, staying in contact and educating officials, you can ensure that your positions are understood.

Communicating with Lawmakers

The electronic age makes this very easy; Utilize personal visits, phone calls, letters and emails. Remember, legislators are extremely busy people and you must plan ahead.

Personal visits – call for an appointment, be flexible with timing, explain the purpose of the meeting, confirm the meeting time in writing, arrive early, and not be disappointed if your Legislator or Elected Official cannot meet with you as planned.

Most likely, if you arrange a Congressional office meeting, you will meet with a staff person who handles specific issues for the official such as healthcare. This person is considered by the official as his or her expert on the issue, and they rely on this person to convey the sentiments of the constituents.

Meetings – Do your homework! Develop a one page paper that succinctly describes why you are here (ASPMN Governmental Affairs Director can help you with this) Set goals for your meeting – what do you hope to achieve? Include the following:

- Introduction – who you are, why you are here today, what specifically you want to discuss
- Overview – why the problem exists, what are the implications?

Key Points

- What are the strategies to mitigate the issue? – What needs to happen...more funding, a change in the law? Be as specific as possible. Know what to ask for and show that you have researched a solution(s)
- Be a resource – show that you can be counted on to provide more data, more relevant information
- Know your adversaries – it is just as important to know who and why someone would oppose what you are proposing.
- Research your Congressional member – look at their voting record, read the members website to see what he/she has sponsored or supported. Make sure you read their biography. This may give insight to their position on issues based on their experiences. You also might find a connection you have with them.
- Recognize your power as a constituent – the official was *elected*, and YOU are whom he/she is representing. Officials rarely will turn down a meeting with a constituent.

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Capitol Hill 101

THE SENATE

The Constitution prescribes that the Senate will be composed of two Senators from each State (therefore the Senate currently has 100 members) and that a Senator must be at least 30 years of age, have been a citizen of the United States for 9 years, and, when elected, be a resident of the State from which he or she is chosen. A Senator's term of office is 6 years and approximately one-third of the total membership of the Senate is elected every second year.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Constitution prescribes that the House of Representatives will be composed of Representatives from each State (the number of Representatives is determined based on population—the House currently has 435 members) and that a Representative must be at least 25 years of age, have been a citizen of the United States for 7 years, and, when elected, be a resident of the State from which he or she is chosen. A Representative's term of office is 2 years.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Introduction

Anyone may draft a bill; however, only members of Congress can introduce legislation, and by doing so become the sponsor(s). There are four basic types of legislation: bills, joint resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and simple resolutions. The official legislative process begins when a bill or a resolution is numbered—H.R. signifies a House bill and S. a Senate bill—referred to a committee and printed by the Government Printing Office.

Step 1. Referral to a Committee

With few exceptions, bills are referred to standing committees in the House or Senate according to carefully delineated rules of procedure.

Step 2. Committee Action

When a bill reaches a committee it is placed on the committee's calendar. A bill can be referred to a subcommittee or considered by the committee as a whole. It is at this point that a bill is examined carefully and its chances for passage are determined. If the committee does not act on a bill, it is the equivalent of killing it.

Step 3. Subcommittee Review

Often, bills are referred to a subcommittee for study and hearings. Hearings provide the opportunity to put on the record the views of the executive branch, experts, other public officials, supporters and opponents of the legislation. Testimony can be given in person or submitted as a written statement.

Step 4. Mark Up

When the hearings are completed, the subcommittee may meet to "mark up" the bill, that is, make changes and amendments prior to recommending the bill to the full committee. If a subcommittee votes not to report legislation to the full committee, the bill dies.

Step 5. Committee Action to Report a Bill

After receiving a subcommittee's report on a bill, the full committee can conduct further study and hearings, or it can vote on the subcommittee's recommendations and any proposed amendments. The full committee then votes on its recommendation to the House or Senate. This procedure is called "ordering a bill reported".

Step 6. Publication of a Written Report

After a committee votes to have a bill reported, the committee chairman instructs staff to prepare a written report on the bill. This report describes the intent and scope of the legislation, impact on existing laws and programs, position of the executive branch, and views of dissenting members of the committee.

Step 7. Scheduling Floor Action

After a bill is reported back to the chamber where it originated, it is placed in chronological order on the calendar. In the House there are several different legislative calendars, and the Speaker and the majority leader largely determine if, when and in what order bills come up. In the Senate there is only one legislative calendar.

Step 8. Debate

When a bill reaches the floor of the House or Senate, there are rules or procedures governing the debate on legislation. These rules determine the conditions and amount of time allocated for general debate.

Step 9. Voting

After the debate and the approval of any amendments, the bill is passed or defeated by the members voting.

Step 10. Referral to Other Chamber

When a bill is passed by the House or the Senate it is referred to the other chamber where it usually follows the same route through committee and floor action. This chamber may approve the bill as received, reject it, or change it.

Step 11. Conference Committee Action

If only minor changes are made to a bill by the other chamber, it is common for the legislation to go back to the first chamber for concurrence. However, when the actions of the other chamber significantly alter the bill, a conference committee is formed to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate versions. If the conferees are unable to reach agreement, the legislation dies. If agreement is reached, a conference report is prepared describing the committee members' recommendations for changes. Both the House and the Senate must approve of the conference report.

Step 12. Final Actions

After a bill has been approved by both the House and the Senate in identical form, it is sent to the President. If the President approves of the legislation he signs it and it becomes law. Or, the President can take no action for 10 days, while Congress is in session, and it automatically becomes law. If the President opposes the bill he can veto it; or if he takes no action after Congress has adjourned its second session, it is a "pocket veto" and the legislation dies.

Step 13. Overriding a Veto

If the President vetoes a bill, Congress may attempt to "override the veto". This requires a two-thirds roll call vote of the members who are present in sufficient numbers for a quorum.



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Sample Letter Requesting Meeting with Elected Officials

(INSERT DATE)

Representative/Senator/Elected Official (INSERT NAME)
(INSERT CITY, STATE)

Dear (INSERT NAME):

On behalf of the (INSERT CHAPTER NAME or your name for yourself), I am writing to request a meeting on (INSERT DATE). Given your interest in workforce and nursing issues, I would like to tell you more about The American Society for Pain Management Nursing® (ASPMN®) and how we might serve as a resource to you.

ASPMN's mission is to advance and promote optimal nursing care for people affected by pain by promoting best nursing practice. This is accomplished through education, standards, advocacy, and research. ASPMN stands ready to work with lawmakers to advance programs and policy that will sustain and strengthen our nation's nursing workforce.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I will be following up with your office shortly to see when a meeting might work with your schedule on (INSERT DATE).

Sincerely,

(INSERT NAME, CREDENTIALS)



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Sample Talking Points and Discussion Questions For Meetings with Elected Officials

The overall goals for this meeting are to:

- 1) *Provide an overview of ASPMN.*
- 2) *Discuss the importance of pain management nursing.*
- 3) *Discuss the nursing shortage as a public policy issue.*
- 4) *Provide the groundwork for ASPMN to be a resource of information.*

Introduction

- Given your interest in nursing and/or workforce issues, we are here today to provide you with an overview of the American Society for Pain Management Nursing® (ASPMN®) and to see how we might serve as a resource to you in the future.
- We would like to discuss the role of the pain management nurse and the quality care that they provide to health care services within your district, state or municipality, and nationwide.
- Tell stories about your experience as a pain management nurse/educator, etc.
- Tell them **“All Nurses are Pain Management Nurses.”**
- Provide them with the link to ASPMN’s YouTube video about the Role of Pain Management Nurses:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_oUyPV58MI&feature=youtu.be

Nursing Shortage information:

Why there is a Nursing Shortage:

- Studies have shown that the pool of registered nurses will continue to decline if efforts at the state and federal level are not increased to increase the graduation rates of nurses at all levels.

- **Retention and Workplace Issues** – the physical and emotional demands of the environment are created by increasing workloads, difficulty in staffing and the increased use of unscheduled overtime. Studies show that nurses report feeling undervalued overworked and underpaid.
- **Recruitment and the Image of Nursing** – the image of nursing has changed over the last decade from a field that offered many opportunities to one that is viewed by some as uncertain and difficult. Women have more career opportunities and many students view the job as having unsatisfactory working conditions and not competitive with salaries of other professions. Some nurses would not recommend nursing as a career choice.

Implications of a Nursing Shortage:

- Registered nurses are essential in ensuring access to and the quality and safety of care. The escalating nursing shortage poses a significant threat to society's most vulnerable populations and has adverse implications for access to care and the quality of health care and safety of that care.
- The growing shortage has had an effect on the access to health care and in the ongoing debate of healthcare reform. This could mean waiting longer for nursing interventions, increased Emergency Room diversion, exposure to medical errors or traveling to hospitals further away from home for acute care.



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Sample Agenda for Meetings with Elected Officials

- I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION
- II. OVERVIEW OF ASPMN AND MEMBERS IN THE ELECTED OFFICIALS DISTRICT(S)
- III. OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC POLICY ISSUE
(use specific data, illustrate examples of how this issue affects patient care and the quality of health care)
- IV. OFFER TO LEAVE BEHIND RESOURCES AND BACKGROUND MATERIAL
- V. FOLLOW-UP WITH A THANK YOU LETTER

Hear what nurses have to say about their important role in pain management:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/ASPMN>



Our Mission:

To advance and promote optimal nursing care for people affected by pain by promoting best nursing practices.

Key Messages:

Everyone, regardless of income, race, gender, age, status or geographic location, **should have access to effective pain management**

Pain management should be delivered with an individualized, balanced approach, utilizing interdisciplinary methods – pain management is not one-size-fits-all and it is often a combination of therapies that achieves the best results

Appropriate education and training on pain management issues and treatment **is vital for nurses** who are often the most effective patient advocates

Patients, families, employers, colleagues and the public at large need education regarding the dramatic impact pain can have on a person's ability to have a productive life and that there are a variety of effective ways to help manage pain

Elected officials share a responsibility to make sure that the workforce for the U.S. health care system is adequately educated and that funding is made available to **address the nursing shortage**

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