

Become an Advocate

PSPA Members' Role as Advocates

Although we represent you, PSPA's influence only carries so much weight. The most important element of a successful advocacy strategy is YOU. Legislators are more likely to act on problems that affect their constituents. Relationships with legislators are cultivated over time. If you do not already have a relationship with your legislators, it is not too late. However, it is important to initiate and maintain a positive relationship with your legislators. Again, to find your legislator's contact information, you may visit the General Assembly's website at www.legis.state.pa.us.

Communicating with Legislators

When communicating with your legislator, it is important to do your homework. Here are examples of doing your homework:

- Every time a bill gets amended, it receives a new printer's number, so be sure to know the content of the most current printer's number of a bill (see www.legis.state.pa.us).
- Know where your legislator stands on legislation and ask if you do not know. If you already know you have his/her support, thank them to help firm up their position.
- Be prepared to know how the issue would affect Physician Assistants.
- Know what your legislators' committee assignments are. All legislators, except those in leadership, typically have two to four different committee assignments. Even if your legislator is on the Health Committee, chances are that he or she has not read all the bills that have been referred to that committee. You will need to outline the bill, as well as its effect on PA's when speaking to him or her. Your legislators' committee assignments can be found on the General Assembly's website (www.legis.state.pa.us).
- Know their voting record.
- Get to know your legislators' staff members.

Build a Coalition

When working in the political arena, it always is easier to get things done within a group. Coalition building with people in your community, as well as with other PA's, can be an effective lobbying tool for issues that have broad appeal. The more people involved, the louder your voice will be. Coalitions can share both direct and grassroots lobbying efforts. This strengthens the information base and increases the number of constituents that elected officials hear. It is a powerful organizing strategy, provided the coalition serves as a means to a shared goal and doesn't consume time and energy that drains your ability to lobby effectively.