A LEGISLATIVE PRIMER

FOR FEDERAL ADVOCACY

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INTRODUCTION TO NAPNAP'S HEALTH POLICY PROGRAM

The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) maintains a strong Washington advocacy program to keep NAPNAP members informed about federal issues affecting Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (PNPs) – including those that affect reimbursement and services provided to pediatric patients.

With the help of Courtney Yohe, Health Policy Advisor at Arnold & Porter LLP, and Allison Shuren, a partner at Arnold & Porter LLP and a pediatric nurse practitioner, NAPNAP continues to raise the profile of PNPs and advocate for federal policy that benefits our clinical practices and the patients we care for.

Our Washington Representatives work hand-in-hand with NAPNAP's Health Policy Committee, chaired by Ann Sheehan and represented by President Michelle Beauchesne; Past President, Linda L. Lindeke; Incoming President Jean Martin; Chief Executive Officer, Karen KellyThomas; and leaders Karen Duderstadt, Andrea Kline and Mary Chesney. The Committee convenes regularly to prepare timely comments on legislative and regulatory issues under consideration, expressing the unique and powerful voice of the PNP.

In addition to initiating regular discussions with Health Policy Members about relevant health and professional practice issues, the Washington Representatives communicate with the NAPNAP Membership in several distinct ways:

- Maintaining a Legislative Tracking sheet, providing current information about key legislation important to PNPs. This information is available on the NAPNAP website, through the Advocacy Section.
- Providing regular E-Legislative Alerts to Chapter Presidents and Legislative Liaisons to disseminate timely information about pending legislation.
- Hosting annual Fly-ins for members who want to learn more about the legislative process and experience the opportunity to meet with their own legislative leaders in Washington
- Sharing information through keynotes, workshops and networking activities at the NAPNAP annual meeting.

The success of the NAPNAP's Washington advocacy efforts depends directly on the efforts of its members. We hope this advocacy guide will encourage your interest in legislative involvement – whether it is on the federal, state or local level.

We would like give credit, and offer thanks to Kathi Ream and the Emergency Nurses Association permission to use of its Washington Advocacy Manual for adoption and use in this document.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

As a nurse practitioner, you are well aware that the effectiveness of your work often depends on the quality of your relationships with patients and colleagues. So is true with government relations. You must develop relationships with legislators and their staffs, long before you turn to them for an understanding of your point of view on an issue. *Strong personal relationships are the best means of influencing legislative decision making*. Personal visits, phone calls, faxes, and e-mails also are important, especially when they come from constituents who are well-known, highly regarded, and have gone out of their way to be helpful in a variety of ways in the past. Building relationships takes time and effort, but it's the most effective way to shape the thinking of those who decide public policy.

How do you go about building such relationships? In much the same way you cultivate friendships: by being friendly and personally helpful. "Personally helpful" cannot be emphasized enough. Become a useful and trustworthy source of sound information and insight, contributing your personal time to professional and political needs and interests. Your own party affiliation should not restrict you. Every elected officeholder represents an entire state, legislative district, or local government – Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike. You don't have to be a member of the legislator's political party to work together.

You will need, however, to do some homework about the key issues that are important to the interests of you and your patients. In the same way, familiarize yourself with the legislators with whom you want to build relationships.

Amass information. Know the number of pediatric nurse practitioners (PNP) providing primary care in the congressional district and state; the approximate number of patients served; facts about the role of a PNP; scope of practice issues; as well as particular challenges faced by PNPs in your local area.

As a voter, you are represented in Washington by a U.S. Representative and two Senators. You can obtain the name of your Representative through your local elections board, the League of Women Voters and .

You can obtain information about your Representative and Senators by contacting their offices in Washington, D.C. or through http://thomas.loc.gov, http://www.house.gov and http://www.senate.gov.

Some suggestions for building relationships with your legislators include:

- Write and/or call legislators on current issues.
- Make personal visits either in Washington, D.C., your state capitol, or at the home district offices on current issues or broad problems.

- Organize group visits on issues of mutual importance.

- Invite legislators to tour your clinic for a discussion of health care issues. Also consider inviting legislators to attend special events where they might get some publicity.

- Get personally involved politically in legislators' campaigns and the activities of your political party.

Here are some ways you can work with NAPNAP to build relationships at the federal level:

- Develop resource relationships that officeholders can call upon at will for reliable and authoritative information.

- Leverage legislative influence through effective coalition-building activities.

- Where appropriate, provide financial support for legislators' campaigns through *individual* contributions.

These steps will progressively build your credibility with the officeholder. Establishing a reputation as an objective information source, for example, builds credibility for subsequent communication on issues. Political support provides another avenue to express your views.

Personal Visits

Personal meetings with legislators and key staff members are the most effective way to make your case on an issue. Such visits also are a good way to introduce yourself as a constituent. A personal meeting can be difficult to accomplish with the policymaker's busy schedule, but remember that you are offering an important business contact. You can arrange the meeting with the policymaker directly or through staff aides.

The following suggestions will help make the best use of your time and the legislator's:

- Always make an appointment. Arranging the first meeting may require patience on your part, but be persistent. Later, as you become known as a resource, gaining appointments will be less difficult. Your standing will improve if you become known as a campaign supporter, political activist, or health-care leader who can muster support on the issues from a variety of groups through your grassroots and coalition activities – i.e. colleagues, friends, neighbors.

- Be prepared to meet with key legislative personnel or committee staff members if the legislator is unavailable at the last moment. Briefing these people before your visit also may be useful so that they can prepare the legislator. Staff aides are often more knowledgeable about

details of a specific issue than lawmakers themselves.

- If several individuals join you in the visit, decide in advance who will be the principal spokesperson. That individual, of course, should encourage others to participate in the discussion to share particular expertise or experiences.

- If you want to discuss a specific issue, make sure you are thoroughly familiar with all aspects of it before going into the meeting.

- When talking to legislators, try to be concise, well-organized, and mindful of the other person's time. State your view firmly, but be attentive to the policymaker's position also.

- Open the discussion by reminding the legislators who you are, whom you represent (i.e., yourself, your facility, or your local NAPNAP chapter), and why you are there. Know the issues and the bill numbers about which you are speaking. Clearly state your concern about the issue, how it will affect you, patients in your care, and the community. Avoid harsh accusations. Be polite and respectful. Often, we forget how we sound when we are particularly passionate about an issue.

- Always be truthful and never mislead. Your personal credibility and that of NAPNAP is at stake. If you don't have the answer to a question, do not improvise. Promise to get back to the questioner with the necessary information, and be sure to do so promptly.

- Come prepared with a brief (1-2 page) position paper that summarizes your points with facts, and leave it behind with the legislators or staff aides. If you would like to provide a lengthier set of materials to answer questions posed at the meeting, email them later with a "thank-you" note. (NAPNAP materials are available on its website for your use.)

- To gain a favorable vote, follow up with letter(s) and calls to legislators and their key staff advisors at appropriate points as the issue progresses.

- Maintain the relationship. Get your name on legislative e-mail lists. Find occasions to see the legislators again in appropriate circumstances, and write to them on the issues from time to time. If you obtain reports or data that will be useful to legislators and their aides and that you can share with them, email those documents with a brief note. Eventually, you may even find policymakers coming to you for information, help, or your point of view on new issues.

ORGANIZING THE GRASSROOTS

Tip O'Neill once famously remarked that, "All politics are local." That couldn't be more true when it comes to federal advocacy.

The most effective voice of NAPNAP is its individual members. Therefore, it is critical to have NAPNAP members who are willing to write letters, make phone calls, send e-mails, and visit with legislators in their districts or in Washington, D.C.

Working on public policy issues is addictive! Once you experience the impact you can have, you will be motivated and excited to take on another. Your enthusiasm and interest are also contagious to others. By relating your experiences to your colleagues, you will find yourself developing a cadre of interested supporters who will form the core of your grassroots network.

A grassroots network serves to unite many individual voices and in expressing local viewpoints to those representing you.

Critical thinking is important in any government affairs endeavor but especially so in developing a grassroots network. Before you send off the troops, think about which members would be most effective in talking with officials and who would remain calm in a pressure situation. Where you lack members to contact key legislators, join coalitions to gain strength in your advocacy efforts.

What ultimately is most important about grassroots networks is to think outside the box. Be creative with how you organize and motivate your members. Developing grassroots is a labor intensive activity so it is important to get others involved – and have fun.

Grassroots Networks Tips

- PNPs are the best advocates for NAPNAP.
- Members get involved when you identify those issues of most interest and concern to them.
- Don't wait for a crisis to start a grassroots program. Relationship building takes time, as does cultivating trust between members and legislators.
- Regular communication is essential. Do not expect the member to stay involved without being kept informed.
- Members need constant feedback to feel comfortable with the process. A monthly or quarterly newsletter is essential.
- Use broadcast fax or email to reach your members effectively.
- Training and education are essential, particularly for key contacts. Include information on how legislation is adopted and the risks of not being involved.

- Keep the message simple.
- Remember that recognition is important. Use newsletters, magazines and meetings to recognize grassroots supporters. Your colleagues are volunteers like you.

Telephone Or Email Trees

A pre-existing telephone or e-mail tree helps you mobilize a large number of people in a short time. If you suddenly discover that a bill you thought was locked in committee is being brought to the floor tomorrow, phone and e-mail trees are a great way to encourage colleagues to take quick action. Remember, a telephone or e-mail tree must be in place *before* quick action is required. You will not have enough time to organize a tree and put it into action if you wait until you need it.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

It is easy to find reasons not to get involved:

"I don't have time to make a phone call." "No one will listen to me." "They don't care what I have to say." "I don't have any experience." "What if they ask me a question I cannot answer?"

Most of us are nervous about our first legislative visit. The following suggested tips should serve to guide you to ensure that your experiences with government relations are positive and successful.

You are an expert in your profession - and nurses are among the most trusted professionals. Most legislators are not nurses, so you have specialized knowledge that they don't have. Trust that they will listen to you and respect you **because you are an expert.**

Consult with advocacy materials located on the NAPNAP website for specific tips on letter writing, personal visits, email, and phone calls. NAPNAP endorses many bills each year as part of our advocacy efforts. Detailed information – including talking points and issue summaries are available for your reference.

Personalize the issue by giving examples of how you, your coworkers, and/or your patients are affected. You would be amazed at how much more weight is given to a constituent's concerns than to those of a lobbyist; but the message must be meaningful. Legislators and their staff know that organizations try to mobilize their members to send e-mails or letters on certain issues. If the letter reads like a form letter, it will not have the same impact as a personal letter that includes examples and personal experiences.

Obtain a commitment. At the close of a personal visit or meeting, you should attempt to secure a commitment from the official that he/she will support your position. For example, you might say in closing, "So we can count on your support on Wednesday?" or "We hope you will recognize this amendment is important for the quality care of our patients, and we hope you will agree to

cosponsor it." Even verbal commitments are tough to break.

Realize that talking to the staff is like talking to the elected official. Treat staff the same way you would treat the elected official. Officials often rely on staff to advise them on how to vote or craft legislation, and they also develop interpersonal relationships with trusted staffers.

Arrive early for meetings and be flexible. An elected official's schedule can be filled down to the minute. They don't have time to wait for you, even though you may have to wait for them. Be prepared to have the meeting standing up, in a crowded or loud area, or amid numerous distractions. If the legislator indicates he has to leave the meeting to go to a hearing or vote, offer to walk with him/her.

Avoid health care jargon. Although you are an expert, try to frame your comments as small bullet points of information that can be easily understood by a layperson. While your clinical knowledge may be impressive, if you lose your audience, your message will be lost.

Leave something behind. At a minimum, leave your business card so the staff or elected official can contact you with questions. Optimally, you should provide a useful "leave-behind" that summarizes your position on an issue in digestible tidbits. Statistics and references are always a plus, as staff will often use information from "leave-behinds" in speeches or as talking points on the issue. Examples may be found on the NAPNAP website.

Be realistic. Thousands of bills are introduced during each legislative session, but fewer than 10% are enacted. Don't be discouraged if your bill does not pass. You have established relationships, educated staff and elected officials, and built support for your position. If you have accomplished these things, you have laid the groundwork and increased your chances that a bill will pass the next time.

Come prepared to defend your position. You always have to know what your opposition is up to. If you anticipate questions and are prepared in advance to defend your position, you will increase your persuasiveness.

Dress appropriately in business attire. Remember the purpose of your visit is to talk about professional issues. To be most effective, you should appear organized and professional.

Be loyal to your friends. Like-minded individuals who work on issues similar to yours can be powerful advocates in public policy. They might call you with inside information or invite you to participate in an outreach activity. If you undermine your friends, they will not be around the next time you need help.

Recognize the value of compromise. In the world of public policy, you may not get everything you want. However, isn't it better, for instance, to get some money for injury prevention than none at all? Think about areas in which you are

prepared to compromise and identify those that are not negotiable. In some cases, you may even want to anticipate compromise by asking for more than you actually want. But be careful – don't concede anything until the timing is right.

Keep your phone call or visit brief and to the point. While staff or the elected official will usually be polite, it is incumbent on you to recognize that they are very busy. Keep your meeting pleasant and brief, and start looking for clues that it's time to wrap things up after fifteen minutes. Meetings should rarely last more than twenty minutes, but take your cue from the person with whom you are meeting.

Make friends before you need them. Whenever possible, develop relationships before you have to ask for something. Try to become familiar with legislators who work on issues of interest to you, even if nothing is developing on that topic or in his/her committee at the time. One obvious place to start is by getting to know the members of the health care committees at your federal, state, or local levels.

It's okay to disagree respectfully. If a legislator has an opposing position on an issue and you are unable to change his/her mind, remain respectful of the time he/she gave you to state your position. If possible, compliment the legislator on his/her work on another issue. The legislator will appreciate your understanding and be impressed by your knowledge of his/her record.

Say thank you. Whether you are following up after a personal visit or thanking a member for fighting in committee for one small provision that was important to you, it is always nice to recognize another's efforts. Legislators and their staff work hard, and most have great intentions, so your sincere thanks is appreciated.

Provide helpful information whenever possible. Providing information is always appreciated. If you send a copy of a current report or an article you think the staff or elected official would find interesting, you present yourself as a considerate, alert person who wants to help. When you provide useful information and are not asking for any specific action in return, in effect, you are reminding the recipient of who you are and are providing them with a nonthreatening communication that will be appreciated.

Ask NAPNAP for help. We are committed to helping you. If you need assistance, consult the NAPNAP website or contact NAPNAP's national office for additional information.

A few things to avoid

Do not speak or endorse candidates on behalf of NAPNAP. While NAPNAP can speak on behalf of its members with one voice, it chooses not to endorse political candidates.

Do not pretend to know something that you don't. If you make up information or skirt around an issue, you'll come off as disingenuous and lose

your credibility. Most people can spot a phony.

Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Legislators aren't expected to be experts on everything, and neither are you. Admitting you don't know the answer to something can be a good thing, because it gives you the opportunity to say, "I don't know, but I can research that and get back to you." Then, when you have an answer, you have another opportunity to make contact with the staff or elected official.

Don't promise something you can't deliver. You must be as good as your word or you will lose your credibility.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

A face-to-face meeting is the most effective way of communicating with your legislators. However, such meetings tend to be the exception and not the rule. What then are the other ways of communicating and what is their effectiveness? One caveat that applies no matter which method you choose – make sure you use a communication means that will get your opinion to your legislator BEFORE that vote needs to be taken.

Tips On Writing, Faxing, and Emailing

The letter is the most popular choice of communication with a congressional office. However, since the anthrax incidents on Capitol Hill, you are advised to **fax or email your letters** to your Members.

If you decide to fax a letter, this list of helpful suggestions will improve the effectiveness of the letter:

- Write on your organizational letterhead or use personal stationary.
- Be sure your return address is on your letter, since envelopes become detached before the answer is written.
- Be accurate. Spell names correctly and verify information. You can check names, addresses, and fax numbers by going to the Legislative Action Center on the NAPNAP web site.
- State your purpose for writing in the first paragraph of the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly, e.g., House bill: H. R.____, or Senate bill: S.____.
- Address only one issue in each letter; and, if possible, keep the letter to one page.
- Be courteous and include key information, using examples to support your position. Explain how the legislation would affect your profession, your colleagues, and the community in which you live.
- Ask your elected officials to explain their position on the issue in their reply so you do not get the typical form-letter response – "I'll keep your views in mind

should this legislation come up for a vote." As a constituent, you are entitled to know why your Members of Congress think as they do.

- Thank your elected officials if they vote your way. They appreciate a compliment, and they remember positive feedback.

- Do not hesitate to state your displeasure. However, that, too, will be remembered, so be polite if your Members of Congress oppose your position. You will want their help on another issue on another day.

Addressing Correspondence:

To a Senator:

The Honorable (full name)
(Rm.#), __(name of) Senate Office Bldg
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

To a Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
(Rm.#), __(name of)House Office Bldg
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

Note: When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address them as: Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman: or Dear Mr. Speaker or Madam Speaker:

Tips On Telephoning

If there is not time to fax your letter stating your concerns/support, make a phone call instead. To find your legislator's phone number, go to NAPNAP's searchable online congressional directory contained in the **Legislative Action Center** or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your Senator's and/or Representative's office.

- Decide whether to direct your calls to the Washington or district office. Call the Washington office when you want to discuss the technical aspects of the bill in question. Call the district office when you want to make a political statement by contacting your legislator's top political person in the district. That person will make sure your message gets to the elected official.

- Remember that telephone calls are most often taken by a staff member, not the Member of Congress. Ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue on which you wish to comment.

- After identifying yourself, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that you are a PNP in the district and support/oppose (S.___/H.R.___)."

- State the reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Ask for your Senator's or Representative's position on the bill. You may also request a written response to your telephone call.

Tips On E-Mailing Congress

If you cannot fax your letter or call, then e-mail. Generally, the same guidelines apply as with writing letters to your Members of Congress. You can e-mail your legislators directly from NAPNAP's Legislative Action Center at http://www.napnap.org.

VISITING YOUR LEGISLATORS

Important Points to Remember

As you visit your state or federal legislators, you will want to be mindful of various characteristics of the legislative process. These qualities influence how policy is made, including the effect of your interaction with congressional staff. Remember the following points about the legislative process, knowing that policymaking is not a straightforward process:

- **The legislative process is deliberately complex,** ensuring that proposed new laws and policies receive the fullest possible consideration, NAPNAP advocates for many bills each year. Most bills introduced never receive any action at all, and few of those considered become law. Also, a legislative proposal may be introduced year after year before it gains consideration. Hang in there; evaluate how you might approach your goal when you try again.

- **Every legislative body has informal customs and practices.** These customs and practices can be as important as the body's formal rules. For example, key policy decisions are made by the leadership in some legislatures, by a policy committee in others, and by the majority party members in yet others. Who is making the decisions?

- **Government is inherently political.** Candidates for most legislative seats are nominated through partisan political processes and chosen in partisan elections. The political party that wins a majority of seats in each legislative body also wins the right to pick the leaders of that body, and open factors influencing it, the government is of and by the people. Do not be shy about expressing yourself; just approach your meetings in full awareness of the context in which you are working. often the staff. Consider how party politics might shape your approach to your goal.

- **Legislative proposals may be weighed subjectively.** They are often considered not only on their merits but also on these basic political questions:

- ✓ How will the bill affect the legislator's reelection prospects?
- ✓ What are constituents (citizen voters) saying about the issue?
- ✓ What are the views of the news media, community and business leaders, and local interest groups?
- ✓ What will be the impact on the economy and jobs?
- ✓ Are any significant local campaign supporters taking a public position on the issue?
- ✓ What is the advice from the legislator's staff members and advisers?
- ✓ Is this issue consistent with the legislator's previous votes on related matters, and with his or her political and economic philosophies?
- ✓ Do these political factors need to be addressed explicitly during your congressional visit, or implicitly as you shape and practice the message you are attempting to deliver?

 The legislative process is customarily very open. Every interested citizen usually has the opportunity to offer input and express opinions at various stages of the process. Public comments are welcome. When you participate actively in the political process, you are joining a lively discussion on public policy. Legislators lobby (attempt to influence) each other and are influenced, in turn, by the executive branch of government, other public and private interests, and self-styled activists.

CONGRESSIONAL VISITS

Hymel's Ten Rules For Working Legislative Staff

1. Keep it short – both your message and your visit.
2. Know the arguments on the other side.
3. Document your position. Prepare a summary and supporting papers. Leave them with the staffer.
4. Promise (and keep your promise) to supply answers and documents requested as follow-up actions from your visit.
5. Never threaten.
6. If you see a member alone, make sure you follow up with a staffer.
7. Tell them why the legislators might be interested in your position, from a local or issue-related point of view.
8. If you have allies, tell them who they are.
9. If they agree with your position, leave soon.

10. As former Representative Lindy Boggs said, "Always say please and always say thank you." The basic rules of courtesy apply.

**Gary Hymel served as the Administrative Assistant to House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill and is a well-known lobbyist in Washington, D.C.*

GUIDE TO LEGISLATIVE STAFF TITLES

Each legislator has staff to assist him/her during a term in office. To be most effective in communicating with your legislators, it is helpful to know the titles and principal functions of his/her key staff.

Administrative Assistant/ Chief of Staff

The AA reports directly to the legislator. He or she usually has overall responsibility for evaluating the political outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. The AA is usually the person in charge of overall office operations, including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff.

Legislative Director Senior Legislative Assistant Legislative Coordinator

The LD is the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In some offices there may be one LD or Senior LA, but several LAs. In this case, each LA has responsibilities assigned to them based on their particular expertise in specific areas. For example, depending on the responsibilities and interests of the Member, an office may have a different LA for health issues, education, family and children, etc. Legislative Coordinators are the most junior members of a Member's staff, but often move up quickly to other positions in the office, so it is a good idea to get to know them.

Press Secretary Communications Director

The Press Secretary's responsibility is to build and maintain open and effective lines of communication between the Member, his/her constituency, and the general public. The Press Secretary is expected to know the benefits, demands, and special requirements of both print and electronic media, and how to promote the member's views or position on specific issues most effectively.

Appointment Secretary Personal Secretary Scheduler

The Appointment Secretary is responsible for allocating a Member's time among the many demands that arise from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements, and constituent requests. The Appointment Secretary may also be responsible for making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, visits to the district, etc.

Caseworker

The Caseworker is the staff member assigned to help with constituent requests by preparing replies for the legislator's signature. The Caseworker's responsibilities may also include helping resolve problems constituents present in relation to state/federal agencies, e.g., Social Security and Medicare issues, veteran's benefits, passports, etc. Congressional offices often have several Caseworkers on staff.

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW

Anyone can 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 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 Committee

With few exceptions, bills are referred to standing committees in the House or Senate according to carefully delineated rules of procedure. The names of the standing committees can be found on http://thomas.loc.gov, www.house.gov, or www.senate.gov.

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 official printed record the views of the executive branch, experts (e.g., NAPNAP or NAPNAP members), other public officials, and 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 chair 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 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, ignore 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 Senate in identical form, it goes to the President for signature. If the President approves the legislation, he/she signs it and it becomes law. Or, the President can take no action for ten days, while Congress is in session, and it automatically becomes law. If the President opposes the bill he/she can veto it. If the President takes no action within 10 days after the Congress has adjourned its second session, the effect 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.

GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

Act – Legislation that has passed both chambers of Congress and become law.

Adjourn – To close a legislative day.

Amendment – A change in a bill or document by adding, substituting, or omitting portions.

Appropriations Bill – Legislation that provides funds for authorized programs.

Authorization Bill – Legislation establishing a program and setting funding limits.

Bill – Legislation introduced in either the House or Senate.

By Request – Phrase used when a member introduces a bill at the request of an executive agency or private organization but does not necessarily endorse the legislation.

Calendar – List and schedule of bills to be considered by a committee.

Caucus – Meeting of Republican or Democratic Members of Congress to determine policy and/or choose leaders.

Chair – Presiding officer.

Chamber – Place where the entire House or Senate meets to conduct business; also, the House of Representatives or the Senate itself.

Clean Bill – A bill that has been revised in mark-up. Amendments are assembled with unchanged language and the bill is referred to the floor with a new number.

Cloak Rooms – Small rooms on the House and Senate floor where members can rest and hold informal conferences.

Closed Hearing – Hearings closed to all but members, staff, and witnesses testifying; also called Executive Hearings.

Closed Rule – In the House, a prohibition against amendments not approved by the committee which brought the bill to the floor. The House must either accept or reject the bill "as is".

Cloture – Method of limiting debate or ending a filibuster in the Senate. At least 60 Senators must vote in favor before cloture can be invoked.

Cosponsor – Member who joins in sponsoring legislation but who is not the principal sponsor or the one who introduced the legislation.

Commit – To refer a bill or matter to a committee.

Committee – A group of Members assigned to give special consideration to certain bills. See Joint Committee.

Committee of the Whole – A mechanism to expedite business in the House whereby the House itself becomes a committee, allowing for less rigid rules and a quorum of 100 instead of 218.

Companion Bills – Identical bills introduced separately in both the Senate and the House.

Concurrent Resolution – Legislative action used to express the position of the House or Senate. A Concurrent Resolution does not have the force of law.

Conference Committee – Meeting between Representatives and Senators to resolve differences when two versions of a similar bill have been passed by the House and Senate.

Congressional Record – Official transcript of the proceedings in Congress.

Continuing Resolution – A resolution enacted to allow specific Executive Branch agencies to continue operating even though funds have not been appropriated for them for the following fiscal year.

Discharge Petition – A petition for the purpose of removing a bill from the control of a committee. A discharge petition must be signed by a majority of Members in the House or Senate.

Engrossed Bill – Final copy of a bill passed by either the House or Senate with amendments. The bill is then delivered to the other chamber.

Enrolled Bill – Final copy of a bill that has passed both the House and Senate in identical form.

Extension of Remarks – When a Member of Congress inserts in the Congressional Record material not directly related to the debate underway.

Filibuster – Tactic used in the Senate whereby a minority intentionally delays a vote.

Final Passage – Adoption of a bill after all amendments have been voted on.

Fiscal Year – Accounting year. For the federal government, the fiscal year (FY) is October 1 to September 30 of the following calendar year.

Floor Manager – A Member who attempts to direct a bill through the debate and amendment process to a final vote.

General Consent – A unanimous silent vote. If there is no objection to the matter, it is resolved without a formal vote.

Germane – Having some relation to the bill in question. In the House all amendments must be germane.

Hearing – Committee sessions for hearing witnesses.

Hopper – Box on the desk of the Clerk of the House where sponsors submit their bills.

Joint Committee – Committee composed of Members of both the House and Senate.

Joint Resolution – Legislation similar to a bill that has the force of law if passed by both chambers and signed by the President; generally used for special situations.

Lame Duck – Member of Congress (or the President) who has not been reelected but whose term has not yet expired.

Lobbying – The process of attempting to influence the passage, defeat, or content of legislation by individuals or a group other than Members of Congress.

Logrolling – Process whereby Members help each other get particular legislation passed. One Member will help another on one piece of legislation in return for similar help.

Main Motion – Motion that introduces the business or proposal to the assembly for action.

Majority Leader – Chief spokesperson and strategist for the majority party, elected by Members of the majority party.

Marking Up a Bill – Process, usually in committee, of analyzing a piece of legislation section by section and making changes.

Member (of Congress) – A U.S. Senator or U.S. Representative.

Minority Leader – Chief spokesperson and strategist for the minority party, elected by Members of the minority party.

Motion – Proposal presented to a legislative body for consideration.

Motion to Table – Proposal to postpone consideration of a matter in the Senate.

Omnibus Bill – Bill regarding a single subject that combines many different aspects of that subject.

Open Rule – In the House, permission to offer amendments to a particular bill during floor debate.

Override a Veto – A two-thirds majority vote by both the House and Senate to set aside a Presidential veto of legislation.

Petition – Plea by an individual or organization for a chamber to consider particular legislation.

Pocket Veto – An indirect veto. When the President does not sign or veto legislation submitted to him/her by Congress within ten days of adjournment, the bill dies.

Point of Order – An objection that language, an amendment, or bill is in violation of a rule. Also used to force a quorum call.

President of the Senate – The Vice President of the United States is designated by the Constitution as the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate casts a vote only in the case of a tie.

Previous Question – In the House, a request to end all debate and force a vote.

Private Bill – Bill designed to benefit a certain individual or business.

President *Pro Tempore* – Senator who presides over the Senate in the absence of the Vice President of the U.S. The President **Pro Tem** is usually the longest-serving Member of the majority party.

Public Law – Designation used for legislation that has been passed by both chambers and signed by the President.

Quorum – The number of Senators or Representatives who must be present before a legislative body can conduct official business.

Quorum Call – In the Senate, a method of determining whether there is a quorum. Often used to suspend debate without adjourning.

Ranking Members – The Members of the majority and minority party on a committee next in seniority after the chair.

Recess – Temporary halt to proceedings, with a time set for proceedings to resume.

Record Vote – Vote in which Members of Congress indicate their vote orally for listing in the Congressional Record.

Rescission Bill – Legislation that revokes spending authority previously granted by Congress.

Resolution – A measure passed only in one house to express the sentiment of that chamber. A simple resolution does not have the force of law.

Rider – A measure added to another, often unrelated, bill with the purpose of one piece of legislation passing on the strength of another.

Roll Call Vote – In the House, an oral vote for which a record is kept.

Seniority – Length of unbroken service, often used to determine rank in committees.

Sine Die – Final adjournment at the end of a session. Bills under consideration but not enacted must be reintroduced in the next session.

Speaker – The presiding officer of the House, elected by Members of the House.

Sponsor – The Representative or Senator who introduces a measure.

Suspend the Rules – Procedural action in the House whereby a two-thirds majority can vote to bring a measure to a vote after forty minutes of debate.

Table a Bill – Motion to kill a bill by cutting off consideration of it. Such motions are not debatable.

Unanimous Consent – A procedure whereby a matter is considered agreed to if no Member on the floor objects. Unanimous Consent motions save time by eliminating the need for a vote.

Whip – Assistant leader for each party in each chamber who keeps other Members of the party informed of the legislative agenda of the leader. Also tracks sentiment among party Members for certain legislation and tries to

persuade Members to be present and vote for measures important to the leadership.

Yield – Permission granted by the Member who has the floor to another Member who wishes to make a comment or ask a question.

SUCCESSFUL SITE VISITS AND OTHER EVENTS

Inviting policymakers – federal, state, or local – to discrete events is an excellent way to build political relationships. Some possible opportunities include issue luncheons, legislative breakfasts, and tours of the workplace. Honoring political officials who have supported nursing and important health care issues is another way to foster linkages.

Scheduling a site visit or other local event is a terrific way to cultivate access to lawmakers and generate support for NAPNAP's policy issues. Site visits offer several strategic benefits:

- A site visit demonstrates that NAPNAP has a presence at the district level (i.e., potential voters and check writers have a stake in your issues).
- Mobilizing your grassroots for a site visit at the district level may be easier than asking advocates to travel to Washington, D.C., or to the state capital.
- Because they are interested in stories about the nexus of local organizations and elected officials, local media may cover your event.
- Tours provide a more interesting and memorable background on your issues than any briefing document could.
- Local representatives may be more available in your district than on Capitol Hill or your State Capitol.

A good tour, however, takes careful planning. First, **decide who to invite.** Site visits are appropriate for elected officials or staff. Consider starting with a district staff person and working up to a visit from the elected official. A staff-level visit can be just as important as a Member visit. **Send the invitation** to the legislator and staff explaining who you are, what you would like to show them, and how long it will take. Remember to include directions to the facility.

Scheduling a successful site visit requires you to provide some incentive for the invited legislator. Legislative schedulers are besieged with visit requests. Your written invitation should communicate the mutual benefit of the guest's attendance.

Here are some tips for crafting invitations that lawmakers will find hard to resist:

- Make the policymaker the center of attention. Provide a forum in which the legislator will be publicly introduced and given the opportunity to speak.

- Arrange media attention. If the news media are likely to cover a local event, invite your lawmakers to share the limelight.

- Provide coverage in your facility's publication or chapter newsletter. This will provide welcome exposure for the lawmaker.

- Present an award or photos. Give the lawmaker a plaque or event photographs to display in his/ her office.

- Provide direct access to district voters – for example, a forum in which legislators can interact with voters.

These elements will serve as powerful incentives to attract invited legislators to your site visits. Remember, the way you structure your local events is far more critical than how you address an envelope to a scheduler.

Place a phone call to the official's scheduler to make sure they have received the invitation. Keep in mind that you will have to arrange the tour around the legislator's schedule. Besides formal recesses, Members of Congress are most likely to be in their home districts on Mondays and Fridays. Do not be discouraged if a visit is not scheduled immediately. Be flexible and persistent.

Choose the location. Determine the best location for the visit, making sure to obtain any necessary consent beforehand. If your institution has a public– or community–relations person, involve them from the beginning. They may be able to provide you with some much needed help and resources.

Prepare the information. A packet of materials for the visitor should include: pertinent names, addresses, and phone numbers; background issue materials; and NAPNAP's Public Policy Agenda, available on the website.

Work out the logistics. Do not assume that the congressional office will take care of any aspect of the trip, from travel arrangements to supplying an umbrella on a rainy day. A detailed agenda should clarify who will do what and when.

- How will the guest get to and from the event? Will the office provide transportation?

- How much time can the member commit to the event? Do not try to cram too much into a short visit. Make sure you hit the highlights.

- If this visit is going to occur during a regular mealtime, consider setting up a discussion over an informal buffet or box lunch. Often, elected officials do not have time to eat between meetings. They will appreciate your recognition of that fact.

- You cannot control the weather, but you can be prepared for all possibilities. Make sure you have all necessary accoutrements to

make the visit pleasant for everyone.

Record the event. Be sure to capture the occasion.

- Consider hiring a photographer or have someone designated as such.
- Although you do not want someone recording the visit verbatim, assign someone the task of preparing a written report of the visit. You can turn these notes into an article for your newsletter or an editorial for your local newspaper.
- Legislators and other officials like their constituents to know that they are attending to the needs and interests of the district. One great way to do that is to have the media document these site visits. Be sure to check with the congressional office before inviting media. Usually, you will find the office is willing to help.

Follow up promptly. Once the tour is over, send a thank-you letter to the legislator and staff. Reiterate the key issues you discussed, and offer to answer any questions. If the local media ran any positive articles on the visit, include copies with your letter. Finally, include a photo of the visit for the official to use.

COALITION BUILDING

Are you having difficulty getting a legislator's attention? Have you been wondering if you will ever get another fresh idea about how to approach your legislative agenda? Is your most reliable legislative advocate suddenly tied up with other professional or personal business? Do you worry that your government affairs work will have few accomplishments to reflect for all your effort?

If so, "coalition building" may be the strategy to pursue for effective problem solving. Building collaborations, or partnerships, or alliances, or coalitions, whatever the term, is not an easy undertaking; but neither are government relations work and the making of public policy. Contrary to their images, policymaking and coalition building is demanding. Each is time-consuming, labor-intensive, and complex to the point of sometimes leaving you feeling frustrated. These are not uncommon conditions for pediatric nurse practitioners. Successful PNPs approach these conditions as puzzles and challenges, learning situations, not barriers, on the way to attaining desired goals.

A successful coalition typically has these traits:

- Defined mission statement
- Strong leadership group
- Broad-based stakeholders

- Dedicated fiscal and human resources
- Strong communications base and timely outreach.

Defined Mission Statement

Developing a defined mission statement is key to any group of collaborators. Interacting as a coalition involves merging the interests of disparate groups for mutual benefits. A group's mission should never be assumed, for its members may have multiple individual reasons for involvement. A clear mission statement has these elements:

- A statement of purpose focusing on desired results, not problems.
- A description of what will be accomplished, when, where, how, and for whom.
- The scope of work.

A mission should be stated and agreed upon by all group members. Secure the commitment of the group to keep the collaboration focused on its main purpose. This may seem obvious, but it is easy for coalitions to lose focus out of a desire to accommodate other's concerns. Spend time establishing the group members' agreement and commitment to the mission and goals. Once a collective mission is established, reaching consensus on the means to achieve the group's goal will be easier. If partners are reminded of their agreement on what the goal is, they will find a way to agree on the means for reaching it.

Strong Leadership Group

A clear vision of, and commitment to, the mission accomplishes little absent a strong leadership group. "Strong" does not refer to wielding force, or pronounced toughness. A leadership group is strong because its members – individuals and organizations – are credible, in various ways. For some, credibility may be based on the authority held by an organization partner, or by virtue of the authority of being a well-positioned decisionmaker within a member organization. Credibility of a leadership team also is measured by the track record of achievement that individuals have or the content and technical expertise that individuals can bring to the coalition. The credibility and value of collaboration are readily seen in the diversity of skills brought to the group. Working together and interdependence brings a strength surpassing the capabilities of any one individual.

A successful group reaps the benefits of advanced planning and ground work. Some members may be impatient with the group-building process because they joined to **do** something about a problem. However, no project ultimately will be successful if the group conducting it is not cohesive and effective. Conflicts often arise due to a lack of understanding about the other partners in the group. It is surprising to find out that many misperceptions and myths exist among professionals who interact

with each other daily. Strong leaders might preempt conflicts by taking the time to facilitate understanding of each member organization, as well as building a common vocabulary and a modus operandi. The modus operandi involves the entire coalition in forming the ground rules, communication methods, necessary functions, and organizational roles and responsibilities for the group's successful operation.

Coalition success also is dependent upon the maintenance of extensive, continuous interaction among the members of the alliance, who before the collaboration have been productive by working and making decisions alone. A strong leadership uses shared decisionmaking for producing mutually beneficial situations for all coalition members. Effective shared decisionmaking relies upon continuous information sharing, and skills in listening to and understanding the other's perspective. Each member organization has its own language and culture that may be unfamiliar to others. Each member also has a distinct definition of the problem to be solved. When communication is open and honest, free from reprisal or ridicule, and acknowledged as valuable, partners are more likely to seek out compromises to overcome an impasse. Moreover, when they seek opinions from all members, there will be ownership of the decision by all. Successful leaders know that without others, there would be no credit to share.

Broadbased Stakeholders

The broader the base of stakeholders involved in the coalition, the greater the potential for success. It is important to include all those who may have a stake in the issue being addressed, including those who:

- Want to solve the problem;
- Have the resources to solve the problem;
- May benefit from the solution;
- May benefit from the problem's existence, and
- Have the problem, the target audience.

Considering other criteria for membership also may be important to the coalition, such as familiarity with previous efforts in the issue area, the variety of skills and disciplines represented, and the potential member's ability to work with others, or to influence others to be involved. You may not want to invite those who are likely to disagree with you. Excluding these individuals may be tempting, but will often cause problems during implementation. Including these people in the ownership of the coalition may strengthen the collaborative work and may force them to consider constructive ideas. The whole point of collaboration is to explore differences and devise solutions that allow for these differences.

If you are attempting to recruit an organization to the coalition, the following questions should be explored:

- What are the organization's/ profession's mission and goals?
- What is their jurisdiction?
- Are there any informal etiquette or protocols to observe in dealing with the organization/profession?
- What part of the organization handles the type of project you are interested in?
- Who would be the best contact within their organization?
- What organizational channels/ chain-of-command would they have to go through to approve of involvement?
- Are there any limitations or restrictions to involvement, individual and organizational?
- What are the potential liabilities of involvement?
- What does the organization see as their role in the project?
- What does the organization hope to gain from their involvement?

If you are attempting to bring a legislator into the coalition, the following is a sample agenda for meeting with this potential collaborator:

1 **Introduce yourself** – Name, professional status, relationship with legislator (e.g., constituent, consumer).

2 **Introduce your organization** – Explain mission and goals, size, relationship of organization to the legislator. Have printed background information to share.

3 **Seek clarification about the legislator** – Seek to learn more about the goals, values, priorities, and current projects of the legislator. These questions may offer insights into the potential for involvement, and the ways in which the coalition might offer the legislator support. Before meeting, find out as much as possible about the legislator to ask informed questions.

4 **Explain your project** – Briefly explain the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the project. Share your experience and why it is important, giving the legislator motivation for involvement. Have a short (e.g., bulleted) fact sheet with you to keep you on track, and to leave behind with the legislator. Give the legislator a chance to ask questions and express concerns.

5 **Explain potential legislator role** – Be specific about how the legislator could contribute to the project. Be well-versed on the legislator's relationship to the issue area in the past, the benefits of becoming involved, and the

potential liabilities of involvement. Offer strategies for counteracting the liabilities.

6. **Discuss ways for the legislator to become involved in the project. Mutual agreement on future interaction** – Discuss and agree upon time frame for next action (if any) to be taken by both parties. Establish one contact person for each organization.

7. After the Meeting – Make written notes about the discussion points and agreement. Send a thank you letter, regardless of the meeting outcome. Follow up as agreed at the end of the meeting. Strong, credible leadership ensures reliable follow up where conversations made in confidence are honored and commitments made are fulfilled.

With a broad-based coalition membership, it is normal for conflict to surface at some point. Working through differences can be facilitated through a variety of methods. Often the source of conflict is power, for power is usually unequal among group members. However, in coalitions it is equity within a group's value system that is sought, not equal power. Equity has more to do with each member having some form of power, such as connections, expertise, resources, position, charisma, integrity, and time. Each group member can contribute in a different way at varying levels and at various times. All forms of power must be acknowledged and equally valued to maintain the equity.

Dedicated Fiscal and Human Resources

A full commitment to the coalition is demonstrated by a contribution of time, resources, and power. The coalition's modus operandi should include a clear, dedicated commitment by the partners to pool or jointly secure the resources necessary for achieving the alliance's goals.

Resources are scarce, but by leveraging them, collaboration enhances the probability of success, and allows the coalition members to share equally in the results and rewards, without hierarchy. By combining personnel, power, expertise, materials and time, collaboration also empowers group members. The investment unites and extends strengths, minimizes weaknesses, yields new ideas and more results, which benefit each organization's development.

Strong Communications Base and Timely Outreach

Clearly, a successful coalition depends on well-defined communication channels operating among all the members. Continuous information exchange and the building of connections will provide the foundation for the communication, trust, and sharing that are integral to vibrant partnerships. Collaborators should feel as though they are in the loop, that they know what is going on, and that they are a wanted member of the group who also must contribute to the exchange of information to keep the coalition current

with the ever-changing public policy process.

Equally well-defined communication channels should be in place for a coalition to successfully reach its goals. The traits that are necessary for effective coalition operations include:

- Developing rapport with legislators and administrative staffs;
- Building grassroots advocacy;
- Handling and energizing the media;
- Providing refined spokesperson commentary;
- Delivering computer and Web-based communications; and
- Establishing and maintaining credibility by speaking truthfully, openly, and consistently.

Follow-up And Evaluation

Follow-up and evaluation is often discussed in government relations work. It is essential to establishing credibility. But follow up also is important within the coalition. A successful partnership is constantly seeking ways to improve their group processes. Coalition members should rate the group on its inclusion, leadership, decision making, and workload distribution. Evaluation of the group's process should be incorporated into its modus operandi. Success is not only about the project, it is also about the success of the coalition.

Some questions to ask in the evaluation might include the following:

- Is the group's effort effective?
- Did it have a measurable result?
- Did it efficiently use available resources?
- What lessons have we learned?
- What is changing in our collaboration itself?
- What needs to change?
- What is our highest priority for improving our coalition next year?

NAPNAP places a tremendous value on the feedback of its members. We want to know what you think and encourage you to communicate your views through www.healthpolicy@napnap.org.

CONCLUSION

Taking time out of our busy lives to participate in federal advocacy is so important, but it should also be enjoyable for those who embark on the adventure. It's an opportunity for us to learn as well as to educate others on important issues such as Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, obesity prevention, scope of practice, training and educational programs, mental health issues, and so many others.

There is no better voice for NAPNAP than those of its members. We invite

you to browse through our many resource materials and get involved in our advocacy efforts.

Additional information can be found at http://www.napnap.org or by calling our National office at: