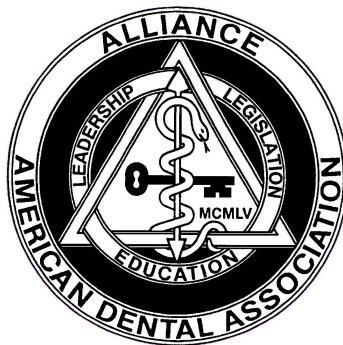


**ALLIANCE
OF THE
AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION**



LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY MANUAL

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Legislative Advocacy manual has been made possible with the assistance of the American Dental Political Action Committee (ADPAC). Permission was given to the Alliance of the American Dental Association (AADA) to use educational information from the American Dental Association (ADA), ADPAC, and the ADA Council on Government Affairs. The Alliance extends grateful appreciation to them for their belief that grassroots advocacy should and must include the dental spouse.

AADA encourages its members, throughout the tripartite, to use this manual for the betterment of its members in the legislative arena.

FORWARD

AADA Mission Statement:

The Alliance of the American Dental Association is the organization of ADA member spouses committed to supporting the American Dental Association through public oral health education, legislative advocacy and the well being of the dental family.

The mission statement of the AADA imparts to its members the great importance of legislative advocacy. For it is through legislative advocacy that AADA members can help to secure the future of dentistry and how the “business” of dentistry is practiced.

This manual is a guide. Its purpose is to help all AADA members to grow in their “political knowledge” and how to use that knowledge to protect the dental profession and the dental family.

The goal of this manual is to educate each AADA member to become a competent dental advocate. Advocacy can be exciting to watch and even more exciting to be a part of it. This will happen when the member becomes comfortable with advocacy and the legislative process.

ADPAC

WHAT IS ADPAC? WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

ADPAC is the bipartisan voice of thousands of dentists, and their spouses, who care deeply about their patients and their profession. They have decided to pool their financial resources to help elect candidates who understand the importance of dentistry and are committed to the nation's oral health.

The Purpose of ADPAC is to:

- Provide financial assistance on a bipartisan basis to congressional candidates
- Oversee a grassroots network of activist dentists and their spouses
- Provide political education opportunities for member dentists and their spouses
- Work closely with state dental political action committees
- Encourage the dental community to participate in an array of political campaigns and activities

Although it is not a lobbying organization, ADPAC focuses on political action and involvement that complements the legislative efforts of the ADA on the national level. ADPAC coordinates its activities with the ADA Council on Government Affairs and the ADA Leadership.

ADPAC is a committee with a working Board of Directors that meets twice a year. The Board consists of 17 Trustee District Representatives, a member of the ADA Board of Trustees, a representative of the AADA, a representative of the ADA Committee on the New Dentist, a representative of the American Student Dental Association (ASDA), and a representative of the State Dental Association of Executive Directors. Additional consultants may also serve at the discretion of the ADPAC Board.

JOIN ADPAC - PROTECT THE DENTAL PROFESSION

By contributing to ADPAC, you join a powerful and united team that effectively advocates the interest of organized dentistry. So every member can become involved in the political process, ADPAC offers a variety of contribution levels:

Capital Club Elite	Capital Club
New Dentist Capital Club	ASDA Capital Club
Sustainer	

Note: It is preferred that contributions be **hard dollars** – contributions made with a personal check or credit card. Only hard dollars may be used for political campaign contributions. **Soft dollars** are contributions made with a corporate check or credit card. Soft dollars may only be used for administrative purposes, such as assisting districts or local dental societies with a fundraising event.

A contribution form can be obtained by calling AADA at 1-800-621-8099 ext 2865 or calling ADPAC at 1-202-898-2424. See Resource page for email and mailing addresses.

GRASSROOTS ACTION TEAM NETWORK

WHAT IS IT?

Webster's definition of GRASSROOTS is "close to, or emerging spontaneously from, the people". We are the people representing dentistry. Grassroots means that we are working together, from all over the United States, with common goals and for a common cause – Dentistry.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Our governmental leaders have many issues that they consider crucial for the well being of our country. Health care reform, managed care, OSHA reform, regulatory reform and the Privacy Act are just some of the health related issues that will have a major impact on the dental profession.

The ADA has full time lobbyists who are defending the ADA viewpoint everyday in Washington, while your state dental association has lobbyists defending the association's viewpoint at the state level. But, the profession of dentistry can no longer rely solely on lobbyists to ensure that its voice is heard in political debates on issues of concern. Grassroots is the way to ensure that our voice is heard and continues to be heard.

The ADA's Grassroots Action Team Network is an ideal way for dentists and their spouses to get involved in the political process and help shape legislative decisions affecting the dental profession, patients and the public at large. Supported by ADPAC, the ADA Grassroots Action Team Network is a coalition of thousands of volunteers, who mobilize in support of political candidates and regularly take dentistry's message to their representatives in Congress. It establishes dentists and their spouses as an important constituency for politicians. To become an ADA Grassroots Action Team Member contact ADPAC at 202-898-2424 or e-mail them at govtpol@ada.org.

Note: Success in your state's political arena also requires a team effort. Participation in your state dental association grassroots network will strengthen dentistry's voice at the Statehouse and help protect dentistry from excessive government regulations and bureaucratic control. Contact your state dental association to become a state grassroots action team member.

BE EDUCATED - BE INVOLVED

AADA Conferences and ADA Washington Leadership Conferences are two of the best formats that an AADA member can have for grassroots education. The AADA Conference concentrates on legislative issues and education. The ADA Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. is a chance to hear from national leaders and dental leaders. It also emphasizes a trip to “the Hill” to meet with your legislators. Both Conferences strive to educate members with the latest grassroots issues and networking initiatives.

“Dental Day at your State Capitol” is another opportunity for grassroots education. Though the program may vary from state to state, it generally is a day in which dentists and their spouses convene together to hear from their state dental association leadership about current dental related bills before the state legislature. After learning of the effects these bills will have upon the practice of dentistry, the public and the dental family, attendees will then visit their legislators to discuss with them their support or non-support of the bills.

Note: To stay up to-date on both national and state dental related legislative issues, be sure to check your state dental association and ADA’s websites.

GET ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

Don’t wait for problems to arise before approaching your legislator. In fact if you have never met or do not know your legislator, you should attempt to make your first meeting a friendly, get acquainted occasion. An easy way to begin is to attend a town meeting your legislator might hold and introduce yourself. Another way is to schedule a personal meeting with your legislator when he/she is back home meeting with constituents. If you are attending a public function in which your legislator is in attendance, take the opportunity to introduce yourself. Keep in mind as you go about developing that relation that most legislator respond best (and first) to people they know.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STAFF

The demands on a legislator’s time make staff very important. Staff members serve as the legislator’s eyes and ears, bringing issues to his or her attention and relaying constituent concerns. While there is no substitute for working directly with a legislator at key points in the legislative process, building rapport with his or her staff is essential. For that reason, you should make efforts to get acquainted with your legislator’s key staff aides, especially the district manager, and the administrative assistant and legislative assistant who deal most with dentistry’s issues.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

To ensure that dentistry's views are heard on Capitol Hill it is important that legislators not only hear from ADA lobbyists, they also need to hear from you, the grassroots members. There are four ways in which to communicate with your legislator. They are:

MEETING WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

When meeting personally with your legislator and/or his/her staff to discuss a specific issue or to introduce yourself as a local constituent, you need to call and make arrangements in advance of your visit. Here are a few pointers for a successful meeting:

- If meeting to discuss a specific issue, be familiar with key aspects of the issue. The ADA Washington Office or your state dental association will brief you and provide information that may be helpful.
- Be concise and well organized. You likely will only be afforded about 15 to 20 minutes of their time.
- Be factual. Inaccurate information and padding the truth can ruin your credibility.
- Be constructive, not just critical. Legislators appreciate ideas and alternatives.
- The meeting should be an exchange of ideas. When the ideas agree with yours, don't spare the praise. When the ideas conflict with yours, be courteous and respectful, but do not hesitate to state your view and request they reconsider their position. Never threaten or refer to campaign contributions.
- If you do not know the answer to a question, say you will look into the question and get back to them with an answer as soon as possible.
- You should have a one-page summary of key points about the issue and your position to leave with the legislator after the meeting is over.
- After the meeting, follow-up with a thank you letter and re-emphasize key points which were discussed. Also write a note of thanks to staff people who helped to arrange or participated in the meeting.
- **Note:** Keep your Action Team Leader (AADA ADPAC Representative) apprised of your meetings and correspondences with your legislator.

WRITING TO YOUR LEGISLATOR

How you write to your legislator is important. They are "seeing" you through your letter and *may* misjudge you, or your position, if your letter is not appropriately written. Keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Use your personal stationery or the dental practice's stationery. Be sure to include your return address on the letter if not using letterhead.
- Address the letter correctly. On the envelope and the inside address, refer to the legislator as "The Honorable (name):"
 - **Members of the U.S. House of Representative:**
The Honorable (name)

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Dear Congressman (Congresswoman) _____

- **Members of the U.S. Senate:**
The Honorable (name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Dear Senator _____
 - **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 as Dear Mr. Speaker.
- Address only one issue. State the reason for writing. Use the bill number and title. If writing about proposed legislation, indicate which committee or subcommittee is dealing with the bill.
 - Keep your comments short, factual and to the point. Keep letter to one page if possible.
 - Explain how the issue will affect you, your family, the practice, and what impact it will have on your community. If the affect is negative, then propose a constructive alternative.
 - Avoid form letters. Communications written in your own words are more effective
 - Ask your legislator to respond and share his or her position on the issue with you and how they intend to vote.
 - Don't forget to write when your legislator does something that deserves approval or thanks. By the same token, you may write to express your disappointment (don't be rude or threatening) when they do not support or vote against your interests.
 - Be advised, that due to safety scanning, a letter can take 3 weeks to reach a legislator's office. If time is critical, consider emailing or faxing your letter.
 - **Note:** Keep your Action Team Leader (AADA ADPAC Representative) apprised of your meetings and correspondences with your legislator.

TELEPHONING YOUR LEGISLATOR

This method is recommended for use when the deadline for a vote is near. Keep in mind that many of the techniques outlined in the previous section for letter writing also apply to telephone calls. Always be sure to identify yourself as a constituent and the bill number and its status. You probably will not be able to talk directly to the legislator, so leave your message with a staff person who is handling the issue you are calling about. Be very concise and exact in expressing your view. Also ask the legislator's position on the issue.

EMAILING YOUR LEGISLATOR

Email is a quick and easy way to communicate, though if you have the time, a written letter is best. Email is best for responding to urgent items, like **Action Alerts**. The ADA's Advocacy site and its **CAPWIZ** system make getting in touch with your legislator as easy as the click of a button.

CAPWIZ

Capwiz is an online system that allows you to receive Action Alerts and email your legislator quickly and easily from your computer. When an important legislative issue arises, you will be sent an Action Alert email. The Action Alert email will contain background on the issue and who you need to contact. The Email provides a link to editable text to get you started writing your message to you legislator. Then one click your message is sent.

In order for you to take advantage of this system you must first sign-up. Go to **<http://capwiz.com/dental/mlm/signup>**. Complete the simple form, which requests your name, email address, mailing address and phone number, and then click "submit". That is all there is to it!

GETTING INVOLVED IN A CAMPAIGN

Take advantage of opportunities to volunteer in a campaign. The most effective contribution to any campaign often goes beyond the donation of money to giving of your own time and energy. Candidates appreciate the commitment of personal time by volunteers, this can lead to a lasting relationship, which often provides the opportunity to personally communication with the legislator on dental issues.

There are a variety of opportunities for campaign involvement, including:

- Hosting a fundraiser in your home. **Note:** A detailed kit is available on the ADA website at: <http://www.ada.org/prof/advocacy/grassroots/index.asp>
- Hosting special event fundraisers outside of your home.
- Hosting a simple **Meet & Greet**, get to know the candidate.
- Serving on campaign committees
- Helping out the staff at campaign headquarters
- Phone banks and canvassing

For more information on campaign volunteering see the ADA Action Team Campaign Volunteer Guide booklet which is available on line at <http://www.ada.org/prof/advocacy/grassroots/index.asp>

RESOURCES

Websites:

- AADA Web: <http://www.AllianceADA.org>
- ADA Website: <http://www.ada.org>
- CAPWIZ: Action Alert Registration: <http://capwiz.com/dental/mlm/signup>
- ADA Grassroots Action Team Registration:
<http://www.ada.org/prof/advocacy/grassroots/index.asp>
- U.S. House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov>
- U.S Senate: <http://www.senate.gov>
- The Library of Congress: <http://thomas.loc.gov>
- Federal Election Commission's Citizens' Guide:
<http://www.fec.gov/pages/brochures/citizens.shtml>

AADA Contact Information:

- Alliance of the American Dental Association
211 E. Chicago Ave, Ste 730
Chicago, IL 60611
- Phone: 1-800-621-8099 ext 2865
- Email: AADA@AllianceADA.org
- Website: <http://www.AllianceADA.org>

ADPAC Contact Information:

- American Dental Political Action Committee
1111 14th Street NW, Ste 1100
Washington, DC 20005
- Phone: 202-898-2424
- Email: govtpol@ada.org
- Website: <http://www.ada.org/goto/advocacy>

AADA Publications: (contact the AADA office for copies)

- Understanding the Legislative Process
- How to Work with Congressional Staff

ADA Publications & Kits:

- *Dental Advocate* and *State Legislative Report*
Online at <http://www.ada.org/prof/advocacy/publications.asp>
- Kits: Available as PDF @ <http://www.ada.org/prof/advocacy/grassroots/index.asp>
 - Action Team Member Guide
 - Action Team Leader Guide
 - Campaign Volunteer Guide
 - Touring the Dental Office with Your Lawmaker
 - Hosting a Fundraiser in Your Home