

OHIO DENTAL ASSOCIATION

Informing – Representing – Serving

Tips on Working with Your State Dental Association

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Assessment of the Specialty

- Important to assess the strengths and weaknesses related to government advocacy
- Capitalize on the strengths
- Minimize any weaknesses

Strengths of the Specialty

- Credibility
 - Experts in pediatric care
 - Access to Care
 - Reports and Recommendations Carry Weight
 - State associations are not scientific bodies
- Respect
 - Colleagues
 - Legislators

Weaknesses for the Specialty

- Limited number of pediatric dentists
- Limited time and resources
- Limited exposure with state association on governmental affairs issues

Maximizing the Strengths

- Continue Access & Education Campaigns
 - Involve state association when possible

- Continue Recommendations and Studies
 - Communicate results to state association
 - Communicate results to policymakers

Minimizing the Weaknesses

- Working well with state associations can:
 - Neutralize or eliminate weaknesses
 - Turn weaknesses into strengths for you, the specialty and the profession

Become a Trusted Resource

- Foster Communication
 - Invite state association leaders and staff to board meetings
- Provide rapid response to state association
 - Legislative issues arise unexpectedly and require immediate attention
 - Information and guidance needed in days or hours, not months
 - Establish a mechanism act quickly

Get Involved in State Association

- State associations need volunteers
- Most states have no limitations on the number of specialists involved
- Opportunities at all levels
 - Committees
 - Task Forces
 - House of Delegates



Make Volunteer Efforts Count

- Live up to commitments
 - Attend and participate in meetings
 - Don't over extend
- Advance in state association leadership
- Decision-makers
 - House of Delegates
 - Board of Directors or Executive Committees



Get to Know Staff

- State associations have limited staff members who wear many hats
- Utilize other services provided by state associations to develop rapport with staff
- Staff needs reliable sources of information

Coordinate Message

- Political Realities:
 - State association leads in dental advocacy
 - Timing is everything
- Discuss issues directly with association
 - Legislators will ask for position and input of association
- Adapt to the circumstances presented
 - Accomplish what you can when you can
 - Don't waste resources on issues that aren't ripe for action

Coordinate Message

- Political Action Committees
 - Work as part of state association PAC board
 - Coordinate with state association when possible to maximize benefit to both organizations





Be a Grassroots Activist

- Be Proactive
- Participate in state lobby day
 - Recruit colleagues to participate
- Host a fundraiser for a candidate or PAC
- Invite legislators on office tour
 - Invite state association lobbyist/leaders

Be an Effective Grassroots Advocate

When talking with legislators, remember:

- 1) Legislators know nothing about dentistry
- 2) Keep message simple and on point
- 3) Work within time constraints – 10 min.
- 4) Ask for a commitment on the issue
- 5) If they commit, thank them and...

STOP TALKING!



Contact Information

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