

Pharmacy and Wellness Review

Volume 5 | Issue 2

Article 1

June 2014

Legislation Editorial

Kent Wilin
Ohio Northern University

Kaitlin Horton
Ohio Northern University

Maria Laikos
Ohio Northern University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.onu.edu/paw_review



Part of the [Pharmacy Administration, Policy and Regulation Commons](#)

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by the ONU Journals and Publications at DigitalCommons@ONU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pharmacy and Wellness Review by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@ONU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@onu.edu.



Legislation Editorial

How can pharmacists make an impact?

The goal of achieving provider status for pharmacists can only be achieved one way: through the collective efforts of the profession. Many pharmacists and pharmacy students are content to let the few champions of the profession lead the charge for the progression of pharmacy, but this approach is no longer sufficient. The pharmacy profession's voice tends to be a quiet one; in order to achieve provider status, it must roar.

All pharmacists and pharmacy students can support the initiative. One simple way to provide your support is to join national and state professional pharmacy organizations; most of these organizations have joined forces to rally for the cause, and your membership is vital to the effort. You can find out more ways to volunteer through your organization as a member, or how to provide financial support to further the effort. You can also give your organization the names of patients or physicians who would be willing to provide testimonials regarding the benefit of pharmacy services.

Another very effective means of advocacy is to engage your congressional legislator; invite them to your practice site to see the benefits of pharmacy services firsthand, or share your own experiences and how your clinical services have impacted patients, physicians, payers and general outcomes. Many lawmakers are unaware of the services pharmacists provide and the extent of the profession's capabilities; simply informing your legislator of these services and the impact pharmacists make can go a long way in advancing the profession.

How to identify/contact your representative

One of the most important actions that pharmacists can take is contacting their elected officials. Senators and congressmen/women have the power to pass the laws that will give pharmacists provider status. It is our responsibility as their constituents to educate them on the positive impact pharmacists with provider status will have on the health care system. With the transitional period our health care system is currently going through, ways to improve health outcomes for constituents have never been more important to our elected officials.

The first step in this process is to identify which officials represent one's district. To locate a congressman/woman, the U.S. House of Representatives has a very easy-to-use Web page at <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>. On this page, constituents only need to enter their zip code, and the corresponding representative will appear. Each representative has a link shaped like an envelope that leads to a contact form. Similarly, at http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm, constituents can locate their senators and contact forms. These contact forms are a way to explain provider status, but much more importantly they are a gateway to setting up a meeting with the representative. A well-thought-out message to a representative can lead to a critical face-to-face meeting. In-person communication can truly create significant change.

What to talk about with your representative

When contacting your representative, you may do so via letter or by scheduling a visit. It is important to introduce yourself and state your credentials for any initial contact. The representatives want to know who is advocating for the cause and the relation the advocate has with the topic of discussion. If you would like a response, remember to include a return address or offer your email or telephone number. This is especially helpful if the representative has any additional questions or concerns to discuss with you before further legislation takes place.

Remember that the majority of our representatives are not familiar with the pharmacy profession. Make sure to have a good understanding of pharmacist provider status legislation and provide your representative with as much detail as possible. Information may include, but is not limited to, introduction of pharmacy provider status legislation, the average workday of a pharmacist, programs such as medication therapy management and rapid diagnostic/point of care testing that show the quality of pharmacists in the community and specific examples of the type of care provided to patients since pharmacists are the most accessible health care professional. It will be good to explain how pharmacists work now and then how that will change once pharmacists obtain provider status.

Be sure when reaching out to your representative to only talk about one topic at a time, because there will always be other opportunities to contact your representative for additional legislative topics. It is also important to be brief, limiting letters to one page or scheduling a quick 10 to 15 minute visit. Refrain from including personal experiences or feelings toward the subject matter and only discuss the facts. Remember to be courteous to your representatives and their staff, as they are the ones to speak on your behalf when it comes time for legislation. In closing your letter or discussion, thank your representative for his or her time and again offer follow up for any questions with your email or a return address.

Editor-in-Chief: Kent Wilin

Managing Editors: Kaitlin Horton, Maria Laikos

*For more information on how to become an advocate of the pharmacy profession,
please visit the American Pharmacists Association advocacy website at
<http://www.pharmacist.com/providerstatusrecognition>.*