



NASPGHAN ADVOCACY – GET INVOLVED; STAY ACTIVE

“Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed.” – Abraham Lincoln

Why Become a Grassroots Advocate?

More than ever before, NASPGHAN needs its members to engage federal policymakers and make their voices heard. Dramatic changes are ahead in the way health care is covered, delivered and reimbursed. At the same time, federal budget deficit reduction puts federal programs like Medicaid at risk and threatens to reduce spending for medical research and prevention. NASPGHAN needs pediatric gastroenterologists in every state and congressional district who are willing to educate policymakers about issues important to the pediatric gastroenterology community.

The 2012 elections will result in a new class of freshman lawmakers. Newly elected members of Congress are especially eager to connect with their constituencies and to establish a network of trusted expert advisors on issues such as health care. NASPGHAN members who live or work in the states and districts of newly elected lawmakers should seize the opportunity to establish a relationship early on with these lawmakers and their staff.

What is Effective Advocacy?

Effective advocacy means getting involved and staying active. Effective advocacy also means serving as a reliable source of accurate information to help guide lawmakers in their decision-making. Lawmakers regularly turn to reliable sources to identify policy concerns and to help them make informed policy decisions. Tips for being an effective advocate include:

- Advocate based on personal experience.
- Keep messages clear and concise. Keep it simple.
- Provide local data and statistics, or even anecdotal evidence, when available. Remember, all politics is local.
- Provide contact information (phone, email) in written communications with lawmakers and staff.
- Always send a thank you note and provide any promised follow-up information following a meeting.
- Provide accurate information. Don't mislead or provide misinformation.

How Do I Get Involved?

NASPGHAN has made it possible for pediatric gastroenterologists to contact their members of Congress in less than five minutes through NASPGHAN's Legislative Action Center. The Legislative Action Center can be accessed through www.naspgghan.org and allows NASPGHAN members to effortlessly email their lawmakers using template letters that can be personalized. These letters can also be downloaded for mailing. Talking points and additional background materials are also posted to the Legislative Action Center and NASPGHAN Website. NASPGHAN members will be alerted to take action on new or pressing issues through email action alerts or through NASPGHAN's legislative and regulatory update, "Washington Report."

NASPGHAN members are also strongly encouraged to join **NASPGHAN's Advocacy Network**. By joining, NASPGHAN members will be afforded added opportunities for active engagement in grassroots lobbying efforts, as well as access to advocacy educational materials and activities. To join the Advocacy Network apply at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NASPGHAN_advocacy.

When it comes to grassroots advocacy, no time commitment is too small and each connection made with a lawmaker or his/her staff can have a significant impact on advancing the practice of pediatric gastroenterology. In addition to responding to ASGE action alerts, other ways to get involve include:

- Meeting with legislators and their staff in Washington, DC or their district offices.
- Offering to serve as a resource to lawmakers and their staff on pediatric health policy issues.
- Inviting lawmakers to your practice or academic center.
- Attending town hall meetings hosted by elected officials.
- Contributing to or volunteering for a political campaign.