



Talking to your elected officials is important.

Health reform is one of the most important issues being tackled by the federal government today. Congress and the Obama Administration are pushing hard for new legislation before the end of 2009. Your Representative and your Senators will be voting on this legislation, and it is crucial that they hear from you before they do.

As a physician, you are on the front lines of health care in America. Your perspective on any health care legislation is extremely important to your Members of Congress. He or she have probably not been to medical school or practiced medicine. They need your knowledge, experience and insight to help them make the right decisions. They need to know how you feel about health reform proposals they will be voting on, and they need to know the dangers of a government-run system. By talking to your elected officials you can help them to understand what is at stake and how it could affect all Americans.

If you have questions or would like to know more contact the ASMD at (202) 449-8665.

Ways to talk to your elected officials.

In some ways speaking with elected officials is easy. After all, they work for you and your taxes pay their salary. They need support from you and others like you to win re-election every two, four, or six years. Most members of Congress put special effort into listening to constituents like you, and since you are represented by only one Member of the House of Representative and two Senators, you don't have to work too hard to reach them. Here are some suggestions for reaching your elected officials:

- **Write them.** You can email your elected officials through their websites, but email is the least influential form of communication. Writing a personal letter is better, although it is likely that only a lower-level staff member will read it. Due to security processes a letter will get recorded more quickly if sent to the District office rather than to Washington, DC.
- **Call them.** A phone call the Member's office can sometimes be very effective, since you can ask for the staff member who deals with health reform directly. Since he or she is more knowledgeable than others in the office, your perspective will have a greater impact.
- **Go to them.** Members often hold Forums or Town Hall meetings, and speak before local groups like Rotary Clubs, especially during Congressional recess – usually around national holidays and the entire month of August. Attend these events to speak with them directly.
- **Meet with them.** During Congressional recess many Members will hold personal, one-on-one meetings with constituents in their states and districts. You can schedule a meeting and discuss health care reform personally with your elected official. You should plan to schedule a meeting several weeks to a month before it will occur.



ASMD

PROTECTING THE BOND BETWEEN DOCTORS AND PATIENTS

POLITICAL OUTREACH GUIDE

Key Points for your elected officials.

- **Health care decisions should be made by physicians, patients, and patients' families.** The bond between physicians and patients has been under attack for years. It is critical to the future of health care in America that we oppose any proposal that expands the involvement of government in decisions related to patients' care.
- **Government controlled health care will be expensive and inefficient.** Government already dominates education, transportation, and much more. The U.S. government controls nearly half of all health care spending. Proposals to expand public health care programs would put the government in charge of a majority of the available health care dollars, and we'll all experience higher taxes and lower quality care. A government run plan will be extremely costly – like Medicare and Amtrak.
- **Physicians will say "NO!" to government-run health care.** If proposals to give government more power to control the way health care is provided in America are enacted, then treatments, procedures, and prescriptions could be mandated not just by middle managers at insurance companies focused only on a balance sheet, but by *government bureaucrats* focused only on rules determined every year by other bureaucrats – *not by doctors*. This will seriously impact the quality of care people receive. Through the American Society of Medical Doctors, physicians across the country are vowing not to participate in such a plan.

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