

## **Becoming a Citizen Lobbyist**

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This note is to help chronic pain patients and others to begin the process of lobbying their government at Federal and State levels. It may also be used to contact key influencers -- editors of local newspapers, newsroom chiefs of local media (radio and TV), Presidents of State Medical Boards, Directors of local offices of the US Drug Enforcement Agency, Offices of the State Attorney General or county prosecutors. This is a key part of a lobbying package first distributed by email and social media in December 2022, and periodically updated.

### **Timing and Advance Research**

It is intended that you begin phoning your legislators and influencers in person, in the new legislative session starting in January 2023. Don't waste time with email unless you get a contact address first by talking with someone over the phone. Legislators almost never read their mail, and truly never respond in their own voices.

Before you phone, read this package and get familiar with the language.

#### **Step 1: Find Someone to Call**

Do a google search on "My Legislators" and your zip code.

Select a few links in the google hit list and bookmark them for repeated later use. One link that looks interesting is this (though it is current up to 2021 when I did the search)

[https://www.apaics.org/aapi-current-elected-officials?gclid=Cj0KCQiA7bucBhCeARIsAIOWr--ufWKIW35mWRwl67gKHfg6IIPfuw-DiY6EaMz5aTCBxeAxWm0p0ZMaAkSUEALw\\_wcB](https://www.apaics.org/aapi-current-elected-officials?gclid=Cj0KCQiA7bucBhCeARIsAIOWr--ufWKIW35mWRwl67gKHfg6IIPfuw-DiY6EaMz5aTCBxeAxWm0p0ZMaAkSUEALw_wcB)

Other links you'll need:

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

<https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>

Write down a few phone numbers for

- Your two US Senators
- Your US Representative
- Your State Senator
- Your State Assembly Member or State Representative
- The Office of your Governor
- Your State Secretary of Health and Human Services

**Step 2:** Print out these instructions and rehearse your script in front of a mirror or with a family member

“Good Day. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I live in \_\_\_\_\_(city and State)”

“I am a constituent of \_\_\_\_\_(legislator’s name).”

“To whom am I speaking?” (make a note of the name for later follow-up)

“I am calling to ask for (the legislator’s name) help.”

“I am a severe chronic pain patient (or the family member, care giver, or friend). I have been suffering for )\_\_years.”

“My life (or the life of my family member) has been wrecked by my inability to find a doctor who will treat my pain effectively.” (check any that apply below)

\_\_\_ My doctor is retiring and I cannot find anyone else who will treat my pain.

\_\_\_ My doctor has been terrorized by the arbitrary and scientifically unjustifiable over-regulation of opioid pain relievers.

\_\_\_He/She tells me that he/she cannot prescribe opioids for fear of losing medical license and livelihood, even though they are the only therapy that works for me.

“I want my legislators to introduce legislation to get law enforcement out of my doctor’s office and the US CDC out of pain management policy at both Federal and State level. “

“I want to set up a half hour online meeting with appropriate members of the staff of (legislator’s title and name). I will share that meeting with a subject matter expert in this field of policy.

“I also want a staff email address where I can send information and a briefing to prepare for that meeting. I prefer to work with your boss’s healthcare legislative assistant or Chief of Staff.

**Optional:** “I do not want to be blown off with a form letter that doesn’t make commitments or say anything.”

“My contact phone number is (area code and number)\_\_\_\_\_ .

“When may I expect to receive confirmation that you have set up the meeting I’ve requested?”

**Step 3:** Call one of the phone numbers you have recovered from google

Give the script above.

Make notes on the responses of the staffers you talk with.

Email your notes to [Lawhern@hotmail.com](mailto:Lawhern@hotmail.com)

**Step 4:** Repeat the process above with other phone numbers

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### **Contacting influencers and media**

The process above can be modified when you reach out to media. You’ll be looking for contact phones of editorial page editors and local or national media newsroom chiefs.

Your central message is this:

“I follow you (or your boss) in media.”

“I think (\_\_\_\_\_name) needs to develop and run a segment on the destruction of pain medicine and millions of lives in the US by bad government regulatory policy”

“I can provide you with a network of subject matter experts to support media reports in this field”

Provide my email address and name as a point of contact.

“Please call me back at \_\_\_\_\_ to confirm that you are taking action to save my life!”

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## What Are Our “Asks”?

When you succeed in getting an online meeting with healthcare legislative assistants or Chief of Staff to your legislator, what do you ask for?

1. Identify members of staff in key Congressional or legislature committees, with whom you and others can work to draft laws that address several objectives:
  - a. Repudiate and remove all references in healthcare regulatory documents to the 2016 and 2022 CDC guidelines on prescription of opioids in acute and chronic pain
  - b. Repudiate and repeal State level guidelines on prescription of substances controlled under the Controlled Substances Act of 1970.
  - c. Develop legislation to restrict law enforcement access to State PDMP records, unless a court first issues a warrant establishing that there is probable cause to believe a crime has been committed.
  - d. End the practice of issuing "high prescriber" letters from all State PDMPs (based on recommendations of the AMA) as 19 other States have already done.
  - e. Develop and introduce legislation modeled on that of Minnesota and other States (wording to be provided by follow-up) protecting clinicians and their patients from license sanctions or arbitrary prosecution for the imagined "crime" of prescribing opioid therapy to their patients.
2. Make introductions to key staff or leadership in the Department of Health and Human Services (or State equivalents), Center for Medicare or Medicaid Services, and State Medical Boards, so that patient advocates may follow up on initial meetings with briefings to those organizations.