



Tips: Contacting Members of Legislature

Political power.

It's what allows individuals, organizations, and associations to ensure that elected officials address their concerns. With issues such as health care reform, patients' rights, and access to care at the top of the political agenda at the Capitol, turning on your political power as a nurse has never been more important. It is critical that nurses speak up-about quality patient care, adequate staffing, safe workplaces, and the multitude of concerns you and your colleagues face every day. Who better to advocate to the legislature about the need for quality health care than those who are on the front lines?

There is no better advocate than a constituent. Contact the legislator who represents you. If your office is in another district contact that legislator as well.

**Your letters, phone calls, and visits to members of the Legislature truly make the difference.
There are many ways to make your voice heard:**

- 1. Visit your members of the Legislature**
Members of the Legislature are often available for meetings with constituents when they are at home in their district. To set up a meeting with your member of Congress, contact the district office and speak with the scheduler. Attending the town meetings that members of the legislature often hold during recess is another great way to learn where your member of the legislature stands on the issues important to you.
- 2. Make phone calls**
Get the phone numbers for members of the legislature from the government pages of your phone book, Assembly and Senate websites www.assembly.ca.gov and www.senate.ca.gov, or on the ANA\C website at anacalifornia.org.
- 3. Send e-mail and write letters**
Write a letter that states who you are and your position. Keep the letter short and to the point. Using e-mail or sending a fax is another way to make sure your voice will be heard in time to make a difference. If you are willing to send a copy to the office that would help our lobbyist as he makes the rounds.

Tips on effective e-mail and letter writing:

- **Be brief**
Short, direct letters are the most effective.
- **Be specific**
Deal with just one subject or issue in your letter, and state your topic clearly in the first paragraph.
- **Be personal**
Letters are most effective when they reflect your personal experiences and views in your own words. Form letters don't carry as much weight as a letter that you have written yourself.
- **Be sure to give your name and address**
Legislators and other decision makers pay most attention to letters that come from their constituents-people who will be voting for or against them-so it's important to let them know you are from their district. Including your contact information also enables elected officials to respond to your concerns.
- **Be persistent**
Write often, especially to legislators who are undecided on an issue.