

2010 Advocacy Cheat Sheet

Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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“Advocacy, simply put means speaking out on your patients’ behalf.” ---AAP Advocacy Guide

What is advocacy? Advocacy is the process by which a problem is identified and you speak out to make a change on your patients’ behalf. This can be done on many levels: individual, community, state and federal.

How to advocate

You can use your personal knowledge and experience to advocate for children in numerous ways. It could be simply calling an insurance company or a social service agency. You can join forces with a community organization. Directly contacting your legislators via a letter, an email or a simple phone call can have a significant impact. You may also decide to have a face-to-face meeting with your legislator. Some pediatricians enjoy testifying at the state and national level as well. The possibilities are endless!

Easy ways to be an advocate

- ◆ Vote
- ◆ Join the KAAP and the national AAP
- ◆ Write a letter or make a phone call to your local or national legislator
- ◆ Meet with your legislator in person
- ◆ Donate to an organization the focuses on child health issues
- ◆ Become an AAP Key Contact
- ◆ Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper

Letter Writing Tips (including e-mail)

- ◆ Keep the letter to one page.
- ◆ Make it personal. Avoid “form letters”. Tell a personal story about how this problem affects you and your patients.
- ◆ Include a brief statement about the subject. Include the bill number if you are writing about a specific piece of legislation.
- ◆ Include specific facts and data supporting your position.
- ◆ Invite them to contact you for further information or to discuss your concerns.
- ◆ Don’t forget to include your address and phone number.
- ◆ Be Polite! Make sure to thank them for their time.

Telephone Call Tips

- ◆ Identify yourself as a constituent (if you are). Calls from constituents are most effective.
- ◆ Give your name and city of residence
- ◆ Give the specific bill number you are calling about if appropriate.
- ◆ State your concern. If appropriate, state your support or opposition for the specific bill and your reasoning. Be brief.
- ◆ Request that your legislator also support (or oppose) the bill.
- ◆ Leave your telephone number and indicate your willingness to discuss this issue further.
- ◆ Be Polite! Thank them for their time.

Meeting with a Legislator

- ◆ Make an appointment in advance.
- ◆ Introduce yourself. Give your name and address. If applicable, state the name of the organization you are representing.
- ◆ Briefly state the reason for your visit. If discussing a specific bill, provide a copy of the bill and mention the current status of the legislation (i.e. has it been through committee yet).
- ◆ Explain your position on the bill. You may use personal anecdotes and/or objective data.
- ◆ Allow time for questions.
- ◆ Ask the legislator to tell you their position on the subject. If they support your viewpoint, thank them. If they don’t, tell them that you respect their viewpoint.
- ◆ Be Polite! Thank them for their time.
- ◆ Write a follow-up letter.

Potential Community Partners

Kansas Action for Children
SAFE KIDS

www.kac.org
www.kdhe.state.ks.us/safekids

Important Resources

Kansas Chapter AAP
Kansas Medical Society
AAP Department of Federal Affairs
AAP Department of State Government Affairs

www.aapkansas.org
www.kmsonline.org
www.aap.grassroots.com
www.aap.org/moc/stgovaffairs

Legislative Information

Kansas

In Kansas, the legislative branch of the government consists of the House of Representatives with 125 members and the Senate with 40 members. Your representatives are elected from districts. To find information on your district representatives, visit www.kslegislature.org. You can also find up-to-date information about current bills and statutes on that website. Further information regarding the Kansas government can be found at www.kansas.gov.

National

Below you will find information about your current representatives to the US House and Senate.

Kansas Senators

Sen. Sam Brownback (R)

www.brownback.senate.gov

Sen. Pat Roberts (R)

www.roberts.senate.gov

House of Representatives

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--|--------------|
| Rep. Jerry Moran (R) | District I | www.jerrymoran.house.gov | 202-225-2715 |
| Rep. Lynn Jenkins (R) | District II | www.lynnjenkins.house.gov | 202-225-6601 |
| Rep. Dennis Moore (D) | District III | www.moore.house.gov | 202-225-2865 |
| Rep. Todd Tiahrt (R) | District IV | www.tiaht.house.gov | 202-225-6216 |

How they voted

You can find out how your legislator voted on a specific bill by visiting the appropriate website. For the senate, go to www.senate.gov and click on "legislation and records" at the top. Then scroll down until you see "roll call votes". For the house, go to www.house.gov and then scroll down to "Find Vote Information" and click on "roll call votes". For example, using this website you can quickly discover how they voted on bill HR 2.

| | Brownback | Roberts | Moran | Jenkins | Moore | Tiaht |
|---|-----------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| HR 2 A bill to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program (Passed 66-32) | No | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |

Become a Key Contact

An easy way to keep up with current legislation and to expand your advocacy skills is to become an AAP Key Contact. This program not only helps keep you informed about current legislation, it also provides you with guidance on how to contact your representatives. It can be as easy as clicking on a button that sends a pre-filled email or letter to the appropriate legislator or as you get more comfortable, it provides you with phone numbers on who to call to voice your opinion. The AAP notifies you immediately of any important legislation that needs your help so that you too can make a difference. The time commitment is what YOU want it to be.

Sign up at www.aap.grassroots.com/keycontact

Advocacy Toolkits

The following organizations offer free toolkits that provide valuable information for those interested in becoming a better advocate for children.

AAP Advocacy Guide

www.aap.org/moc/advocacyguide

Kansas Action for Children (KAC)

www.kac.org

Need More Help?

Feel free to contact the Kansas Chapter of the AAP at 913.780.5649 or kansasaap@aol.com. The KAAP website (www.kansasaap.org) also has a section devoted to legislative issues. In addition, the chapter sends out a periodic legislative update via email; if you are not receiving it, contact the KAAP to get signed up!

You can also contact the AAP Department of Federal Affairs at 800-336-5475, or e-mail them at kids1st@aap.org.