



ADVOCACY:

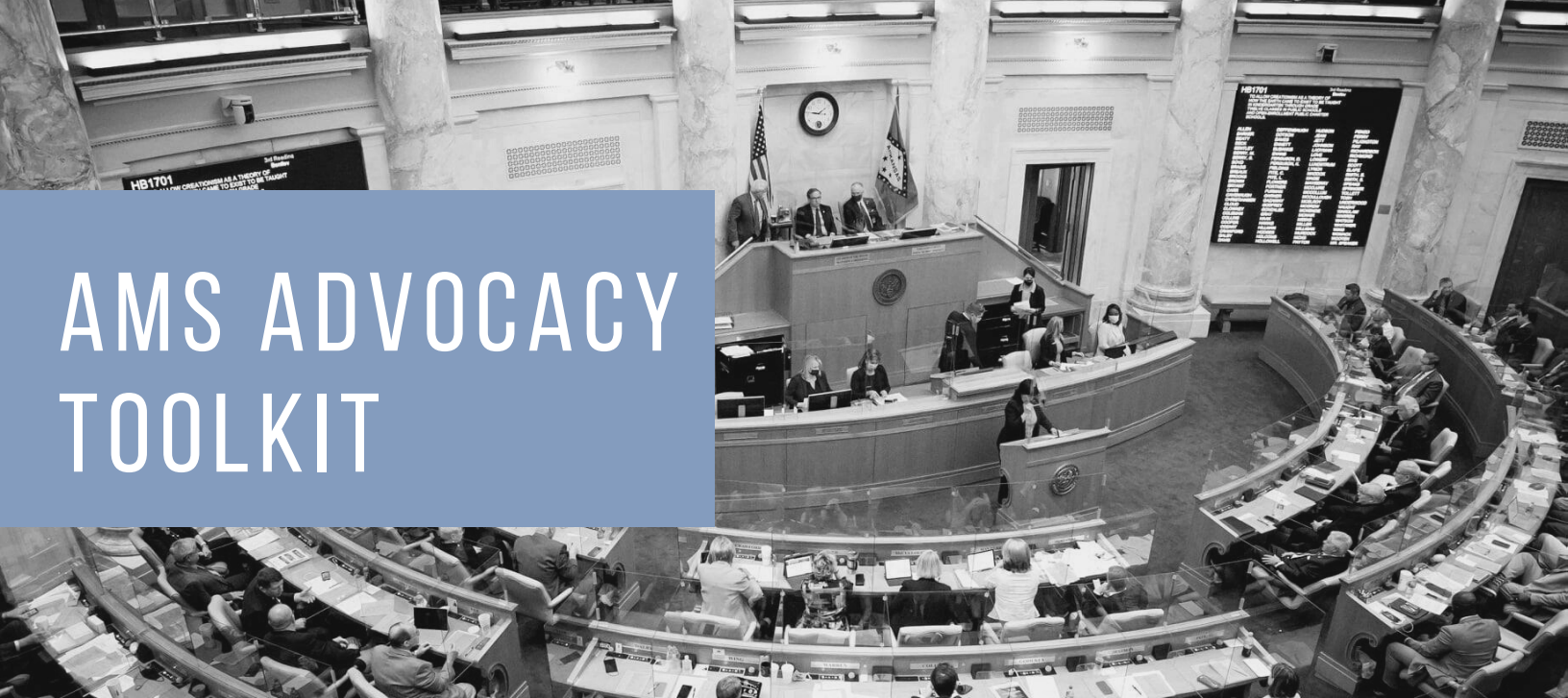


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2023 Legislative Session

ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

AMS ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT. AMS created a toolkit for you to use when communicating, working, and interacting with legislators to ensure the House of Medicine's concerns on health care issues are heard. Physicians are leaders in their communities and your expertise as a constituent is vital in deciding legislative issues.

WHY IT MATTERS

This toolkit is designed to help you not only communicate with your legislators but also with your peers. We need even more physicians involved to help our grassroots efforts be effective in this time of limited contact and networking that typically takes place at the Capitol during each session.

Influencing lawmakers is a team effort by members and the AMS staff, and we are thankful you have chosen to help us during the session.

AMS ADVOCACY TEAM



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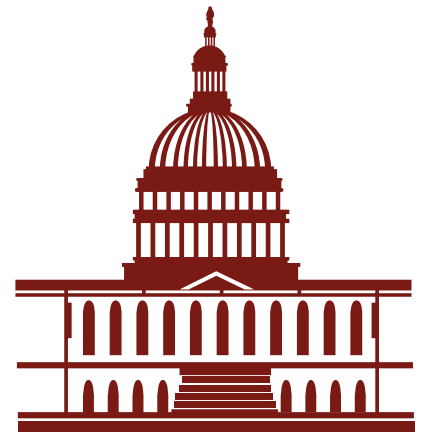
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ABOUT THE ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Arkansas General Assembly consists of the Arkansas State Senate with 35 senators, and the Arkansas House of Representatives with 100 representatives. To learn more about how a bill becomes a law, visit [ARKMED.org/bills](https://www.arkmed.org/bills).



LEGISLATIVE SESSION INFORMATION

To view schedules, calendars, bill information, and legislator information, visit: arkleg.state.ar.us.

LEGISLATIVE MESSAGE CENTER

You can call the Capitol and leave a message for your legislator.
House of Representatives: 501-682-6211
Senate: 501-682-2902

LIVE STREAMING FROM THE CAPITOL

The House and Senate have links to the live streaming of their committee meetings and floor sessions.

House of Representatives: <https://www.arkansashouse.org/>
Senate: <https://senate.arkansas.gov/>

LOCATE YOUR LEGISLATOR

Go to [ARKMED.org](https://www.arkmed.org), and under the Advocacy tab, click on the “Locate Your Legislator” link (or scan QR code).

Scroll down to enter your **zip code** and address, then scroll to the bottom to locate your **STATE Representatives and Senators**.

To send a message, **click the box next to your House or Senate legislator**, then click **“compose”** to send them a message. You can also click on their names to see if their district phone numbers are listed.



CONTACT AMS

501-224-8967 - Office

[ARKMED.org/advocacy](https://www.arkmed.org/advocacy)



FACEBOOK
[@ArkMedSoc](https://www.facebook.com/ArkMedSoc)

TWITTER
[@ArkMedSoc](https://twitter.com/ArkMedSoc)

INSTAGRAM
[@ArkMedSociety](https://www.instagram.com/ArkMedSociety)

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH LEGISLATORS

As a physician, your professional insight must be shared with lawmakers as the work you do is increasingly affected by government regulations, legislation, and special interest groups.



“Constituent-to-legislator” is the most powerful communication and there is no substitute for having a discussion about an issue with your legislator.

When meeting with your legislator and discussing your issues, here are some tips to guide you through your visit and conversation:

- **Get to know them ahead of time.**
- **Be familiar with your issue.**
- **Have a specific “ask.”**
- **Thank them for their time.**
- **Provide feedback to AMS Governmental Affairs.**
- **Follow up with an email or letter.**

ALWAYS BE POLITE AND TELL THE TRUTH!

- **Don’t allow your party affiliation to restrict your contact with legislators.** You may find that some issues will cross the party lines and you will need votes from those legislators who you might have thought would oppose your ideas automatically.
- **Try to start and end the conversation or letter on a positive note.** Even if the legislators cannot support your position on a particular issue, there will be other issues you may need their support on in the future.
- **Keep your comments short and to the point.** Don’t be afraid to say you don’t know everything about a bill. Refer the Senator or Representative to the AMS, if necessary, or tell them you will check with other sources and find out the answer to their question.
- **Follow up** with your legislators to let them know you appreciate their vote or support on a certain issue.
- **Invite your legislator to speak** at organizational meetings and local medical groups. He or she may welcome the opportunity to clarify some issues of interest to physicians.

WRITING TO YOUR LEGISLATOR

When writing to your legislator, properly addresses the lawmaker with the correct title and salutation. A typed or legibly handwritten letter, either emailed or mailed, is acceptable.

Make your name and address visible so they will know you are a constituent. Include additional contact information.

- **First Paragraph - Who you are and your standing.** Emails from people who are most affected by the policy or have knowledge of its impact are the most likely to influence legislators.
- **Second Paragraph - Your personal story.** Tell your compelling story using both emotion and fact. Personalize with a story from your life, your community, or your professional expertise. Remember to stay on topic.
- **Third paragraph - Your specific ask.** Be as precise as possible with your request. Some examples may be, "Please go to the House floor and speak on behalf of this policy," or "Please sponsor this bill."
- **Fourth paragraph - Use Local Data.** Legislators rely heavily on accurate information that will impact their constituency when considering proposed legislation and have little time to research all of the issues before them. Try conducting an informal survey of 10 constituent physicians on the issue at hand and relay those findings to your legislator.
- **Fifth paragraph - Describe Your Passion.** Your enthusiasm reflects in this paragraph when you say why you are supporting or not supporting the measure before them.



IMPORTANT: Proofread for errors ensuring your message is concise and brief.

For letters, it should stay within a two-page maximum.

Send a copy to AMS Governmental Affairs team at ssmith@arkmed.org.



PEER-TO-PEER COMMUNICATION



Physicians of every specialty all over the state are going to come together to support one another on issues that affect all of your patients's lives. Don't just assume other physicians care as much as you do about an issue. In the same way you would try to persuade an elected official to see your point of view, you can lobby friends, family, and colleagues.

TIPS TO PERSUADE OTHERS TO JOIN THE FIGHT

- **Who are the most obvious supporters?** Peers who share your views will generally express interest in your suggestions for tips to make a difference. By looking in your sphere of physicians, one or two advocates may come to mind who would join the fight.
- **Provide simple suggestions for new recruits to make.** Assisting with the initial piece of communication builds confidence. Refer them to this toolkit to get started.
- **Be sincere.** Be honest with your colleague about the time and effort required to play a substantive role in political opinions.
- **What if it doesn't go your way?** Some people will not have the time, the passion, or the same interest to become involved but know that a certain amount of rejection should be expected.

**WANT TO
REACH OUT TO
YOUR PEERS?**

WE CAN HELP!

Contact Laura Haywood,
lhaywood@arkmed.org.

or call

501-224-8967

to ask for a list of
members and
non-member physicians
in your area.



When individuals use social media effectively, they've been able to pressure hard-to-reach legislators, build new communities of advocates, and ultimately win on their policy issues.



USING SOCIAL MEDIA

ENGAGING WITH LEGISLATORS ONLINE

- **Study their style and plan engagement accordingly.** Familiarize yourself with the kinds of posts they typically make. Did they retweet something or tag a constituent in a post? Did they use a hashtag? Use these clues to help craft your posts and messages.
- **Tag their official handles** in any post you want them to see, which sends them a notification and will help your content stand out.
- **Include location to signal constituency.** Lawmakers prefer to engage with their own constituents, but it's hard to determine on social media where someone is from. To boost your chances of having a member engage with your content, find a way to signal that you are from their area by adding your location to your Twitter profile or adding a "constituent badge" in Facebook.
- **Keep the conversation going by asking questions.** Try responding to a post that the legislator shared with a follow-up question. If you only tag them in a comment, they may "like" your post if they agree with it, but you won't learn anything new about their policies or have an opportunity to continue the dialogue. Asking questions shows the legislator that you are reading what they are posting.
- **Follow up after your engagement.** Take the opportunity to follow-up with a letter or phone-call to engage further with your legislator. Don't let the conversation end online.



[ARKMED.ORG/ADVOCACY](https://arkmed.org/advocacy)