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Directly Speaking Pharmacy Month is a Great Time to Reach Out to Your Legislators!

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October is National Pharmacy Month. October 15-21, 2017 is National Hospital and Health-System Pharmacy Week and Tuesday, October 17th is National Pharmacy Technician Day! It's a great time to celebrate!

Governor Rauner just signed HB3462, the two-year extension of the Pharmacy Practice Act which creates a new Collaborative Pharmaceutical Task Force that will shape the Practice Act for the future! So why not use Pharmacy Month and all of its festivities to show your legislators just what a hospital or health-system pharmacist does? It's important to get to know them now before you really need to ask them for a favor. So it's easy to reach out to them but just in case you think you can't do it, we're going to show you how you can! And after we do, we're going to tell you why every one of you needs to make this effort this year and this month!

To find your legislators and set up a visit:

[Note: If you are reading this article online, skip directly to clicking on the hyperlink in step 3. If you are reading a hardcopy of *KeePosted*, start with step 1.]

1. Go to the ICHP website: <http://www.ichpnet.org> and place your cursor over the Pharmacy Practice Tab.
2. Click on the Advocacy button.
3. Click on the link titled Advocacy Center just below the picture on that page.
4. Locate the **Find Officials** box on the right hand side and type in your zip code. You will then need to type in your street address as many zip codes are split by district boundaries.
5. The results will contain a list of both your Federal and State elected officials.
6. Click on your State Senator or State Representative, and you will find a comprehensive bio that includes contact information. Most of the bios provide an email address but a few may not.
7. For those entries that do not provide an email address, you may try to find them on the Illinois General Assembly website at www.ilga.gov
 - a. There click on "Members" under Senators or under Representatives to look up any incomplete information about your legislator. You may still not find an email address, so written communication

or a phone call will have to do.

The screenshot shows the Illinois General Assembly website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Legislation & Laws, Senate, House, My Legislation, and Site Map. Below this, there are three main columns of links. The left column includes 'SESSION SCHEDULE' with details for the Senate (Not in Today, Next: 10/24/2017) and the House (Not in Today), and a search section with 'By Number' and 'By Keyword' options. The middle column lists 'Legislation & Laws' with sub-links for Bills & Resolutions, Public Acts, Senate Members, Schedules, Committees, Journals, Transcripts, Rules, Audio/Video, FOIA Information, and Media Guidelines. The right column lists 'Illinois Compiled Statutes', 'Illinois Constitution', and 'House Members, Schedules, Committees, Journals, Transcripts, Rules, Audio/Video, FOIA Information'.

- b. From either source, find your legislators “District” office, not the Springfield office.
8. However, if the legislator provides an email address, then that is their preferred means of contact. If they don’t provide one, then old school is the ticket with a phone call or better yet a written (on your computer so they can read it) letter.
9. To visit them in their office, call and set up an appointment in advance. Dropping in on them in the district is strongly discouraged plus they are very seldom there anyway.
10. When meeting your legislator:
 - a. Dress professionally!
 - b. Introduce yourself and provide your address. This lets them know you’re a constituent without having to say it. In addition, they may know one or more of your neighbors which is a great conversation starter.
 - c. Be polite. Always!
 - d. Be concise and speak in layman’s terms. They most likely do not have a health care background.
 - e. Offer to help them with any health care related bill information (especially pharmacy, of course).
 - f. Join their email group if they have one and/or follow them on Facebook.
 - g. Get permission from your hospital community relations department and invite them to come visit your pharmacy during Pharmacy Month to see what a hospital/health-system pharmacist does!
11. Follow up with their assistant to set up the visit details. Perhaps even make it into a group visit and have multiple legislators visit together.
12. Follow up with your legislator after their visit and ask if they have any questions about the visit or if there is something you can help them with regarding any healthcare legislation.
13. Post your story and/or pictures on the ICHP Facebook page (offer to send them to your legislator too as many of them love the PR!).
14. Consider contributing to your legislator’s campaign fund or political action committee. This shows your sincere support for them.

Hopefully, that doesn’t sound too hard. So now, here’s why we need your help. The Collaborative Pharmaceutical Task Force will be appointed by the following legislative leaders and made up of representatives from the following organizations:

The Speaker of the House, Michael Madigan shall appoint:

The Illinois Retail Merchants Association Representative

The Chairman of the Task Force

The President of the Senate, John Cullerton shall appoint:

The Illinois Pharmacists Association Representative

A representative of a statewide organization representing unionized pharmacy employees

The Minority Leader of the House, Jim Durkin shall appoint:

The Illinois State Medical Society Representative

The Illinois Council of Health-System Pharmacists Representative

The Minority Leader of the Senate, Bill Brady shall appoint:

The Illinois Hospital Association Representative

A representative of a statewide association representing long-term care pharmacists.

In addition, the Secretary of the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Bryan Schneider shall appoint the following non-voting members of the Task Force:

A representative of the University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Pharmacy

A clinical pharmacist with extensive study in pharmacy e-prescribing

A representative of the Department

You can see that the Task Force has a wide-ranging membership, and a broad scope of interests are represented. This means that health-system pharmacy will need to be heard not only at the Task Force table but with all of Illinois' legislators as soon as deliberations begin. We encourage all of our members to take a look at Public Act 100-0497 and especially Section 85/4.5 The Collaborative Pharmaceutical Task Force, to see what is in store. But that section only describes what is statutorily mandated to be discussed by the Task Force. The entire Act will be open for discussion, and ICHP's Government Affairs Division has been reviewing it in its entirety and have put together a variety of changes that would bring the Act up to today's highest practice standards.

So our request to you each of you is to "Reach Out" to your State Senator and State Representative and show them what hospital and health-system pharmacists do every day. Show them where the Act limits your ability to practice at the top of your clinical ability. Show them that you want to help them make Illinois a healthier and safer State for all of its citizens and your patients! Pharmacy Month is a great time to reach out to your legislators!

IPHP HELPLINE

There is hope! — Call Illinois Professionals Health Program (IPHP) Helpline to receive support from your peers 24/7.

If you know someone who needs assistance, encourage them to call.

1-800-215-HELP (4357) www.advocatehealth.com/IPHP

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