

**A Guide to Talking to Members of the General Assembly**

American Massage Therapy Association—Ohio Chapter

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*Grassroots outreach is an essential part of legislative advocacy. AMTA-Ohio strongly encourages its members to reach out to their state representative, state senator, member of Congress, and local government officials. The Ohio Chapter can provide you with tools and handouts for your meeting, if necessary. This handout is intended to help you schedule meetings with members of the Ohio General Assembly.*

**Contacting Members of the General Assembly**

Much like the US Congress, the Ohio General Assembly has a House of Representatives and a Senate. Every Ohioan has a member of the House and Senate representing them. To find out who your state representative and state senator are, you can contact your local board of election or log onto the following websites—

* *Ohio House of Representatives:* [*www.ohiohouse.gov*](http://www.ohiohouse.gov)
* *Ohio Senate:* [*www.ohiosenate.gov*](http://www.ohiosenate.gov)

The Ohio General Assembly regularly considers and passes legislation that can impact insurance reimbursement, Medicaid coverage, public safety, and scope of practice issues for providers. Much of AMTA-Ohio’s advocacy is targeted at the General Assembly. Members of the state legislature typically have one or two aides in their office; these individuals will answer the phone and assist you with scheduling a meeting.

State Representatives and State Senators have much smaller districts than members of Congress; therefore they usually have time to meet with constituents in their district. Additionally, they hold regular office hours and town halls in their districts to provide constituents with an additional avenue to discuss important topics. If you call your state representative or state senator’s office, you can find out if there are events coming up and possibly schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss massage therapy. You can also find upcoming events by following your elected officials on Facebook or Twitter.

**Preparing for the Meeting/What to Expect**

If you would like, you can invite state legislators or local officials to your practice. Or you can meet at a local coffee shop or another location if that is easier. Bring copies of AMTA-Ohio’s *Massage Modernization* handout and any other material you feel is pertinent. Remember, legislators are there to serve you; they want to hear what’s going on and want to help your practice be successful. Be sure to share your own experiences and stories so they know the challenges facing LMT’s in Ohio. Ask for their help and be sure to follow-up with them. Finally, report back any meetings to the Ohio Chapter Board of Directors.

**Tips for a Successful Meeting**

* *Don’t be nervous! State legislators and local officials want to hear from you;*
* *Share personal stories—be sure they understand that legislation and policy changes can positive impact your practice, your clients, and the general public;*
* *Bring handouts and make sure they leave the meeting with info;*
* *Follow-up after your meeting with an e-mail or thank you card;*
* *Keep the lines of communication open—share interesting studies, news articles, and AMTA literature with your state legislator after the meeting so they stay informed;*
* *AMTA-Ohio and the lobbying team at Capitol Consulting Group can help with preparing materials and talking points for your meeting, don’t hesitate to ask!*