

Meeting with your Maryland State Legislator



February 17, 2010

Annapolis, MD

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Make up of the Maryland General Assembly

- The Maryland General Assembly is the state of Maryland's legislative branch, seated in the state's capital, Annapolis.
- The Assembly is bicameral, consisting of two houses: the Maryland House of Delegates and the Maryland Senate.
- The 427th Session began January 13, 2010 and adjourns April 12, 2010
- The General Assembly has 47 Senators and 141 Delegates elected from 47 districts.
- Legislative information on www.mlis.md.us is updated each night during the Session

Why do you have to make a strong case for Health IT today?

- Maryland is currently facing a \$2 billion budget shortfall in this year's budget
 - Falling tax revenues due to economic struggles
 - Impact of “Snowpacolypse 2010”
 - *Source: Washington Post, January 19, 2010*



The National Picture

- Medicare and Medicaid Incentive Programs for Meaningful Use of EHR's - \$27 billion
- An additional \$1 billion in State HIE and Regional Extension Center Grants were announced by ONC next week.
- Public Comments due on Meaningful Use Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Certification Interim Final Rule on March 15
- Detailed analysis for HIMSS members at www.himss.org/economicstimulus

What is a State Advocacy Day?

- Advocacy Day is a day set aside for your HIMSS state chapter(s) members to meet with state policy makers.
- It can be as small as a few HIMSS members meeting on the statehouse steps and then going to visit legislators.
- It can be as big as 50 or more HIMSS members and associated organizations meeting all day(s).
- **If you have seen one Advocacy Day, you have seen one Advocacy Day. They differ from State to State and Year to Year.**
- It is an opportunity to energize your chapter(s).
- It can be an opportunity to support legislation.

Why a State Advocacy Day?

- If we are to transform Healthcare by using healthcare information technology, we need to foster beneficial policy.
- Ideas are important. Ideas become reality through action.
- Action is achieved through communication, gaining mind-share, forming policy and implementing that policy.
- **Communicate, educate, be a resource, share experiences and respond to questions from policy makers.**
- Use HIMSS Legislative Principles to define “Why”.

Other Logistics during the day of the Meeting

- **Provide Sufficient Time between Legislative Meetings**
 - “Always expect the unexpected”
- **Provide an All day Contact for the Legislators**
 - It is not uncommon for a legislator to reschedule a meeting for an earlier or later time, due to such activities as votes and scheduling conflicts
- **Include Feedback Forms in Participants’ Packets**
 - It is important to record feedback from participants while the visit is still fresh in their minds.
 - It’s important to have thoughts and follow-up information from the legislative meetings recorded the day of the meetings

Plan To Have a Good Meeting

- If a group of you are meeting with a state legislator, meet in advance
- Discuss potential questions that will be asked. Select a person to respond to each FAQ
- Assign a leader who will serve as a group spokesman/moderator
- The group leader will recognize members of the group to answer questions

During the Legislative Meeting



- Stay on message
- Personal stories from a local level coupled with data
- Make a clear actionable request
- More bees with honey!

Three Parts of a Legislative Meeting

- **Hook** (who you are)
- **Line** (why you care – local stories and statistics)
- **Sinker** (your request, “ask”)

*Kush, Christopher. *The One-Hour Activist*. Jossey-Bass. 2004

Common Pitfalls to Avoid*

- **Don't go off message**
- **Don't address unrelated issues**
- **Don't be late or fail to show up**
- **Don't let them make you too comfortable**



More Pitfalls to Avoid*



- **Don't lie or bluff. If you don't know, say you will call them with the information they need. It is a great way to build a relationship**
- **Don't argue if they give you a yes**
- **Don't engage in excessive praise or scorn**
- **Don't discount meeting with a staff**

****Kush, Christopher. The One-Hour Activist. Jossey-Bass. 2004.***

Talking Points: The Case for Healthcare IT

- **Healthcare information technology (IT) is a fundamental requirement for advancing healthcare reform for both public health and individual care, and when implemented correctly, will increase quality and reduce costs.**
- **Broad adoption of information technology is fundamental to our ability to improve the quality of care and lower costs**
- **Share your story! Tell your lawmakers what your organization is doing to make healthcare better and more affordable for Maryland.**



Most Important: FOLLOW UP

- The meeting never happened if you don't follow up!
 - Schedule a follow-up telephone call
 - Immediately send a Thank You note!!!
 - Stay informed on the progress of HIT legislation
 - A win is when the policymaker **CALLS YOU** for input.

Advocacy Tools and Resources

www.himss.org/advocacy

- Fact Sheets and Position Statements
- Legislative Principles
- advocacy@himss.org
- Legislative Action Center
- CRS Reports
- HIMSS State HIT Dashboard

Upcoming Events

- March 1-4, HIMSS Annual Conference, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, GA
– www.himssconference.org
- June 14-16, Government Health IT Conference, Ronald Reagan Building, Washington DC
– www.govhealthitconference.org
- June 16-17, HIMSS Public Policy Summit, Ronald Reagan Building, Washington DC

Questions?

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