Ensuring Legislators Understand Osteopathy

William Henning, DO
A Rude Awakening

- July 2009, California’s legislature slipped last minute language into a budget bill
  - Placing 2 Naturopathic Doctors on the Osteopathic licensing board
- Governor Schwarzenegger signed
- In every challenge lies an opportunity.
Why was this bad?

- NDs focus on herbal/natural supplements
  - NDs would be sitting in judgment of DO licensure, assessing appropriateness of:
    - Osteopathic manipulation
    - Surgery
    - Medication management
    - Etc
    - Why did this happen?
OPSC’s Reaction

- Considered legal remedy
- Met with regulatory agency head
- Introduced legislation to remove NDs from the OMBC
March on the Capitol
Success!

- Legislation was signed in 2010, removing NDs from osteopathic licensing board
But then...

- OPSC examined our legislative presence
- Found it lacking
- The key question is not how much can we afford it is how much do we need?
Action Plan

- Change legislative advocacy firms
- Start “Key Contacts” program
- Hold annual legislative reception
- Increase legislative contributions
- Work with allopathic colleagues
- Other actions to expose legislators to osteopathic medicine
Change Legislative Advocacy Firms

- Prior firm:
  - 1 person
  - $40,000/year
  - Distrusted California Medical Association

- New firm:
  - 2 dedicated lobbyists; 8 total
  - $75,000/year
  - Good relationships with California Medical Assn
Key Contacts Program

Goal: establish ties between local physicians and their legislators

- Identify top 20 legislators
- Ask for physician volunteers
- Orient physicians
- Remind physicians to contact legislators at least quarterly
Legislative Reception

- Distinctive Sacramento headquarters building
Legislative Reception

- Annual event
- Invite all legislators to reception
- Lobbyists and physicians promote
- Opportunity to talk in small groups
- Award “Legislator of the Year”
Legislative Reception
Legislative Reception
Increase Legislative Contributions

- **OSTEOPAC (Political Action Committee)**
  - Previous: $2,000/year
  - Now: $15,000/year

- **Fundraising**
  - Added OSTEOPAC to dues invoice
  - Special events (wine & cheese reception with legislator)
Increase Legislative Contributions

- Physicians and Executive Director attend fundraisers
- Follow-up with thank you note and info on osteopathic medicine
Work with Allopathic Colleagues

Goal: “Don’t forget about DOs”

The CMA double edged sword

- Lobbyists meet weekly
- Executive Directors meet weekly
- Presidential officers meet annually
- Attend quarterly CMA Board meetings
- Attend CMA House of Delegates
- Participate in specialty society meetings
- Participate in regional exec dir meetings
Other Actions

- Invite legislators to speak during Board meetings
- Print “Meet your Legislator” article in journal
- Join coalitions which have access to legislators (eg – MICRA)
OPSC’s Results

- No more Naturopathic Doctors on osteopathic licensing board
- DOs included in $100 Million state budget for residency funding
- DOs recognized in legislation
You have to invest:

- **TIME**
  - Regular, organized interactions with legislators
- **MONEY**
- The physician leader and the society business model
- Legislative action is the largest threat to the viability of our organization.
THANK YOU!