

Ensuring Legislators Understand Osteopathy

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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

Bottom Line

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!