

Health Care Reform Step by Step Guide for Success

Building connections with state officials is critical to achieving participation in the health care reform programs that will be rolled out during the next ten years. Health care reform will require a strategic and focused effort by registered dietitians to build long term relationships with department/agency officials. Success will come with repeated efforts to communicate in a variety of ways and with several key officials for each issue. Remember, making contacts across a variety of disciplines is important. This includes making connections in the governor's office and a variety of state agencies/departments.

Determine affiliate members who have expertise or are employed at the governing department(s) that may be involved in the initiative. Develop strategies and a timeline for each opportunity that you undertake. Refer to resources listed in the state specific materials included in the state template developed for your state and on ADA's Health Care Reform Web pages. For the specific programs/grants of interest, locate the contact information for the official in the governing department.

- Contact the state department/agency official and request an in person or phone appointment.
- Prepare for your appointment by reviewing related resources provided on ADA's Health Care Reform Web pages.
- Prepare to make a specific request of the official for including the registered dietitian in the program or a specific request in approving a grant application, etc.
- Follow up with a personalized letter thanking them for their time and confirming major points discussed. Include specifics regarding follow up that was agreed to in the meeting (commitments made on who will do certain follow up).
- Coordinate with your affiliate Public Policy Panel (your State Policy Representative and/or your State Regulatory Specialist) and plan to send a letter to other state officials (possibly the governor's office or other related state agencies) letting them know of your conversation and discussion with the official and your application and interest in the project.
- Ask to get on the contact list for the state agency/department that will automatically send you an email when proposed changes to rules and regulations are announced.
- Research the related federal department/agency link for seeking information on announced deadlines and on proposed changes in rules and regulations. Note the deadlines and follow up at the appropriate time to learn of the new rules and regulations and of the new announced opportunities in specific programs/grants.

- Keep in close communication with your State Policy Representative; State Regulatory Specialist and Reimbursement Representative for overall Health Care Reform information and for a coordinated affiliate plan of action.
- Refer back to the ADA Health Care Reform Web site for details on each program.
- Keep ADA informed of your activities so that we can share strategies with other affiliate groups.

Contact the ADA staff for further questions and information.

General information:

Juliana Smith, Director, State Government Relations
(jsmith@eatright.org)

Questions on reimbursement and insurance issues:

Pam Michael, Director, Nutrition Services Coverage Team
(pmichael@eatright.org)
Tori Bender, Manager, Advocacy and Communications
Nutrition Services Coverage Team
(tbender@eatright.org)