

State Advocacy Tips:

WOCN[®] Society members must be engaged at a state level because we are the eyes and ears of our profession and our patients. Policy decisions often happen quickly at the state level and can be made without the input of all stakeholders, if those stakeholders are not engaged in the process. So, how do you become engaged in the process at the state level? There are some simple steps that can be taken:

1. **Stay Alert** – Try to read about the activities of your state legislature in the newspaper or on health policy blogs that might be available in your state. Listen to your patients and take note of their issues related to health care. Even consider engaging ones that show interest in writing their story as it relates to their struggles.
2. **Engage Other Stakeholders** – Reach out to patient group leaders in your state as well as the public policy representatives you might have at your institution and ask that you be kept involved and considered a resource on health policy decisions. Reach out to your state nursing association representatives and develop relationships with them.
3. **Research** – Two great resources are listed below that can help you become well informed about state policy and your state legislatures. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has a wealth of information about state policy and state legislators, and has a dedicated [Health Policy section](#). WOCN has a section dedicated on [their website](#) to help you locate your state representatives.
4. **Reach Out** – The WOCN Society encourages all of its members to reach out to their state representatives, just as they would with their federal representatives. Being engaged is the best way to protect both your profession and your patients.