

Minnesota HomeCare Association

Client Advocacy Outreach Toolkit

“When the world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful.”- Malala Yousafzai

Why Should I Advocate?

You are a constituent, but you are also a home care client (or a family member of a person receiving home care services). This makes you the ideal person to talk to lawmakers about the importance of home care. You have the power to educate lawmakers about the impact of home care not only on your life, but the lives of those in their community.

MHCA wants to make it easy for you to take action.

How can I make a difference?

You may be one person, but you have the ability to make a big difference for people throughout the state. Developing a relationship with your lawmakers (both state and federal) can translate to meaningful change that will impact the care you – and others - receive.

How do I arrange a meeting with my lawmaker?

There are two types of meetings you can schedule with your lawmaker. One takes place at the Capitol (St. Paul or D.C.), the other is an in-district meeting. An in-district meeting takes place within a lawmaker’s district (i.e. not at the Capitol). These meetings can take place at the lawmaker’s local office, a coffee shop, or your home (necessary for Medicare patients!)– whatever works best for both you and the lawmaker.

The first step – if you don’t already know it – is to find who represents you. You can find this information [online](#).

The next step is to contact your lawmaker. You can call his/her office or send an email request. Just remember: they are very busy, it may take a few days to receive a response so plan accordingly. If you haven’t heard from someone within 2-3 days, you may wish to follow up using another method of communication.

When requesting a meeting, it is important that you use the correct title (Representative, Senator) and state the reason for your request. It is also important to note that you are a constituent. If you are granted a meeting, don’t be surprised if it is a brief (15-20 minute) time slot, or with a staff member. Remember: lawmakers can be incredibly busy but establishing that relationship is so valuable!

Mission: MHCA represents and supports Minnesota home care providers committed to high quality home care services.

Vision: MHCA will shape the home care landscape to improve and sustain quality care services.

What should I do to prepare for my meeting?

The following tips will set you up for a successful visit:

- Do your research. Does your lawmaker sit on a key committee? Does s/he know much about home care?
- Review sample scripts/materials from MHCA or visit our YouTube channel for ideas on how to talk to your lawmaker! You may also wish to ask your provider agency for assistance.
- Be prepared to tell your home care story – be sure to include how the services you receive have improved your quality of life!
- Be sure to dress appropriately.
- Bring a pen and paper to take notes.
- If you are running late or need to reschedule, let the office staff know as soon as possible.
- Remember that lawmakers are regular people who have been elected to represent your community. Don't be intimidated!

What should I do during the meeting?

The day is finally here! You have spent time lining up the visit and preparing – you're set! The following may be helpful as you walk into your meeting:

- Be on time! If you're running late, let the office know.
- Feel free to start with some small talk but keep it to a minimum.
- Be flexible. It's common for lawmakers to be late and/or to be called out of a meeting. If a staff member needs to step in, s/he will relay your information to the lawmaker. Staff can be some of our best allies!
- Be sure to address your lawmaker as "Representative" or "Senator" (as appropriate) unless s/he asks you to do otherwise.
- Be sure to listen carefully – this is often just as important as speaking!
- Be prepared to answer questions, but don't be afraid to say you need more time to research an issue.
- Thank the lawmaker for their time and promise to follow up with any material requested.

I'm done now, right?

Congratulations, you've completed your meeting! The hard work is done, there are just a few loose ends to tie up before you move on to your next advocacy conquest.

- Follow up with a thank you email or letter, highlighting the main points of the meeting. Remember to keep it brief! Include any requested follow-up material.
- Please [email MHCA](#) and tell us about your meeting – this is very helpful in our effort to advocate for home care services!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead