

Overview of the Legislative Process Opportunities

The following opportunities were designed to give you a chance to incorporate skills from today's module into your professional practice. Many of these opportunities can be done in as little as 5 minutes. You are encouraged to choose opportunities that relate to your personal interests and that fit within your schedule.

Opportunities in as Little as 5 Minutes:

- Look up your state legislature's Web site and set it as a favorite on your computer.
- Look up the Congressional Web site and set it as a favorite on your computer. Links for the above sites can be found in the AAP Advocacy Guide and on the AAP Member Center.
- Look up your decision-maker(s) phone number and e-mail address and program it into your cell phone and/or PDA.
- Watch for AAP Federal Advocacy Action Network (FAAN) alerts by e-mail to learn about when your voice is needed to weigh-in on federal bills affecting children's health and the profession of pediatrics. Keep your eyes open to issues that you see affecting your patients.
- Check with your AAP chapter to see if they have a state advocacy e-mail alert and sign-up to receive updates.
- Keep your eyes open to issues affecting your patients.
- Leave a copy of the "How a Bill becomes a Law" board game in the lounge or general meeting place at your place of residency. Encourage your colleagues to play the game as their time allows.
- E-mail or call your local, state, or federal decision-maker about an issue you care about.
- Visit the Web site: <http://www.vote-smart.org> to learn about how your congresspeople stand on issues you care about.

Opportunities in Less than 30 Minutes:

- Find a state or federal legislative issue that is important to you and find one way that you can weigh-in to influence the process.
- Contact your local AAP Chapter to find out about the state and federal issues they are working on and where these bills are in the legislative process.
- Complete the attached advocacy leadership skills inventory to identify your personal strengths and find an advocacy activity that relates to your interests.

Opportunities in about an Hour:

- Tour your state capitol building or city hall to learn more about how your decision-makers work and the decision-making process.
- Attend a local city council, county commissioner, or state legislative hearing, or congressional townhall meeting in your area on an issue that you care about.

Advocacy Leadership Inventory

Leadership comes in many forms, some of which are easy to overlook or take for granted. As a Pediatric Resident, it is important to recognize the ways you are viewed as a leader to decision-makers and the general public, along with the many advocacy-skills you use when working with others on a daily basis. The following list can serve as a starting point for taking a comprehensive inventory of the talents and leadership potential you possess.

- Courage – the willingness to stand up for what you believe
- Persistence and determination – the ability to work hard even when things are difficult
- Passion – the ability to commit yourself wholeheartedly to what you believe
- Fearlessness – the willingness to take risks
- Community building skills – the ability to bring people together and make them feel good
- Social skills – the ability to work with many different people
- Verbal skills – the ability to communicate or persuade others either individually or in a group
- Writing skills – ability to communicate a message through writing
- Communication or Motivation skills – the ability to articulate a vision and mobilize others toward a common goal
- Analytical skills – the ability to figure out what needs to be done and how to do it
- Conflict resolution skills – the ability to help people resolve or understand differences
- Research and information gathering skills – the ability to find and use information
- Sense of humor and the ability to “roll with the punches”
- Moral commitment – a desire to change what is unfair or unjust
- Precision – ability to work with numbers and “know where things are at”
- Follow-through with details – the ability to do the little things that make the big things possible
- Accountability – willingness to hold yourself and others responsible to the task
- Inspiration – the ability to help others believe in themselves and their capacity for change
- Knowledge of political or social systems
- Access to resources – ability to find money, space, people, talent or community connections

Now that you have identified your personal strengths and leadership skills, write down 1 to 3 ways that you will use these skills to advocate on behalf of children's health and well-being:

1.)

2.)

3.)