Advocacy 301

The Honorable Alan Wheat
Former Member, U.S. House of Rep. (D-MO) and Chairman, Wheat Shroyer Government Relations, LLC

Sherri Layton, LCDC, CCS
Director of Public Policy, La Hacienda Treatment Center and Public Policy Committee Co-Chair, NAADAC

John Lisy, LICDC-CS, OCPS II, LISW-S, LPCC-S
Executive Director, Shaker Heights Youth Center and Public Policy Co-Chair, NAADAC

Presented by: The Honorable Alan Wheat; Sherri Layton, LCDC, CCS; John Lisy, LICDC-CS, OCPS, LISW-S, LPCC-S
Prepping For Your Visit

Have scheduled appointments with your elected officials?

Research your Members of Congress
- Committee assignments
  - Visit their websites
- Addiction-related caucus membership?
  - Know their political views

Bring the topics home to the District. Think of local examples.
- How will our topics resonate with their interests?

Coordinate with your group
- If there are multiple participants, select a group leader to handle introductions & closing.
  - Assign topics to group members to lead that part of discussion to avoid attendees talk over one another.

If you are new to advocacy and want someone to join your meeting, let us know TODAY!
If you have not been in touch with others from your state, please let us know and we will try to help you connect.
Getting Started

Approach your meeting with confidence
You are the expert on these topics
Legislators are generalists, they don’t know your field as well as you do.

Introduce yourself/your group - BRIEFLY
Bring business card
Who is NAADAC? Your state affiliate?
Establish yourself as constituent
What makes you credible to speak on these issues
Why is this important to you personally
Ask about their familiarity with addiction prevention/treatment/recovery issues
Your intro should lead you into issues discussion

Emphasize who you represent
As a provider
As an employer
As an individual

The Meat of the Meeting

Review the one pagers, one topic at a time
Stick to these issues unless legislator/staff member asks about other issues
Present issues factually and objectively
End with a specific “ASK”

“All politics are local!”
Include the examples you prepared that show applicability or need in the District relative to the issues being discussed.

Share the stage with other attendees – Pay attention to the time

Ask if they have questions or need additional information

“Be brief, be smart, be gone!”
General Messaging to Remember

Singleness of purpose, non-partisan

Why does it matter?

We are the solution!

We make financial sense!

And remember, this is all about building a relationship so they look to you as their EXPERT in addiction policy.

Conclusion of the Meeting

Have a designated “closer” to wrap up and make closing statements.

Most likely group leader who handled introductions/scheduling.

Restate the “asks” and request their support.

Remember meetings typically last 15-20 minutes!

Thank the lawmaker or staff for their time.

Convey interest in serving as their addiction professional resource.

Exchange business cards if you haven’t already.

*Invite them to visit your facility in the future or be on your eblast newsletter.*
After the Meeting

Complete the NAADAC 2023 Hill Visit Report
This will help NAADAC's advocacy team with follow up and future advocacy.
Submit one Visit Report for each meeting.

Attend the Debrief Meeting
Thursday 3:00 – 6:00 PM
Bethesda Marriott
Report on your visit and share your experiences.

Advocacy Visit with The Honorable Alan Wheat
Going Back Home

- Establish regular on-going communication with your legislator.
  - Keep them updated on relevant District issues
- Get to know the legislator's staff. They are an essential conduit.
- Maintain communication on areas where you agree and disagree.
- Set goal to have Legislator visit your facility.

Tips for effective advocacy

BE POSITIVE about the work we do. Tell compelling stories about successes.

BE POSITIVE about your profession and our contributions to society.

BE POSITIVE and kind, even if your legislator does not share your views.

BE HONEST, concise, compassionate and concerned. Focus on your clients' needs, not your own.
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Q & A

www.naadac.org/advocacy-conference