

AAPPN Members: Your Guide to In-District Legislative Meetings

Legislative visits are simple, quick, and you don't have to travel to Olympia! Your legislators are back in their district offices over the summer and fall. It's a perfect time to let them know the important role Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners play in our community.

Let them know what you do in your work. Your personal story will help them understand that psychiatric ARNPs are a vital part of mental health care. From that understanding, they can utilize AAPPN as a resource and make it easier for AAPPN lobbyists to get their ear when bills are being drafted.

The goals for your meeting are to:

1. introduce yourself and share your story of how being a PMHNP improves the lives of your patients and community;
2. introduce AAPPN as a resource regarding mental health issues; and
3. establish an ongoing relationship with your lawmakers.

Steps to meeting with your State lawmakers:

1. If you don't know who your legislators are, look them up at <http://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>.
2. Call or email to schedule your meeting. When calling, ask to speak to the person responsible for scheduling and let them know you are a constituent. The purpose of the meeting is informational.
 - You can expect to be scheduled for a 15-30-minute meeting.
 - Call the office a week before your meeting to confirm the date and time.
 - Spend a few minutes researching your legislator – read their bio, find out which committees they sit on, and if they hold a leadership position in the legislature.
 - For each meeting, print out two copies of the [AAPPN handout](#) to give to the legislative aide and lawmaker.
3. At the meeting:
 - Tell a short and engaging story that demonstrates why your work is important. The goal is to make the story relatable. Also mention your membership with AAPPN.
 - If you are comfortable, you may want to address the following issues:
 - i. Your story may illustrate why more funding is needed for mental health.
 - ii. If your lawmakers serves on the Health Care or Judiciary Committees, they may be interested in how the *Volk* decision impacts your practice. You can let your lawmaker know that AAPPN is participating with the Bree Collaborative, looking at the impact the *Volk* decision has had on access to behavioral health services.
 - Share the AAPPN handout and offer AAPPN as a resource for the lawmaker's office.

- Legislators may ask what AAPPN's priorities are for the 2019 legislative session. You can mention the following, and if you have personal stories or opinions that touch upon these issues, all the better!
 - i. Mental health funding (a priority for the Governor as well)
 - ii. Insurance Prior Authorization issues
 - iii. The shortage of mental health beds
- Ask for the aide's contact information.
- If you feel comfortable, ask if you can take a photo with the legislator or aide. Please email the photo to Chris Crosser at chris@aappn.org so we can share it on Facebook.

4. After the meeting:

- Send a thank-you email to the legislative aide and lawmaker and restate how AAPPN can be a resource for them.
- Email a brief summary of how your meeting went to Chris Crosser at chris@aappn.org. Please include any photos taken at the meeting.
- We also urge you to post a message on the AAPPN listserv and/or Facebook page letting other members know how your meeting went. The more members who visit, the greater the impact, and your positive message could spur others to take the time.