

Legislative FAQs

What happens to legislation after I receive an alert from ISMS?

The Legislative Action Hub on the ISMS Web site (www.isms.org) is your go-to place for all of our active issues. When you visit the Hub, you will see our active issues listed with a brief description. Each issue also contains links to relevant materials such as current bill status, position papers, memos to the General Assembly, other supporting materials (e.g letters to the Governor) and roll calls after voting has taken place.

Where can I find the Legislative Action Hub?

Visit the ISMS Web site at www.isms.org. Mouse over the “Governmental Affairs” menu and click “Legislative Action Hub.” Also, we will include a link in all legislative alerts.

How often is the Legislative Action Hub updated?

The Hub is updated by Governmental Affairs staff as action occurs. When the General Assembly is not in session, the information stays posted for those wishing to learn about our issues and legislative successes and challenges.

In addition to the Legislative Action Hub, information and updates can always be found in our regular communications, Weekly Rounds and Illinois Medicine EXPRESS.

Why do I receive these alerts only periodically?

Illinois does not have a year-round legislature. The General Assembly meets in Springfield starting in January each year, and the target date for adjournment is typically late May; however, the legislature has been known to run several months later than the targeted adjournment date.

Almost all of our legislative alerts are sent during the session, when issues move very quickly. However, Illinois also has a Veto Session held in late fall, when the General Assembly convenes to reconsider anything vetoed by the Governor or issues deemed important or time sensitive. You may see an alert during this time asking you to take action.

We use these alerts judiciously. We try to be very prudent and only activate our grassroots network when your help is absolutely critical to the success or defeat of a targeted piece of

legislation. *This is why it is very important to act quickly when you see an alert – time is a critical factor.*

Does my phone call really make a difference?

YES! It makes THE difference! We hear a lot of legislator feedback, and when everyone does their part and is engaged and active with their legislators, they listen. Members who are engaged and active in communicating with their legislators dramatically improve the success of our efforts.

Why are phone numbers listed for both Springfield and the district office?

Whether a legislator can be reached in Springfield or at their district office depends on the timing of votes and the schedule of the General Assembly. We always provide clear direction in our legislative alerts regarding which number to call for maximum effectiveness.

Are emails as effective as phone calls?

Legislators tell us that phone calls are more immediate and impactful because emails aren't always seen right away. We recognize it is not always possible to make a timely phone call when alerts are issued, however, and we usually include a link to make emailing your legislator easier. Contacting your legislator by any means is better than not contacting them at all!

How can I follow up with a legislator after a vote?

After a vote, check the Legislative Action Hub, where a roll call will be posted when available. If your legislator voted favorably, make sure to call and thank them. If your legislator did not vote favorably, make sure to tell them you are disappointed in a professional, respectful manner. Remember, just because someone may vote unfavorably on one issue, there are many, many more ahead, and it is important to maintain a cordial relationship. This lets them know that you as a constituent are active, engaged and paying attention.

Who are my legislators?

At the state level, everyone has one representative and one senator. At the federal level, everyone has one representative and two senators (Senator Dick Durbin (D) and Senator Mark Kirk (R)). The Illinois State Board of Elections has a very good look-up system: visit www.elections.il.gov to find out who your elected officials are.

For your convenience, our alerts are personalized based on your address; every legislative alert will have specific instructions for contacting your legislator.

Is it important to get to know my legislators?

YES! Building a relationship with your elected officials is extremely important. Get to know them before the busy legislative season, when you will most likely need their help on issues of importance to Illinois physicians and our patients.

How do I get to know my legislators?

There are many ways to get to know your legislators. Here are a few:

- *Visit them at their district offices. This often requires an advance appointment; the scheduler will assist you with available times.*
- *Get involved in working on the campaign of a local legislator who shares your views.*
- *Invite a legislator to your home.*

ISMS is also a great resource to assist you in planning a legislative visit. Please call the department of Governmental Affairs at 312.782.1654 for assistance.

What should I expect at a legislative visit?

- *Plan to be on time, brief and set a limited agenda.*
- *If you are going with a group, keep it to a manageable size and choose a spokesperson.*
- *Be persuasive, outline the issue and give personal, real-life examples.*
- *Be polite! Legislators may not agree with your position on every issue, but politeness may help you change their minds or gain their support on other issues.*

Visiting your legislator will go a long way. You will establish a relationship and become a resource when the official needs to consult on bills and issues related to Illinois physicians and our patients. Conversely, when an important vote arises during the legislative season, you will be able to rely on your established relationship to voice your support or concerns about the bill.