

Legislative District Office Visit

THE RATIONALE

Developing relationships with legislators takes time and persistence. This introductory meeting is a first step toward what you hope will be a long-term relationship. If you already have a good relationship with your elected officials, feel free to request a home visit.

You don't want to show up out of the blue with a long list of demands - like we sometimes must do during the state budget or legislative session. The idea is to build a strong, long-term relationship based on effective, regular communication with give-and-take, and periodic updates.

You want to get to know what your lawmakers are passionate about, whether it's health care, labor, equity, or something else. You want to share your passions and goals. You want to talk about what you do all day and why it matters to New Yorkers. You want to establish trust and rapport.

When lawmakers think "home care" you want them to think of YOU, not a line item in a budget. Remember that legislators are just people, and they work for YOU! Leave them feeling like home care is about serving their constituents.

HOW TO DO IT

Make the Call

1st: Identify which lawmaker you want to meet with. If you aren't sure who represents you or which district your business is in, use these links:

- Find Your State [Assembly Member](#)
- Find Your State [Senator](#)

2nd: Identify which district office you want to visit. Do this by clicking on the link to your member's webpage.

- [Senators](#) and [Assembly Members](#) each have their own page.
- Geographically large districts may have more than one regional district office. Pick the one that is most convenient for you.
- Example: You are represented by Assembly Member Karen McMahon. Visit her Assembly page, click on CONTACT, and you will see both her Albany office and her office in Williamsville. You should call the number associated with her Williamsville office, although be prepared that you may be asked to contact the Albany office. It depends on each individual member's staffing. The same process applies to Senate offices.

3rd: Decide who's going on the visit! Do you want to go alone, or go with other area providers? Make sure you have a list ready of who is planning to attend, both their name and the agency they represent.

4th: Make the call to ask for an appointment.

Example script: Hi! This is Laura Smith calling from Laura Cares at Home, located in Troy. I'd like to make an appointment to stop by for a district office visit. May I speak with someone in scheduling?

OR- This is Laura Smith calling from Laura Cares at Home, located in Troy. I, along with Bob Johnson from Bob's Home Care and Nora Jones from JonesCares would like to stop by together for an office visit. May I speak with someone in scheduling?

WHY do you want the meeting? (Sometimes you will be asked what the meeting is for, sometimes not.)

- To introduce yourself (as a valuable resource in the community).
- To strategize/work collaboratively with the lawmaker to help keep their constituents in their homes and communities (where they vote, pay taxes, and spend money).

Be prepared to meet with staff. Our legislature is very staff-driven, and meeting with a staff person is as important as meeting with the legislator they work for. Make sure to note the name of the person with whom you are meeting, their contact information (including email address), and the date, time, and location of the meeting.

5th: Verify the meeting BY EMAIL right after the call.

6th: Verify the meeting again 2 business days before the meeting - an email or phone call is fine.

Make the Visit:

1st: Make sure everyone going on the visit knows where and when they need to be. Do arrive 5 minutes early and only go into the office once your whole party is there.

2nd: Have a GENERAL idea of who is going to say what. This will vary depending on whether you already have a relationship with the lawmaker and if they have any familiarity with home care. Is anyone in your group a new provider or new to the area? Make sure to highlight that.

Focus on WHY you wanted the meeting:

- To introduce yourself as a valuable resource in the community.
- Mention you are members of the New York State Association of Health Care Providers.
- To strategize/work collaboratively with the lawmaker to help keep their constituents in their homes and communities - where they vote, pay taxes, spend money.

Lawmakers take a lot of questions from constituents who don't know where to start when they or a loved one needs care. You want to be a resource to whom your lawmaker can turn.

Focus on **YOUR** why: Why are YOU passionate about your work? What drives YOU? WHAT you do is important, and you will talk about that, but start with what motivates you to keep going despite it being a very tough business. Check out [this video](#) if you need some inspiration to help you express your "why".

After the WHY, talk about the WHAT. What do you do in the community? Who do you provide care for? What kind of services do you provide? Don't get bogged down in technical language and acronyms. For instance, instead of saying "we provide care to elders with their ADLs" you might say "we assist elders who need help to bathe and dress". District office staff tend to be generalists and not experts in home care. Maybe talk about a specific case as an example (being mindful of not sharing personally identifiable information).

You want to give as much information as you get. Asking how you and your elected officials can work collaboratively to keep people in their homes and communities will give you insight into what the lawmaker is thinking or knows.

3rd: Have something to leave with the legislator or their staff. Make sure to bring a couple of copies. Items to include:

- Overview of Home Care in New York State (HCP-developed “Home Care 101” document) provided in this toolkit.
- If your agency has a promotional document or packet that describes who you are and what you do, bring that along. Don’t bring the whole sales pitch - keep it short.
- If you don’t have a document in-house, you can use the “Swiss-cheese” document provided in this toolkit. Just be sure to fill in your agency’s information before printing.
- Include your business card! Include your cell phone number if it isn’t already there.

Make The Ask- A Home Care Visit

- Ask your lawmaker if they would like the opportunity to see home care in action! You don’t have to set it up on the spot but do indicate that such a visit could be set up, could be short in duration (15-30 minutes for instance), and that we have legally-reviewed HIPAA compliance forms, etc. to make sure that patient confidentiality is upheld. Part of your follow-up will include actions to start that process.

Wrap it Up

- When it’s time to end your meeting, be gracious. Say thank you. State what your next step will be. If your legislator is interested in making a home visit, say that you will follow up with their scheduler to get some prospective dates. If they aren’t interested, let them know that you will be dropping by from time to time to keep them in the home care loop. When you leave, be sure to thank the office staff. Be sure to hand over your leave-behind materials and business cards.
- If there is interest in a home visit, follow up the next business day with a phone call to the district office to get some prospective dates. The next edition of the *HCP Insider* will include instructions and materials for a home visit, including HIPAA compliance forms and some tips for success.
- Regardless of interest in a home visit, SAY THANK YOU by sending a thank you note in the mail. Everyone emails- and personal touches go a long way.

TELL HCP!

- Let the HCP Public Policy team know how it went! Is there any follow-up we need to do? Anything we should know or take note of? Any questions you need help with? [Drop us an email.](#)

Overview of Home Care in New York State

New York State has the most comprehensive Home and Community-Based Care (HCBS) services in the United States. HCBS encompasses extensive medical and supportive assistance, and without access to these services, countless vulnerable New Yorkers would need to be institutionalized in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The emotional trauma a person experiences leaving their cherished home can be overwhelming, and the financial cost of long-term care impacts all New Yorkers.

A crucial component to reducing long-term care costs and delivering healthier and happier results is paid caregivers in the home. We must leverage this impact because without their assistance, HCBS recipients would not enjoy the quality of life and the dignity of independence we often take for granted.

“The Players” (Provider and Payor Basics)

The New York State Association of Health Care Providers (HCP) is a trade association supporting the HCBS industry. Our provider members primarily operate Licensed Home Care Services Agencies (LHCSA) that deliver personal care in the home. LHCSAs are unique to New York State and are heavily regulated and overseen by the New York State Department of Health. Other states have less stringent requirements for personal care providers.

HCP also supports other state-regulated HCBS providers, including Certified Home Health Agencies (CHHA), who offer personal care and home health aides, along with more clinical services such as wound care and speech therapy. In addition, Consumer Directed Personal Assistant Program (CDPAP) Fiscal Intermediaries (FI) are among our members and allow beneficiaries the autonomy to choose and train their caregiver/s.

The vast majority of HCBS recipients are Medicaid beneficiaries. In NYS, Managed Long-Term Care (MLTC) plans (insurance plans) work within the Medicaid system to oversee and administer the financial aspects for those needing long-term care support in the home. Many New Yorkers are served through Medicaid funding in the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) programs. These individuals are especially at risk for institutionalization if not for the availability of HCBS.

Still more New Yorkers are served by other government-funded programs (e.g., Program of All-Inclusive Care of the Elderly/PACE, Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly/EISEP) or private insurance. Only a minority are self-paying.

The Home Care Impact

Home care workers provide a wide range of assistance for persons with disabilities and chronic conditions. These services enable them to accomplish activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living. Activities of daily living (ADL) are the most basic tasks, such as walking and eating. Instrumental ADLs are more complex tasks like cooking, medication management, and

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housekeeping. Home health aides may also assist with medical equipment, supplies and devices used in the home.

[NYS Department of Health guidelines for providing personal care services](#) and home health aide services define the activities these aides may perform. These tasks range from light housekeeping and hygiene assistance to helping with specialized equipment and medications. Home health workers often spend more time with their patients than any other provider type and do so in the most intimate setting: the home – the care setting of choice for most New Yorkers. As a result, they often develop special bonds with those in their care.

Equally important, these essential workers may assist clients in their communities, allowing patients to maintain societal involvement by reducing the challenges presented by their disability, weakness, or impairment. These challenges represent simple day-to-day life for most of us – eating in a restaurant, managing appointments, and attending social or religious gatherings.

Without assistance, HCBS recipients and their families would not enjoy the quality of life and the simple dignity of independence that is often taken for granted.

Economic Impacts

Keeping people in their communities makes economic sense. CMS estimates over \$200 billion will be needed for home care by 2028, representing a 73% increase from 2020. However, this figure is far lower for home care than in other settings, as shown by multiple data sources.

However, we must look beyond the cost of care and realize the benefits of home care on the state's economy. Home care workers represent the largest portion of the NYS health care labor market. The industry also directly supports public and private transportation commerce, as workers travel from one home to the next.

When policies and funding do not adequately support the home care industry, family members must step into the caregiving role. The state's economy suffers as a result of both job loss and qualified caregivers working "off the books". Both significantly impact tax revenue and local spending.

Additionally, when we can maintain people at home and in their communities, they can funnel money back into that community. For example, home care patients buy from their local markets and shopping centers. They order pizza and use maintenance services. These more subtle economic impacts of home care are difficult to measure but no less important when considering why the industry warrants adequate public support.

Societal Impacts

Over and above the dollars and sense (!) of home care, there are social impacts of keeping New Yorkers healthy at home. The most immediate is the health benefit of easing loneliness for those that are homebound. Improved individual health translates to improved public health.

Additionally, the positive results of individual participation in one's community go far beyond the unmistakable aspects of personal fulfillment and quality of life. Religious, social, and support groups, and even civic activism are all more accessible to someone at home than those in institutional settings. This personal involvement benefits society as a whole.

Finally, it is proven that paid caregivers take burdens off family members, allowing them to contribute to society through their jobs and community involvement, educational engagement, and helping to maintain family relationships.

Add your agency logo here OR copy and paste body onto your letterhead

If your letterhead doesn't already have your address, etc.

AGENCY NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS LINE 2

CITY, STATE ZIP CODE

AGENCY NAME is a Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA) serving the areas of TOWNS/CITIES OR COUNTIES. Our team of dedicated home care professionals assists XXXXX (number) people to stay in their homes and communities by providing help with things like bathing, grooming, dressing, and getting around the house safely.

Our mission is XXXXXXXXXXXX.

OTHER POINTS YOU MAY WISH TO HIGHLIGHT:

We currently employ XXXXX people here in TOWNS/CITIES OR COUNTIES.

We have multiple offices located in TOWNS/CITIES OR COUNTIES.

In addition to being a LHCSA, we also offer the following services: (CHHA, HOSPICE, ETC.)

AGENCY NAME has been in business since XXXX, or other points about how your business started.

AGENCY NAME is a member of the New York State Association of Health Care Providers (HCP), as well as... MEMBER OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, MINORITY OR WOMEN OWNED BUSINESS, etc.

Here is an **example** of how to use this "Swiss-cheese" document. I would write the following on my agency's letterhead:

Laura Cares at Home™ is a Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA) serving Rensselaer and Albany Counties. Our team of dedicated home care professionals assists over 500 people to stay in their homes and communities by providing help with things like bathing, grooming, dressing, and getting around the house safely. To meet the special needs of the Polish community in Troy, we specialize in serving patients whose primary language is Polish.

Laura Smith launched Laura Cares at Home™ in late 1994 to honor the memory of her grandparents who lived in rural upstate New York. Finding care for them was a challenge, but with tremendous support from their family, her grandparents' final years were spent in their home together, where they wanted to be. Family caregiving was hard, and Laura noted the need for home care that could meet the unique needs of elders and their families. Our mission is to empower our elders to age in place with dignity and self-determination. Sometimes all that is needed is a little help with bathing and dressing, and other times our services include more intensive support. We offer flexible services to meet the needs of those we serve. If a move is appropriate, we provide a Certified Senior Move Manager to make sure that any transition is a smooth one.

Add your agency logo here OR copy and paste body onto your letterhead

Laura Cares at Home [™] is a proud member of the New York State Association of Health Care Providers (HCP) and the Rensselaer County Chamber of Commerce. We are honored to serve your constituents with skill and compassion.