

*Be a Champion for
Children's Health*



CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION

SPEAK NOW
FOR KIDS



When advocates dedicated to children's health and well-being raise their voices, great things can happen.





Join children's hospitals and advocates from across the country as we work together to improve access to quality care for all children. With your help, we can ensure our elected officials put forth policies that support children's unique health care needs.

Representing more than 200 hospitals, the Children's Hospital Association is the voice of children's hospitals nationally. The association works hard to promote policies that enable hospitals to better serve kids and is the premier resource for pediatric data and analytics.

TOGETHER WE:

- Halted Medicaid cuts that would harm children's access to health care
- Secured funding to train more than 6,000 pediatric specialists at nearly 60 independent children's teaching hospitals
- Worked with Congress to introduce the Advancing Care for Exceptional Kids Act of 2015 (ACE Kids Act) to improve pediatric care for children with complex medical conditions

But the fight for quality health care for all kids is far from over.

We need to ensure all children have access to the right care, in the right place, at the right time. It's a goal that needs your help to become a reality.

It's Easy to be a Champion for Children's Health

Patients served by children's hospitals depend on champions like you to be their advocates and to support policies that improve the well-being of all children. Whether you're a patient, parent or a staff member just concerned about our kids' health, you can raise your voice to influence local, state, and federal policies. We need to educate our elected officials on how their decisions impact children's health.

Speak Now for Kids is an online advocacy network designed to raise awareness among legislators about how public policies impact children's health care. Established by the Children's Hospital Association, Speak Now for Kids offers resources for people like you to support your advocacy efforts.

Follow these simple recommendations to increase your effectiveness as a champion for children's health:

- Find your legislators.
- Write to your legislators.
- Promote your positions through social media.
- Make timely and effective phone calls.
- Meet your legislators.

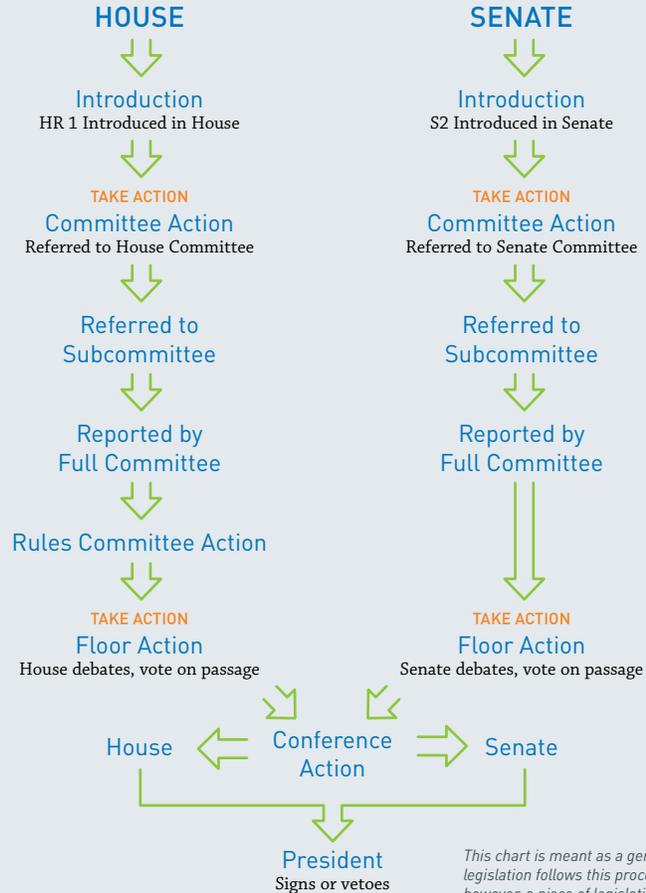
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The Legislative Process

As a champion for children's health you want to be in the know when it comes to understanding the legislative process. Creating and passing legislation is complicated; this chart will help you understand how a bill becomes a law.

At every step in this process, you have the power to influence your legislators. Some sit on committees that craft legislation before it reaches the full House or Senate. And all of them will ultimately vote on any legislation considered by Congress. There is no bad time to reach out to your legislators, and this guide will show you how.



This chart is meant as a general overview – most legislation follows this process. Occasionally, however, a piece of legislation will skip one or even many steps to be passed more quickly.

Find Your Legislators

There are multiple resources available to find your elected officials at each level of government. For starters, visit www.speaknowforkids.org and click ACT NOW. You'll be given contact information on all of your lawmakers, from the president of the United States to your state legislators. You can also find information about important bills Congress is considering that may have an impact on children's health care. And, as you'll see next, we give you the tools you need to contact your legislators.



Write to Your Legislators

Now that you know who your legislators are, let's talk about the best way to contact them. As a constituent, you carry a lot of power with your elected officials—remember, they work on your behalf. Simply visit our Legislative Action Center at www.congressweb.com/speaknowforkids. There you'll find pre-written letters to your legislators that you can personalize with your thoughts on why quality health care for all kids is so important. Many congressional staffers say that a personalized letter carries more weight than a pre-written letter since it illustrates

that the constituent took the time to tell their story.

While our pre-written letters will cover most of the basics, [here are some more tips on writing to legislators](#):

- Begin by introducing yourself as a constituent. Many legislators won't accept letters or emails from folks outside their district.
- Make "the ask." Within the first paragraph, specify what action you want taken and, if possible, refer to bills by

name or number. Legislators can't know what you want them to do unless you tell them.

- Briefly explain the issue you are referencing—this is your chance to educate legislators on how the policy will affect you.
- Be clear, but be respectful in your request.
- Make it personal. Briefly share your story about how your legislator's actions will directly impact you, your community, your job, and your family.

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- Ask for your legislator's view on the issue. If they agree with your opinion, you can hold them accountable if they don't vote your way.
 - Include your name, home address, email address and phone number. It is important to include your home address so you can be identified as a constituent.
 - Include a link to your CarePage or blog if you have one.
 - Keep the length of your email to three or four paragraphs and less than 500 words.



Elected officials respond to constituent outreach in a number of different ways. In-person visits carry the most weight with legislators, but of course it's not always convenient to visit your legislator in Washington, or even while they're at home in their district offices. Luckily, more than 90 percent of congressional staffers say that written communication from a constituent can influence their bosses.



*“Political action is the
highest responsibility
of a citizen.”* John F. Kennedy

When to Write

There is no wrong time to communicate your concerns to your legislators, but there are key times in the legislative process where legislators may be most receptive to your point of view (these are indicated by **TAKE ACTION** on the chart on pages 4 and 5):

- After a bill is introduced and assigned a number it is sent to the appropriate committee. This is a great opportunity to educate your elected official on the impact that the new legislation may have on children's health.

Committees are always seeking input from the public, and sending an email can provide just the right amount of detail and personal touch.

- Just before a committee takes action or votes is another ideal time to reach out to your legislators with a clear request to vote for or against proposed legislation.
- When a legislator acts favorably on your request, follow up with a thank you note regardless of whether or not the end result is

consistent with your position. The thank you note strengthens the constituent-legislator relationship. It also helps reinforce that constituents pay attention and are engaged in the entire legislative process.

- Congress still accepts “snail mail,” and many legislators say they appreciate hand-written letters. Keep in mind that because of security restrictions, it can take more than three weeks for your letter to arrive.

Interact with Legislators on Facebook and Twitter

Social media has radically enhanced the way constituents communicate with legislators. Legislators continue to use traditional means such as their own websites and email, but many have shifted much of their energy and attention to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and blogs to be more accessible to those they represent. Additionally, electronic communications are fast, inexpensive and they allow legislators to respond much more quickly.

Finally, social media breaks down geographic barriers to communicating with Congress. Normally, legislators only want to hear from constituents—the people who live in their district, vote for them and keep them in office. Social media, of course, is not tethered by geography—you can communicate through Twitter and Facebook with a legislator in a position of leadership, or who is a member of a key committee, even if they aren't your legislator. (You can learn more about congressional committees and jurisdiction on page 22.)





Twitter

Twitter has become a favorite tool of legislators to release press statements, photos, and short news items. Every senator and more than 95 percent of representatives use Twitter.

There is an easy way to find your legislator's Twitter handle:

- Visit www.govsm.com, a Wiki page devoted to legislators' social media usage. You'll need to know the names of your legislators in advance, and you'll see the full range of social media platforms they are currently using.

To reach your legislator simply begin your tweet with their Twitter handle (user handles begin with an @ sign). You'll also want to include relevant hashtags, (which begin with a # sign). Hashtags are a way of branding your tweet and making it easier to track conversations. For example:

@SenateMajLdr Please support children's health by funding #Medicaid and #CHGME.

Other common hashtags used by the Children's Hospital Association include:

#speaknowforkids
#ChildHealth

#ACEKidsAct
#CHIPWorks

Facebook

More than 90 percent of legislators in Congress have a Facebook page and use it for sharing information with constituents. Legislators frequently use Facebook to communicate their opinion on pending issues or legislation. However, they also use Facebook to talk about what is going on in their states or districts, including events they're holding or attending. This is a good way to find out where you can meet your legislators in-person.

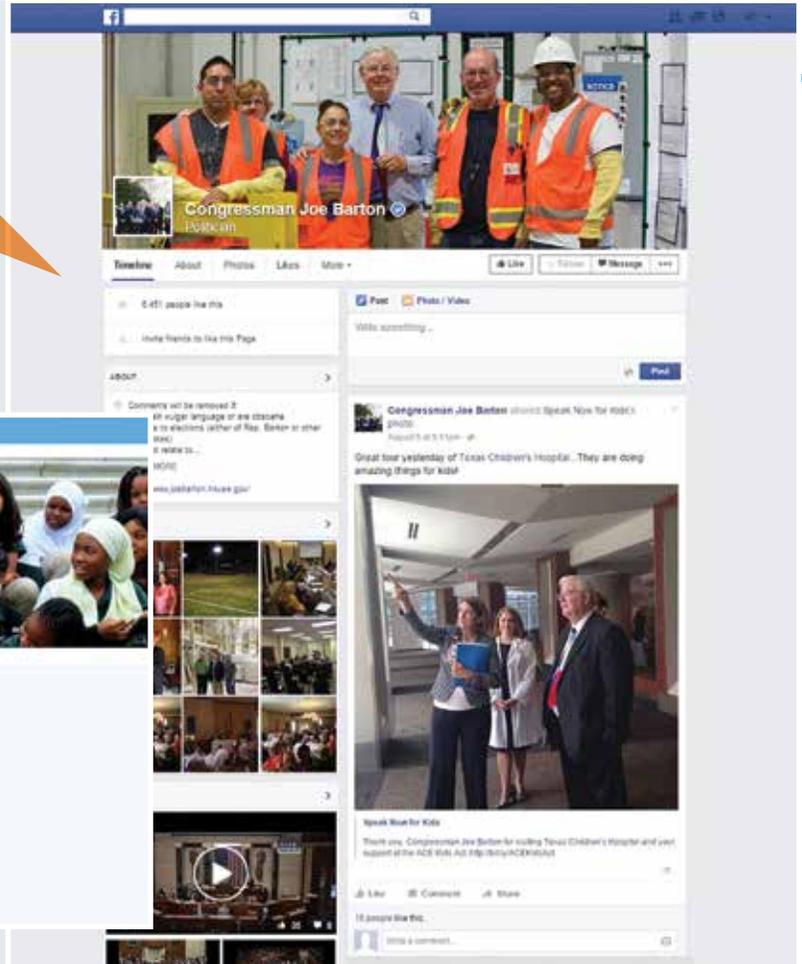
In addition, legislators read comments and posts on their Facebook pages. In a 2010 study by the Congressional Management Foundation, nearly two-thirds of U.S. House and Senate social media managers said Facebook is an important tool for understanding constituent views and opinions. Keep track of what they post and add your thoughts; these are great ways to make your voice heard.



A survey conducted by the Congressional Management Foundation found that a majority of congressional staff felt that email and the Internet have made senators and representatives more accountable to their constituents.



The Congressional Research Service found that legislators sent more than 30,000 tweets and posted more than 16,000 times on Facebook in just two months.



Make Timely and Effective Phone Calls

The window of opportunity to influence legislation when Congress or a state legislature is in-session can be very small. A personal phone call to your legislator's office is always an effective and timely advocacy tool.

When calling your legislator's office:

- Provide your name and address so you are recognized as a constituent.
- Identify the bill or issue you are calling about by its name and/or number if you have it.

- Ask to speak to the staff member who handles health issues; the health staffer will relay your comments and concerns to the legislator.
- Briefly state your position and how you would like your legislator to vote.
- Ask for your legislator's stance on the bill or issue and for a commitment to vote for your position. Remember to make "the ask."
- Don't guess at answers to questions. If the elected official's staff requests

information you don't have, tell them you will gladly follow up with requested information.

- Follow-up with a note restating your position and thanking the legislator or staff member for his or her time.

It is important to keep your phone calls quick and simple since most staff multitask during calls to keep up with the volume of communication from constituents.

For the most effective phone conversation, follow this example:



“Hello, this is Tiffany Smith at 123 Main Street in Hartford, Connecticut. As your constituent, I am calling to let you know that I fully support H.R. 1234, which would expand health care coverage for children. I urge you to vote yes. What is your current position on the bill? [Listen to response and make the ask for a commitment to vote for your position.] Thank you.”

Communication from constituents is crucial. A well-timed phone call can have a big impact on influencing legislation.



Visit Your Legislators

Visiting your legislator is by far the most effective means of conveying your message. A face-to-face visit connects the issues you care about to the people your legislator was elected to serve.

In a recent survey, 77 percent of congressional staffers said that an in-person visit carried the most weight in terms of delivering a constituent message. Visiting your legislators may sound intimidating, but remember: their offices are

open to the public; they are elected to work for you; and they need to hear your story and opinions in order to vote on issues that will benefit the communities that they serve. Your visit helps your legislators to do their job well.

Visits can be conducted in your home state or congressional district, as well as in Washington, D.C. Building a positive face-to-face relationship requires you to plan ahead. If you would like

to visit your legislator, you may want to consider contacting your children's hospital government relations department to ensure that your efforts and messages are coordinated.

Please note that legislators often can't control their calendars and frequently ask their staff to handle meetings with constituents. A meeting with the appropriate staff member is often just as effective as a meeting with the legislator.

In advance of your visit:

- Make an appointment in advance. Expect to get about 15 minutes with your legislator or their staff—sometimes less. Be prepared to deliver your message in as little as 90 seconds.
- Be on time (or early).
- Be prepared by knowing where your legislator stands on the issue by doing some research on his or her website. You can also contact the Children’s Hospital Association to get your legislators’ voting history.
- The Children’s Hospital Association frequently posts fact sheets on its website;

download the relevant fact sheets to share with your legislators and their staff.

- Dress in business attire.

During your visit:

- Summarize who you are and why you are meeting with the legislator within the first 90 seconds of the meeting by doing the following:
 - Identify who you are and your relationship to your children’s hospital (if any).
 - Identify yourself as a constituent.
 - Highlight the issue you came to discuss.
 - Be specific about the action you want taken.

- Use this meeting to explain how the bill or issue will affect you personally, as well as other voters in your district or state.
- Make “the ask.” You can’t know if the legislator will support (or oppose) a given piece of legislation if you don’t ask.
- Stick to the issue and avoid political attacks on your legislator or staff (or even his opposition—keep the visit positive).
- Share a personal story to provide context for why you care about the issue.
- Before leaving, ask how you can be of help on this

issue. Position yourself as a resource.

- Give your legislator or staff the fact sheet on your issue and briefly highlight your points.
- Thank the legislator or staffer for their time.

An example of a good introduction/90-second speech:

After your visit:

Follow up with a thank you letter or email and include any information that was requested by the legislator or staff. This will strengthen your relationship and leave a positive impression with the legislator's office.

"Hi, I'm John Smith. I am a constituent of yours and I am here to talk with you about health care coverage for children. I am asking you to vote yes on H.R. 1234, which reauthorizes the Children's Health Insurance Program. CHIP provides health insurance to children who do not qualify for Medicaid and can't afford to purchase private insurance. Here's a sheet with some more information. My phone number and email address are included if you have any questions. Thank you for your time today."



Common Policy Priorities for Children's Health

Medicaid

Medicaid is a federal-state program that covers more than 40 percent of all children in the U.S. While a quarter of the population, children are roughly half of all Medicaid recipients. Children's hospitals provide about 45 percent of the hospital care required by children covered by Medicaid and almost all the hospital care for Medicaid-covered children with complex medical conditions.

Medicaid, on average, pays for 56 percent of all inpatient days of care provided by independent

children's hospitals. However, Medicaid payments for services are inadequate, resulting in barriers to care for children covered by Medicaid. On average, Medicaid pays only 78 percent of the cost of care, even after hospitals account for supplemental payments, such as disproportionate share hospital payments, that provide financial help to hospitals that treat a large number of Medicaid and uninsured patients.

Get the facts on Medicaid in your state by visiting <http://bit.ly/MedicaidFactSheets>.

ACE Kids Act

The Advancing Care for Exceptional Kids Act of 2015 (ACE Kids Act) is a proposal to improve how care is delivered to America's children with complex medical conditions on Medicaid. Once enacted into law the ACE Kids Act will improve coordination of care for children, address problems with fragmented care across state lines, and gather national data on complex conditions to help researchers improve treatments for rare diseases. The ACE Kids Act is estimated to save \$13 billion over its first 10 years.

CHIP

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides health insurance to children who do not qualify for Medicaid and do not have access to private health insurance. It provides federal matching funds for states that put up funds of their own to expand Medicaid to uninsured children of low-income families, create alternative insurance programs for them or both.

Started in 1997, CHIP has maintained a proven track record providing child-specific care, including developmentally-appropriate benefits, a full range of providers in network, and affordable cost-sharing protections. In April 2015, Congress passed the Medicare Access and CHIP

Reauthorization Act (H.R. 2), which extended CHIP funding through September 2017. Before that date, Congress will revisit CHIP funding, providing another opportunity for children's hospitals and Congress to work together to ensure public policies strengthen children's health care coverage.

Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education or CHGME

Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program was created in 1999 to provide children's hospitals with federal graduate medical education (GME) support comparable to the GME support the federal government provides to adult teaching hospitals through Medicare. CHGME supports the training of 6,000 residents at nearly 60 independent children's

teaching hospitals. Hospitals receiving CHGME funds train more than a third of all pediatricians and nearly half of all pediatric specialists.

TRICARE

TRICARE is the Department of Defense military health system for active duty military, guard and reservists, and their families, serving more than 9.6 million beneficiaries, including almost 2 million children. TRICARE is the only health insurance plan for children that is consistent in policy and payment across all 50 states. The Children's Hospital Association TRICARE Project seeks to optimize the military health system's understanding of children's health care needs, and the ability of children's hospitals to best serve military children.

Additional Resources for Children's Hospital Advocates to Stay Informed

The Children's Hospital Association website provides information on policies affecting children's health and how you can get involved as a champion for children's health www.childrenshospitals.org.

Check out Speak Now for Kids' storybank and learn how you can get your friends and family involved in advocacy efforts at www.speaknowforkids.org.

Take action at our Legislative Action Center at www.congressweb.com/speaknowforkids.

Relevant Congressional Committees

House Energy and Commerce Committee

www.energycommerce.house.gov
Maintains principal responsibility for legislative oversight of drug safety, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Senate Finance Committee

www.finance.senate.gov
Has jurisdiction over Medicaid.

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee

www.help.senate.gov
Handles most issues relating to public health, medical research, and individuals with disabilities.

Other resources:

U.S. House of Representatives:
www.house.gov

U.S. Senate:
www.senate.gov



Glossary of Terms

Glossary adapted from “Congress at Your Fingertips,” copyright 2013, CQ-Roll Call, Inc. Publishing: Newington, VA.

Act — Legislation that has passed both Houses of Congress and becomes law

Amendment — A change in a bill or document by adding, substituting or omitting portions of it

Appropriations Bill — Legislation that provides funds for authorized programs

Authorization Bill — Legislation establishing a program and setting funding limits

Bill — Legislation introduced in either the House or Senate

Budget Resolution — Concurrent resolution that establishes spending and revenue targets for the upcoming fiscal year

Chamber — Place where the entire House or Senate meets to conduct business; also, the House of Representatives or the Senate itself

Cloture — Method of limiting debate or ending a filibuster in the Senate. At least 60 senators must vote in favor before cloture can be invoked

Committee — A group of legislators assigned to give special consideration to certain bills

Conference Committee — Meeting between representatives and senators to resolve differences when two versions of a similar bill pass the House and Senate

Continuing Resolution — A joint resolution to appropriate funds,

usually for a short period of time and often in the absence of a regular appropriations bill

Cosponsor — Legislator who joins in sponsoring legislation but who is not the principal sponsor or the one who introduced the legislation

Filibuster — Tactic used in the Senate whereby a minority intentionally delays a vote

Lame Duck — Senator or representative (or the president) who has not been reelected but whose term has not yet expired

Lobbying — The process of attempting to influence the passage, defeat or content of

legislation by individuals or a group other than legislators

Majority Leader — Chief spokesman and strategist for the majority party, elected by members of the majority party. In the House, the majority leader is often the second-ranking lawmaker, behind the Speaker of the House.

Minority Leader — Chief spokesman and strategist for the minority party, elected by members of the minority party

Omnibus Bill — Bill regarding a single subject that combines many different aspects of that subject

Quorum — The number of

senators or representatives who must be present before a legislative body can conduct official business

Ranking Members — The members of the majority and minority party on a committee next in seniority after the chairman

Sequestration — The permanent cancellation of budgetary resources by a uniform percentage, applied to all programs, projects, and activities within a budget account

Speaker — The presiding officer of the House, elected by members of the House

Sponsor — The representative or senator who introduces a measure



CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION

600 13TH STREET, NW, SUITE 500
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

p | 202-753-5500

f | 202-347-5147

6803 WEST 64TH STREET
OVERLAND PARK, KS 66202

p | 913-262-1436

f | 913-262-1575

WWW.CHILDRENSHOSPITALS.ORG

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