Home Care Visit Campaign

Taking your legislator on a home care visit is one of the most effective ways to influence and make a lasting connection. The more lawmakers understand first-hand the value and impact of home health care, the more informed they will be when they're faced with legislation that governs and impacts our industry. Help them understand what we do and how important it is to the patients we serve.

Before the Visit

1. Identify your Legislators
   Use the Iowa Legislature website to find the legislators for your agency.

2. Do your homework
   Take a moment to review your legislators’ voting records, issues and legislation, and their positions on various policy issues. Be sure to have a good understanding of the legislator and his/her concerns, priorities and perspectives.

3. Check the calendar
   Give yourself at least 2-4 weeks to plan the visit. Each office of a legislator has a scheduler. Ask for the scheduler when you make initial contact, and tell them what you want to do. They may ask that you submit your request in writing. Be as clear and concise as possible in stating what you want (have the legislator accompany you on a home care visit in his/her district), why it is an opportunity for the legislator and when you want to schedule it. Offer several possible dates and plan to set aside at least one hour for the visit.

4. Start Planning
   Planning what type of home care visit is your next step and which patient(s) you will visit. You must receive written permission from the patient upfront before you bring any non-patient(s) you will visit. You must receive written permission from the patient. Pick a patient who is willing to share their story of care and impacts our industry. Help them understand first hand the value and impact of home health care, the more informed they will be when they're faced with legislation that governs and impacts our industry. Help them understand what we do and how important it is to the patients we serve.

5. Invite the media
   Check with the legislator about their interest in inviting the media to the home visit. Often times, their staff can assist you in contacting local newspapers or television stations. Take digital pictures with a high resolution camera. You can provide these to the local newspaper and other sources. You can help publicize the challenges facing the home care industry and provide a public relations opportunity for your company. Both the patient and any staff or family members you include in the pictures should sign a release. Click here to see a sample press release.

During the Visit

1. Provide materials
   Provide the legislator with materials. Prepare a fact sheet about your agency and be prepared to answer questions from the legislator. This fact sheet should provide information like the number of employees, number of patients served every year, dollars paid out for Medicare/Medicaid/etc., unique services you are providing to your employees, and any other information you feel are important.

2. Show how home care has been affected
   Show the legislator any part of the home care visit that has been changed or will be changing due to recent regulations.

3. Talk with the patient
   Let the patient talk with the Legislator about things like why home care is important to them, why they like home care, how their life would be different without home care, etc.

4. Be prepared for questions
   If any issues are raised, be sure to neutralize any negative or distracting issues by connecting back to the message of the day. Ask your legislator meaningful questions such as:
   - "From your legislative perspective, what do you see as the key issues affecting home care?"
   - "How do you think we should address the rising costs of home care in years to come?"
   - "Do you see the need for more community involvement in the legislative process? If so, what can we do together to help encourage more involvement?"

After the Visit

1. Show appreciation
   Send a personal note to the legislator and their staff that helped coordinate the effort for the home care visit. Send a token of appreciation and a thank you note to the patient’s home and make sure the gift is in compliance with state and federal guidelines. Make a special effort to thank your staff that was involved.

2. Stay in touch
   You have now established a personal relationship with a legislator, so be sure to use this to your advantage. Continue to follow up by providing value-added information about important issues impacting your business and the patients you serve. Forward your lawmakers relevant newspaper articles and other information to help educate them about home care.

3. Contact IAHC
   Once you have completed your visit, please contact IAHC so your district can be marked as “complete”. Also forward any pictures or media material from the visit to be featured on the home page “Member Spotlight”, Facebook, Twitter, and the Home Care Visit Campaign web page.

4. Schedule another!
   Taking a Legislator on a home care visit is easy, so don’t feel you are limited to your assignments. Legislators need to go on several home care visits to see that every agency is different. You may provide different services or have different needs than their original home care visit.