

STATE ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Introduction

PALTmed created this State Advocacy Toolkit to empower our members to speak up for the residents, families, and dedicated professionals in post-acute and long-term care. State policies have a direct impact on your daily work, and your voice is trusted and needed at the table. Inside, you'll find simple, practical steps to help you build relationships, share your expertise, and make a difference in the decisions that shape our field. Together, we can ensure that quality care stays strong in every community.

Your Voice Makes a Difference

State-level policy decisions shape nearly every aspect of how post-acute and long-term care (PALTC) is delivered, from how facilities are licensed to how staff are hired, how care is paid for, and what standards of quality must be met. While federal policies set broad frameworks like Medicare, the day-to-day rules that govern your work are made much closer to home: in your state's capitol.

How State Policies Affect PALTC

- **Staffing:** States often determine staffing ratios, training requirements, and licensing for nurses, aides, and other direct care workers. Funding for workforce development, recruitment, and retention typically flows through state budgets and grant programs.
- **Reimbursement:** Medicaid, which is jointly funded by federal and state dollars, is administered by each state. State legislatures set Medicaid reimbursement rates, a critical factor in whether facilities can cover costs and provide high-quality care.
- **Licensing & Regulation:** States oversee licensing for facilities and medical professionals. They also set rules for inspections, compliance, and penalties.
- **Quality Standards:** Many states develop or adopt quality measures that drive how care is tracked, reported, and improved.

When state policymakers make decisions on these issues, they often do so with limited firsthand understanding of what caring for vulnerable older adults actually looks like. That's where you come in.

Clinicians' Voices Matter

As a PALTC clinician, *you* have real-world expertise and a trusted voice. Policymakers want — and need — to hear directly from front line clinicians about what works, what doesn't, and what's at stake for residents, families, and staff. You are the bridge between legislative action and the daily reality of your PALTC practice.

Why Advocacy is Powerful

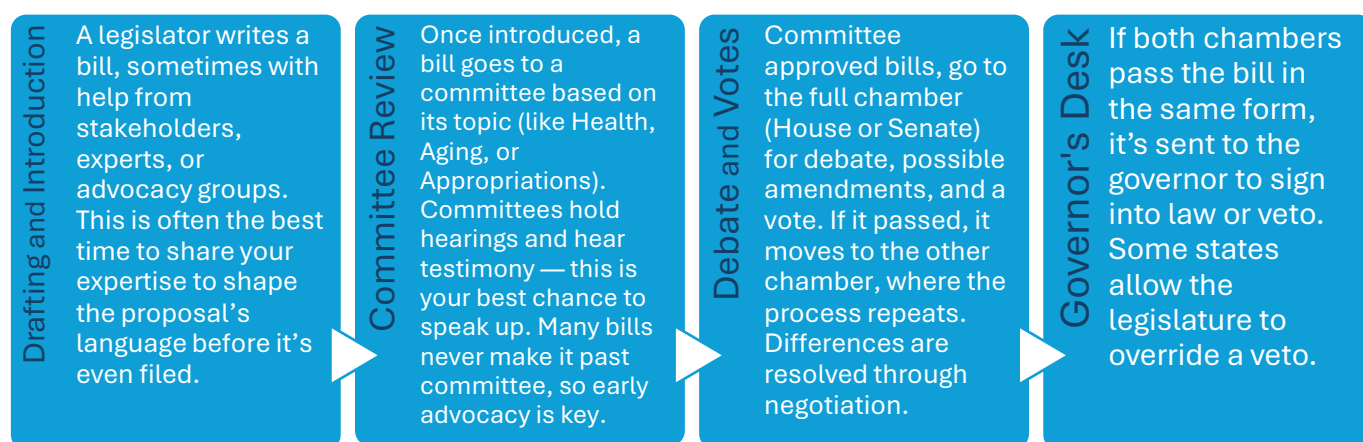
Advocacy isn't about politics, it's about patients. It's about making sure that laws and regulations strengthen, not hinder, your ability to deliver high-quality, compassionate care. When you share your stories, your challenges, and your solutions, you help lawmakers craft better policy. Whether you send an email, testify at a hearing, or invite a legislator for a tour, your voice can change outcomes for your entire community.

Understand Your State's Legislative Process

How a Bill Becomes a Law — and Where You Fit In

Every state has its own unique rules and timelines, but the basics are similar: a bill starts as an idea, is introduced by a legislator, reviewed in committees, voted on by the full chambers, and, if passed, signed into law by the governor. At every stage, your input can make the difference between a good policy moving forward or a harmful one being stopped.

Key Steps in the State Lawmaking Process



Where You Come In

You don't need to be an expert in parliamentary rules to be effective. You *do* need to know who represents you and how to contact them at the right moment.

✓ **Find Your Legislators:** Use your [state legislature's website](#) to look up your State Senator(s) and Representative(s). Save their contact information somewhere easy to find, they and their staff are your direct connection to the process. See our resources below.

✓ **Know the Committees:** Identify which committees shape laws about health care, Medicaid, aging, or workforce issues. These are the lawmakers most likely to take the lead on PALTC bills and they're the ones who most need your expertise.

✓ **Track Bills and Hearings:** Most states have free online tools to sign up for bill tracking and hearing notices. PALTmed will also [track bills](#) that you can follow.

✓ **Show Up:** If you can, testify in person or submit written comments. Legislators remember real stories more than statistics alone.

Quick Tip: If you're not sure how to find your legislators or understand where a bill stands, reach out to PALTmed, we can help you get connected, stay informed, and feel confident stepping up.

Building Relationship with Policymakers



Why Relationships Matter

State legislators make critical decisions that affect your residents, your staff, and your daily work. But many lawmakers have little firsthand knowledge of what post-acute and long-term care looks like day to day. Building respectful, ongoing relationships helps close that gap and ensures they see you as a trusted source when issues arise.

How to Start

- ✓ **Make Contact:** Reach out by phone or email to introduce yourself as a constituent and a healthcare professional. Let them know you are available as a resource on PALTC issues.
- ✓ **Schedule a Meeting:** Legislators or their staff will often meet one-on-one at their local office or during community events. Use this time to share who you are, what you do, and what you care about.
- ✓ **Host a Facility Tour:** One of the most effective ways to build understanding is to invite legislators to visit your facility. Walk them through resident areas, common spaces, and therapy rooms. Help them see how state policies directly impact staff and residents.
- ✓ **Attend Public Events:** Keep an eye out for local town halls, listening sessions, or forums hosted by your state legislators. Showing up, asking questions, and introducing yourself afterward is a simple but effective way to strengthen the connection.

Keep the Relationship Strong

- Follow up with a thank-you note or email after any meeting or visit.
- Share short updates on issues you discussed or legislation they supported.
- Invite them back for special events, resident activities, or milestone celebrations.

Pro Tip: Bring a short, one-page overview of your PALTC practice and facilities you practice in, include how many residents you serve, how many staff are on site, and any unique programs you offer. A simple fact sheet makes your impact clear and gives lawmakers something to take back to their office.

Check out the resources below to see ready-to-use templates for sample emails, invites, and thank you communications.

How to Take Action

Small Steps Make a Big Difference

Advocacy doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming, but it does have to be real. When you share what you see and know as a PALTC clinician, you help shape decisions that affect residents, families, and staff in every corner of your state.

What Taking Action Looks Like



Speak Up Early and Often: Don't wait until a bad bill is about to pass. Reach out when issues are first being discussed. Lawmakers appreciate hearing from trusted experts before they vote, not just afterward.



Use Different Tools

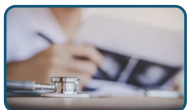
- Write a letter or email sharing your perspective
- Make a quick phone call to share your position on a bill
- Testify at a committee hearing, in-person or in writing
- Facility Visits



Make it Personal: A real-life example is your strongest tool. Policymakers remember stories, not statistics alone. Describe how an issue affects your residents, your staff, or your ability to provide quality care.



Focus on the Goal: Keep your message simple and clear. What do you want the lawmaker to do-support, oppose, or change something? Spell it out, "I urge you to vote YES on Senate Bill 1234 to help address the staffing crisis."



Be Respectful and Credible: Your professionalism speaks volumes. Even if you strongly disagree, always stay courteous and fact-based. This helps you build trust that lasts beyond a single vote.



Follow Up and Stay Engaged: After you speak up, keep the line of communication open. Thank lawmakers for listening or for their votes. Let them know you're available if they have more questions down the road.

Tips for Effective Advocacy

Simple Habits That Make Your Voice Stronger

You don't need a background in politics to be a successful advocate. You just need to share your real-world knowledge in a clear, respectful way, and keep showing up. These simple tips can help you feel more prepared and confident.

Be Clear and Focused

✓ Stick to one or two main points. Lawmakers are busy and may only have a few minutes to listen or read. State exactly what you want — for example: *"Please support increased funding for long-term care workforce training."*

Be Personal and Specific

✓ Your stories are powerful. A short, real-life example of how an issue affects residents or staff can be more memorable than numbers alone. Personal stories help policymakers connect policy to real people.

Be Respectful and Positive

✓ Treat lawmakers and their staff as partners. A respectful tone helps you build trust and keeps the door open for future conversations.

Be Prepared

✓ Before a call or meeting, jot down a few key points or questions. Bring a simple handout or fact sheet about your facility if you're meeting in person. Preparation helps you stay on message and feel more confident.

Follow Up

✓ Always follow up after an email, phone call, or meeting. A short thank-you note makes you stand out and reminds them you're paying attention. Staying connected helps build a lasting relationship.

Pro Tip: You don't need to have all the answers during a call or meeting. If a legislator asks something you don't know, say so then follow up later with the facts. That follow-up builds trust and shows you're reliable.

Check out the resources to see ready-to-use templates for sample emails, invites, and thank you communications.

Partnering with PALTmed for Stronger State Advocacy

Advocating on your own can feel overwhelming but you don't have to do it alone. PALTmed exists to make your voice stronger, clearer, and more effective. When you connect with your association, you join a larger network of clinicians and care providers who share your goals and challenges.

Stay Informed

- PALTmed keeps you up to date on key bills and regulatory changes in your state on our grassroots website.

Get Tools and Resources

- From sample letters and talking points to one-page fact sheets, PALTmed provides ready-to-use materials that make it easier to write, call, or meet with policymakers.

Coordinate with Peers

- When multiple members speak up together, your message carries more weight. PALTmed helps connect members in the same region or district to amplify your voice. Ask about joining the StateAdvocacy Committee.

Pro Tip: Keep PALTmed in the loop when you reach out to policymakers. This helps the association track issues, coordinate follow-up, and share your success stories with other members.

Plan Ahead to Make Advocacy Part of Your Year

Timing matters in advocacy. State legislatures work on fixed schedules, bills move quickly, deadlines can appear with little notice, and decisions are often made in a short window. By planning ahead, you'll be ready to speak up when it matters most.

Know the Key Dates

- ✓ **Legislative Session:** Find out when your state's legislative session starts and ends. Some states meet year-round, but many have short sessions that last just a few months. Mark the start and end dates on your calendar.
- ✓ **Bill Deadlines:** Every bill has deadlines, for introduction, committee hearings, floor votes, and final passage. Pay special attention to when bills are heard in committees, that's your chance to testify or submit comments.
- ✓ **Budget Timelines:** State budgets often drive funding for Medicaid, staffing programs, and facility operations. Know when budget hearings happen so you can speak up about funding needs.

Fill in Your Key Dates

Use websites such as this to find your state's legislative calendar:

<https://www.statescape.com/resources/legislative/session-schedules/>

Use this space to note what's most important for you this year:

- Legislative session begins: _____
- Facility tour scheduled: _____
- Important hearing or budget meeting: _____
- Other dates to remember: _____

Pro Tip: Block a little time each month to check in on bills or policy updates. Even 15 minutes keeps you connected so you're never caught off guard.

Resources

Keep This Information Handy

When you're ready to reach out, testify, or share information, you don't want to waste time hunting down links and contacts. Use this section to gather your key resources in one place so you're always prepared.

Reach out to other professional associations (American Health Care Association (AHCA), Leading Age, American Medical Association (AMA)), consider asking for the following key positions:

- President/CEO and/or Executive Director
- VP/Chief/Director for Policy/Reimbursement
- VP/Chief/Director for Quality/Regulatory Affairs
- VP/Chief/Director for Legislative Affairs/Legislative Counsel
- VP/Chief/Director for Strategy/Communications/Marketing
- VP/Chief/Director of Member Services
- VP/Chief/Director of Education/Community Outreach
- AHCA: <https://members.ahcancal.org/About-Us/Our-Affiliates>
- Leading Age: <https://leadingage.org/state-partners>
- American Hospital Association: <https://www.aha.org/directory/2020-06-09-state-hospital-associations>
- AMA: <https://www.ama-assn.org/member-groups-sections>
 - More difficult to find your AMA chapter, Google search your state name medical society (some even have county medical societies).
 - *Please consider joining the AMA if you are not already a member, and designating PALTmed as your primary affiliation.*
- American Geriatrics Society: <https://www.americangeriatrics.org/about-us/state-affiliates>
- American College of Physicians: <https://www.acponline.org/about-acp/chapters-regions>
- American Academy of Family Physicians: <https://app.aafp.org/sf/s/searchdirectory?id=a233l0000020Q3X>

Regulatory Agencies

- CMS Regional Offices: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Coding/ICD10/CMS-Regional-Offices>
- QIN-QIO Contacts: <https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-03/QIN-QIO-In%20Your-Area-TipSheet.pdf>

Get to know your legislative representatives:

- https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/
- <https://www.congressweb.com/bha/legislators#/legislators/>

State:		
Organization	Contacts	Emails
PALTmed, State Affiliate		
AHCA/NCAL, State Affiliate		
Leading Age, State Affiliate		
Others (AGS, AMA, ACP, AAFP)		
State Legislators		
State Senators		
Federal Legislators (US House of Reps)		
Federal Legislators (US Senate)		



Remember: Effective advocacy isn't about being perfect — it's about showing up, telling the truth, and making sure policymakers see the real impact of their decisions.

Ready-to-Use Templates

Sample Introductory Email to a Legislator

Subject: Local Medical Provider — Offering Expertise in Post-Acute & Long-Term Care

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Last Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a [your role — e.g., medical director, nurse practitioner, attending physician] at [Facility/Practice Name] in [City/Town]. I care for [number] residents and patients in our community who rely on high-quality post-acute and long-term care services.

I'm reaching out to introduce myself as a resource on issues affecting our state's most vulnerable seniors and people with complex medical needs. I would welcome the chance to speak with you about how we can work together to strengthen our care system.

If possible, I'd love to invite you to visit [Facility Name] to see firsthand the care we provide and meet the dedicated staff making it possible.

Thank you for your service to our community. I look forward to staying in touch.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title/Facility]

[Contact Info]

Facility Tour Invitation

Subject: Invitation: Tour [Facility Name] in [City/Town]

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Last Name],

I would like to invite you and your staff to tour [Facility Name] in [City/Town]. We provide post-acute and long-term care to [number] residents and patients from across [District/Region].

This is an opportunity to meet our residents and hardworking care team and to see how state policy decisions directly impact the quality of care in our community.

We can work with your schedule to find a convenient date and time. Please let me know your availability.

Thank you for considering our invitation.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title/Facility]

[Contact Info]

Phone Call Talking Points

When you call:

1. Introduce yourself: name, role, facility, and location in the district.
2. State why you're calling:
 - *"I'm calling to ask [Representative/Senator Name] to support [Bill Number or Issue], which will help ensure high-quality care for our state's seniors and medically complex patients."*
3. Share a short personal example:
 - *"At our facility, [describe a quick story — e.g., how funding helps keep staff, how regulations affect patient care]."*
4. Ask for a follow-up:
 - *"May I send more information? May I set up a meeting?"*
5. Thank them for their time and support.

Sample Written Testimony

[Your Name]

[Your Title/Facility]

[Your City/State]

[Date]

Testimony Before the [Committee Name] Committee

Chair [Last Name], Vice Chair [Last Name], and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is [Name], and I am a [role] at [Facility Name] in [City].

I care for [describe patient population]. Every day, I see the challenges and opportunities we face in providing quality post-acute and long-term care.

I am here to urge your support for [Bill Name or Issue]. This proposal would [briefly describe what the bill does].

For example, [share a 2–3 sentence real story from your experience that shows why this issue matters].

I believe this change will help ensure that our residents receive the best possible care and that our workforce remains strong and supported.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your commitment to those we serve. I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank You Email

Subject: Thank You

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Last Name],

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and hear about the needs of our post-acute and long-term care community.

I appreciate your willingness to listen and your commitment to the people we care for every day. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can ever be of help as a resource or provide more information.

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title/Facility]

[Contact Info]

Contact Us

Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medical Association

paltmed.org

410-740-9743

publicpolicy@paltmed.org

POST-ACUTE AND LONG-TERM CARE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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