



*Tufts Health Care Institute*  
*Program on Opioid Risk Management*  
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## Painless Politics

Strategies for Building Congressional Support  
for Abuse-Deterrent Opioid Formulations

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# Congressional Affairs Goals



- Build support among influential Members of Congress for FDA adoption of the *Guidance Document for Abuse-Deterrent Opioid Formulations*
- If necessary, apply political pressure or seek a legislative mandate to compel FDA adoption

# Strategy for Success



- Monitor legislative activity
- Determine who can make a difference
- Identify a point of interest and hone your message
- Introduce yourself, your organization & your issue
- Build lasting relationships
- Seek action

# Monitor Legislative Activity



- Periodicals
  - General population
  - Industry specific
  - Congress specific
- Keyword news alerts
- Thomas online (<http://thomas.loc.gov>)

# Monitor Legislative Activity



- Close contact with Congressional staff members
- Representation in Washington, D.C.
- Industry association

# Who Can Make A Difference



- Bill sponsors, co-sponsors
- Members of both parties
- Committee/subcommittee chairs and ranking members
- Committee/subcommittee members
  - Care or could care
  - Don't care

# Who Can Make A Difference



- Caucus members
- Sponsors of related bills
- Individuals with a personal interest
- Individuals with a district/state connection

# Point of Interest, Relevant Message



- Study the Member, district, committee assignments, issues
- Relate to district/state
- Relate to key issues
- Focus on common goals
- Infuse party principles and themes



# Introduce Yourself, Your Organization & Your Issue



- Expect blank faces and hallway meetings
- No staff member is too junior
- Give attention to those who need it

# Introduce Yourself, Your Organization & Your Issue



- Start with the big picture
  - One page
  - Do not create more work
- Offer to provide more information

# Build Relationships



- The ethical gift: making a staff member's job easy
- Serve as a resource
  - Provide information upon request
  - Filter out unnecessary details
- Check in periodically, making every contact valuable

# Seek Action



- Strategize; timing is essential
- Convert threats into opportunities
- Ask/allow the Member of Congress to serve the public
- Work as partners

# House Committees



- House Committee on Energy and Commerce
  - Rep. John Dingell (D-MI) likely chair
  - Subcommittee on Health
    - Chair to be determined in new Congress
  - Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation
    - Rep. Bart Stupak (D-MI) likely chair

# House Committees



- House Committee on Government Reform
  - Henry Waxman (D-CA) likely chair
  - Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
    - Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) likely chair

# House Committees



- Committee on Appropriations
  - Rep. David Obey (D-WI) likely chair
  - Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
    - Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) likely chair

# Senate Committees



- Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
  - Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) likely chair
- Committee on Appropriations
  - Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) likely chair
  - Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
    - Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) likely chair



# The Right Contacts Can Yield Results



Example 1:

Bill sponsored in 109<sup>th</sup> Congress

- Sought to eliminate bad actors from the market – a goal favorable to a particular national association
- But the bill would impose all 50 states' regulations on everyone, regardless of business contacts

# The Right Contacts Can Yield Results



Example 1:

Bill sponsored in 109<sup>th</sup> Congress

- Association approached bill sponsor, praising the legislation, focusing on common goals
- Offered subject matter expertise on problem areas

# The Right Contacts Can Yield Results



Example 1:

Bill sponsored in 109<sup>th</sup> Congress

- Learned the bill was introduced to “send a message”
- Congressman will seek association input on how to reintroduce the bill in the next Congress

# The Right Contacts Can Yield Results



## Example 2:

Influential Member of Congress on a key committee

- Initial reaction: Association faced “an uphill battle” convincing him that a market innovation should be permitted
- After in-person meeting with association leaders, Congressman said he would be “okay” with the innovation if there were government regulation

# Special Thanks

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Thank You!