Learning to Work with Your Legislature

Hon. Suzanne Smith, CCH
State Representative
Member NH House of Representatives
Homeopathy in State Legislatures

If homeopaths do not actively engage, the legislative process will continue without us.
New Hampshire Legislature 2016

Setting the Stage: “More people in New Hampshire died from drug overdoses in 2015 than ever before – 385 to be exact – and that number is set to rise past 400, according to new data from the state medical examiner’s office.” Concord Monitor 2016

N.H. Drug Task Force Prepares for First Meeting

By PAIGE SUTHERLAND • NOV 23, 2015

The Legislature’s new drug task force kicks off Tuesday with its first meeting aimed to help better address the state’s opioid crisis.
Homeopaths Rallied at the NH House in support of Including Homeopathy in the Treatment of Substance Abuse Disorders.

Loretta Butehorn, CCH, FSHom, PhD
Rep. Valerie Fraser, RN        Pamela Herring, CCH, ND
Tanya Renner, CCH, RSHom (NA)          Rep. Suzanne Smith, CCH

Questions from panel.
• How many practitioners are trained to use homeopathic medicines?
• Is homeopathy licensed?
• Are there homeopaths working in treatment centers now?

And finally,
This treatment sounds like something we need to learn more about...
Most legislators and business professionals know nothing about homeopathy. You have 30 seconds to get their attention.

• Homeopathy is a safe, effective system of natural medicine used by millions of people worldwide for more than 200 years to achieve wellness. Homeopathic medicines are prepared from natural sources and are recognized by the Food and Drug Administration. They are non toxic and when properly administered, can be safely used with infants, children, adults and animals.
  National Center for Homeopathy

• Homeopathy is an advanced, effective and gentle system of holistic medicine that has been effectively used for over 200 years and on every continent.
  NASH
Getting to know your State Government Officials

- State representatives/ members of General Assembly/State Senators are real people – neighbors.
- Sit down for tea or coffee with them. Get to know them before there is a crisis.
- Government moves slowly. – It may take a whole to accomplish your goal.
Visit “The People’s House” -- Your State House

Sit in the gallery and observe House or Senate session. (video streaming)

Attend a committee hearing. Observe. Familiarize yourself with the process.

Use the state legislature website to familiarize yourself with the members of the committee before which you will be speaking.
What is your idea and your goal?

Insurance coverage?

Health Freedom law?

Homeopathy for Substance Abuse?

Treating veterans with PTSD & Traumatic Brain Injury?
Getting from Idea to Law

Why should this be a law?

Is there model legislation you can use?

Contact your local state rep or senator. Share your idea. Ask their advice. Legislators introduce bills.

Next step: Bill is assigned to a committee

Advocates get to work!!! Phone calls, emails, visits to offices.

The Public Hearing. The public testifies – for and against.

After public hearing – deliberation and recommendation to the full House/General Assembly or Senate.

Part 2 – If the bill passes on House, it moves to the other side of the wall.
Building a Coalition--
Reaching out

Connect with individuals and practitioners, patients, study groups.

A core group can mobilize dozens—Hundreds!
Beginning the process

• You can’t do it alone. Find others with a similar interest who are willing to work on the issue.

• Look to history – Has this been attempted before? What happened?

• Once you have a Core group – Reach out to others who will support your idea. (other unlicensed practitioners, study groups, moms and dads)

• Reach out to those who could be a problem and see where commonality lies. (Licensed naturopaths/medical professionals.)

• Who are the opposition? Why? Can anything be done?
Testifying Before a Committee

◦ Introduce yourself to the Committee.
◦ Be respectful of legislators and other people who have testified.

◦ Be brief and informative. Do not repeat what others have said.
◦ Support personal opinion with as many facts as possible.
◦ If you don’t know the answer, admit it and offer to get back to legislator about it. (Refer to another person who is going to testify)

◦ If you have a written statement, summarize the information and give committee members your written testimony. It is okay to read from your notes.
Public Opinion Matters

Spread the word –
Op eds, letters to editor
Contact the press – this is big news!

Contact legislators around the state.
Email, phone calls. Keep them personal-avoid form letters.
Step One: Find your State Legislator
www.congress.gov/state-legislature-websites
NH – Who’s My Legislator?
Oregon – Citizen Engagement

How to Testify to a Legislative Committee

Giving public testimony before a legislative committee can be an exciting and fulfilling experience.

Committees, as the heart of Oregon's legislative process, allow legislators to study bills closely and hear testimony during public hearings in support of or in opposition to the bills.

Public testimony before a committee may influence the committee's action. Your testimony also becomes part of the public record and may be used in future research.

You can better prepare and succeed in giving testimony by following the suggestions below.

Know Your Audience

- Committee members are "citizen legislators," and they want to hear your comments.
- Be respectful of committee members as well as other people who come to testify.
- Do not scold or insult members or other witnesses, or accuse members of causing your issue. This may alienate members from your cause.

Know the Issue

- Draw from your own knowledge and experience.
- Support personal opinions with as many facts as possible.
- Be knowledgeable of the "other side of the story." You may be asked to discuss how and why your opinion differs from others.

Be Familiar with the Committee Process

- Know the location of the building and meeting room, and be sure of the meeting time.
- Agendas are posted outside the meeting room. Check the agenda to make sure the bill you are interested in has not been removed or rescheduled. Bills are not always heard in the order in which they appear on the agenda.
- If possible, attend a committee meeting before you testify to learn about the process. You can also watch videos of past meetings on OUS.
- When you arrive at the public hearing, print your name legibly on the witness registration sheet for the appropriate bill. Witnesses may be called out of order. Do not remove from your seat to watch the meeting.
Oregon – Citizen Engagement

• Making a Difference—
  A Citizen’s Guide on How to Testify

https://youtu.be/oKP3FfB6nyQ?t=14
Why Advocacy Matters

California SB 796

A Senate bill...
First introduced in February and in May finally voted out of Committee with amendments.

Passed by the full Senate as amended on May 31.

Introduced in the General Assembly and referred to Committee...
• Stay connected with colleagues, study groups, holistic moms and dads.
• Identify your legislator and go to local office. Bring a colleague or two...not ten.
• Visit your State House.
• Attend legislative committee meetings and learn how your state government works.
• Write Letters to the Editor.
• Invite your legislator to community gatherings.
• Ask questions!
Advocacy Works
When We Work Together
Questions?

Hon. Suzanne Smith, CCH
NH State Representative

Homeopaths Without Borders
zanne719@gmail.com