Cracking the Code: How to Successfully Interact with the Legislature
Review of the Michigan Legislature

State Legislators

* House - 110 state representatives
  * Limited to three, 2-year terms
* Senate - 38 state senators
  * Limited to two, 4-year terms

* Michigan is one of 4 states that has a full-time legislature. A full-time state legislature is defined as a legislature that meets throughout the year.
  * California, New York, Pennsylvania

* Members of the Michigan legislature have a base salary of $71,685 and a travel expense allowance of $12,000.
  * In 2009-2010 the annual compensation of state legislators went from $79,650 with a $12,000 annual expense allowance to the current base salary and expense allowance.
MI Legislature – Who are these people?

* 43 new House members were elected in November.
* Of the 110 state representatives 31 are under 40 years of age (28%).
  * 22 are under 40 years of age (20%).
  * 9 are under 30 years of age (8%).
* Of the 38 state senators 9 are under 45 years of age (24%).
  * 4 are under 40 years of age (10%).

* Previous Experience

* Legislators previous work experience is very broad – very few have knowledge of the CMH system.
  * Previous employment ranges from business owners, attorneys, farmers, realtors, teachers, homebuilders, some healthcare providers.
    * Of the 43 new House members 6 were legislative staffers.
* Served in local government
  * 19 of the 43 new House members served in local government (44%).
  * 19 of the 38 state senators served (50%). All but 1 Senator served the Michigan House.
Review of the Legislative Process

- How a bill becomes a law
  - Introduction, committee work, final floor vote (in each chamber)
  - Governor’s signature
  - Appropriation Process
  - Conference committees

- Fact: More than 4,000 bills are introduced each two-year session, but only 20 percent make it to the governor’s desk, and fewer than that actually become a Public Act.

- Legislative Session
  - A two-year term began January 2017
When a bill is introduced in either the Senate or the House, it is sent to a committee for study and to receive public comment.

The committee makes an initial determination if the proposal should go forward in the legislature. If it votes to do so, the committee can suggest amendments to the bill, approve it for further action by the full Senate or House, or disapprove it.

Permanent “standing” committees (Policy Issues)
- Both the House and the Senate have 23 standing committees – these committees work on specific policy issues related to the committee.

Appropriations Committees (Budget/Money issues)
- The Appropriations Committees are subdivided in subcommittees where bills with monetary implications are assigned for discussion, analysis and revision before being presented to the full committee for action.
- Both the House and the Senate have 16 Appropriations Subcommittees.
Committees are the heart of the legislative process. Committees are the gatekeepers and shapers of proposed legislation.

It is where the bulk of the legislative work takes place. Committees can and should do the fact-finding groundwork.

It is important to know what committee your legislator(s) sit on. Because so much work is done at the committee level, legislators tend to focus their attention on those issues related to their committee assignments.

MACMHB key committees – Appropriations (DCH approps), Health Policy, Insurance, Judiciary, Families & Human Services
Interacting with legislative offices

* Interacting with staff
  * Put something in writing
    * Most offices prefer e-mail vs. snail mail
      * Easier to reply and track (send to state departments)
      * Most of the written correspondences to offices is email (80/20)
  * Know what outcome you are looking for
  * Having facts straight
    * Legislative process is complicated and can be confusing
      * Keep it simple
  * Be polite
    * Staff is usually the gatekeeper for the member and can be a powerful advocate on your behalf.
Interacting with legislators

- Stay on Message
  - Keep it simple and to the point (5th grade level)
  - Don’t assume they know what you are talking about
    - 4000 bills introduced
    - Committee process
- Respect the Legislator’s time
- Give reasons for your position
  - Explain how an issue would affect you, your family, your business, profession or local community they represent.
- Keep the Tone Positive and Constructive
- Know your audience (Republican / Democrat) – (federal issue vs state issue)
- Leave Fact Sheets
- Share your knowledge
  - If you have specialized knowledge on an issue- share it! A concrete argument can be used by your legislator in determining the final outcome of a bill.
- Thank you
Understanding a Legislators Schedule

Schedules
- Legislators are in Lansing on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Mondays and Fridays are in-district days
  - Many legislators have in-district office/coffee hours (each week or month)
  - In-district meetings are the best time to interact with your legislator(s)
    - the days activities are usually not as busy (in Lansing they usually have meeting after meeting – it’s a more distracting environment)
    - Legislator are usually more casual

Legislative Session
- House session: Normally Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. and Thursdays at 12:00 noon.
- Senate sessions: 10:00 a.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Legislators also have committee meetings at various times of the day.
Alternative Ways to Interact with legislative offices

* Most legislators use social media as a way to communicate with the public
  * Facebook & Twitter
    * Many legislators post their votes and upcoming community events on Facebook
    * Easy way to track what they are doing in Lansing

* Traditional media
  * Legislators and their staff go through the local paper everyday looking for their name. Most offices keep a three-ring binder with news clips.
  * Letters to the editor is a great way to either thank or put pressure on a legislator.

* Other
  * Newsletters
    * If your agency does a monthly/quarterly newsletter ask your legislator to write a guest column.
    * Be willing to put legislative newsletters or publications in your lobby.
  * Events
    * Make sure you invite your legislator(s) to your community events
      * Agency Open House or annual meeting
      * Walk-a-Mile In My Shoes Rally
      * Quarterly breakfast meetings
Term limits cause turnover in Lansing every few years, requiring constituents like you to keep educating your lawmakers on issues impacting the mental health community.

Legislators are in Lansing to represent their constituents. If you don’t communicate your message, they can’t convey it to the entire legislative body.

- Put a face on the issue
- Keep it local – it’s best to incorporate local examples and local impact
- Don’t assume they know the importance of the issue
  - Medicaid expansion – many legislators said they only heard from constituents opposed to expansion.
  - If an issue is important to you or your agency let them know.

Remember these are regular people, they just have a fancy title.
Useful Information to stay informed

* Michigan Votes – plain language descriptions of every bill, amendment, and vote that takes place in the Michigan legislature.
  * www.michiganvotes.org

* Michigan Legislature – copies of the bills, find the status, summaries, etc.
  * www.legislature.mi.gov

* Michigan House of Representatives & Michigan Senate – find legislative contact information, committee and session calendars, and you can watch committees and session live.
  * www.house.michigan.gov
  * www.senate.michigan.gov
MACMHB VoterVoice Program
A few weeks ago, Congress voted for an initial appropriation of funds for the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA). We know it’s not nearly enough—not when 9 out of 10 Americans cannot access the treatment services they need. The addiction community needs to send a strong, unified message to Congress when it returns after the November elections.

**By taking one minute to sign on to this letter**, you can tell Congress to increase funding for opioid and heroin abuse treatment programs as part of the final version of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. Please encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to sign on as well. This letter is being circulated by Facing Addiction and the National Council is supporting the effort.

The passage of CARA was an important step forward in improving access to treatment services for opioid and heroin addiction. Now let’s make sure the law lives up to its promise by urging the members of Congress to fully fund CARA!

Sincerely,

Chuck Ingoglia
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Practice Improvement
National Council for Behavioral Health

Click [here](#) to unsubscribe from this mailing list.
Resources on federal overtime rules available from National Council

Below is a summary of a number of resources made available by the National Council for employers working to implement the recently issued federal overtime rules.

Read more

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ACTION ALERT: Protect the Medicaid Program for Michigan's Most Vulnerable Citizens

As you are aware, Congressional efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act are underway on Capitol Hill as well as discussions regarding block granting/capping the Medicaid program. Please take a few minutes to reach out to your member of Congress to educate them on why...

Actions

1 advocacy campaign

Find Officials

Look up and contact your officials.

Find Legislation

View and search for legislation.

Quick Sign Up

Use the form below to sign up for alerts.

Enter Keywords

Enter Email

ZIP Code
Please send your message now to oppose H. 437

The newly introduced tax bill, H. 437, has already garnered support among Representatives and Senators across the legislature. This bill will put more pressure on local businesses with new onerous regulation and increased taxes. The bill aims to use the additional tax... [+ more]

Compose Your Message

Recipients
• Representative Justin Amash

Message
Subject
Vote NO on H. 437

Body
Please vote NO on H. 437. This new tax bill aims to offset more expenditures, but will actually run out many small businesses across our country. By pushing for more taxes and additional regulations on new hires, my business will not be able to afford many new hires moving forward. This will cripple local economies, all because the legislature can't find a way to offset costs without raising taxes, yet again.

Remaining: 9,588

Review Your Profile

Not Alan Bolter?

Your Information

Prefix: Mr.
First Name: Alan
Last Name: Bolter
Email: abolter@mcmhb.org

Home Information

Street Address: 2097 Steketee Woods Ln SE
City: Grand Rapids
State: MI
ZIP Code: 49546

I want to receive future alerts
Remember me (Uncheck on shared computers)

Send Message
Keys Issues for 2017

* 298 Process Continued – models/potential pilots
* Mental Health reform tied to corrections

* Major federal changes
  * Replace / Repeal of ACA – what happens with Healthy MI Plan/Medicaid expansion?
  * Medicaid reforms – block grant, when not if...
Questions/Contact Information

Alan Bolter
Associate Director
abolter@macmhb.org
(517) 374-6848