

# Effective negotiations with legislators to channel expanded programs through the office

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## Background

- 2008 NOSORH Promising Practices Report identifies characteristics of successful SORHs:
  - 1) Expert Relationship Developer
  - 2) Adept "Positioner"
  - 3) Resourceful Resource and Funding Developer
  - 4) Ability to Build an Office of Sufficient Size and Scope to be "Visible" and to Have Influence
  - 5) Effective Resource Manager
  - 6) Effective Communicator and Marketer
- Legislative relations key to # 3

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## Background, cont.

- This presentation includes input from SORH Directors in:
  - Michigan (John Barnas)
  - New York (Karen Madden)
  - Ohio (Heather Reed)
  - Washington (Kris Sparks)
  - Minnesota

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## Strategies for Successful Legislative Relations

- Be known and respected “as the rural guy”
  - By policymakers
  - By partners
  - By superiors and colleagues
  - By healthcare providers (JB)
- Know your rural communities - the people/providers/issues (KM)

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## Constituency Building

- Create a constituency and identify a few key people from around the state that can be called upon to advocate. (KM)
- Help to develop a rural health coalition within your legislature (if one doesn't already exist) (HR)
- Use your state rural health association and any other statewide associations that have an interest in rural health. (KM)
- Work on becoming the source for everything rural health. (KM)

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## Partners and Allies

- Get your partners to put proposals forward that involve you.
- Don't worry about taking credit for successes - give the credit to others (it will ultimately come back to you) (KS)
- Become active and involved in state-wide committee's/ad hoc committee's that address issues/write white papers (JB)

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## Legislators and Staff

- Develop relationships with legislative committees that have influence over rural health (KM)
- Consider planning a "Rural Health 101" session for new legislators when they come on board. (HR)
- Be honest and responsive to legislative requests (KS)
- Be there at the capitol - find a way.

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## Inside Your Organization

- Have the trust and respect of your superiors & staff
  - Train them to look for opportunities for your Office
  - Get them comfortable with the idea of you having relationships and interactions with legislators.
- Be able to connect the dots from your Office's work to a new proposal - why a new idea does belong with your Office should be obvious, or at least quickly explainable

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## Your Reputation

- Have a track record of accomplishments and successfully launching new projects.
- Be known as lean and cost effective at delivering programs.
  - That way funders will think of your Office as a way to get the most out of any new spending they're considering.
- Your reputation...it's the only thing you can control. (JB)

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