

Answering the Call to Care Campaign How to Hosting a Legislative Breakfast or Facility Tour

As the Legislature debates long term care policy and funding, it is critical that they understand the impact their votes will have on nursing facility residents and quality of care. Events like Legislative Breakfasts or facility tours have proven to be one of the long term care community's best grassroots advocacy tools. Your facility tour will enable policymakers to meet caregivers and residents while seeing firsthand the daily operations of your facility.

Issuing an Invitation

- ❖ Start by contacting your representative and senator by telephone. You will more than likely work with a legislative aide to schedule the date and time of the event.
- ❖ Briefly explain that you would like to host a Legislative Breakfast at your facility. This is a great opportunity for the legislator to tour your facility and meet with staff, residents or family members to discuss current nursing facility issues.

Planning the Event Step by Step

- ❖ Set aside at least one hour for the Legislative Breakfast or facility tour.
- ❖ Inform and actively involve staff, residents and their family members in the event by introducing them to the elected official.
- ❖ Prior to the event (typically one week), send a media advisory to local media outlets announcing the event. A sample media advisory is included on page 11 in the toolkit. A well-publicized event can also enhance your visibility in the community.
- ❖ Arrange for some time when you and your senior staff can sit down with the legislator in your office to discuss the need for investments in quality nursing home care in the FY 2020 budget.
- ❖ Plan for the overall event to be conducted by you, the administrator. Assign specific staff like CNAs or nurses to explain their day-to-day tasks and the care they provide to residents. Prepare them so they are comfortable and not surprised by the visitor.
- ❖ Prepare for the legislator your facility's profile including pertinent information on number of residents and employees, the services you provide and the number of Medicaid residents. A sample facility profile is included on page 12 in the toolkit.

Conducting the Tour

- ❖ Always manage the actual tour yourself.
- ❖ Be sure to make the legislator comfortable. Thank the lawmaker for his/her continued support.
- ❖ Point out as many types of residents or patients as possible and discuss the range of care provided. This will help to give a realistic and well-rounded picture to the lawmaker.
- ❖ Introduce the legislator to the residents, their families and employees you pass as you are touring through the facility. Legislators appreciate the opportunity to shake hands with voters, while learning about nursing facility care.
- ❖ Always end on a positive note and leave the meeting open-ended for further discussions.

Follow Up After the Event

- ❖ Follow up promptly. Send a "thank you letter" the day after the event, while the details of the tour are fresh in the legislator's mind. A sample thank you letter can be found on page 12 in the toolkit.
- ❖ Send a thank you note to any legislative aide who helped make the visit possible.
- ❖ After the event, send a press release to the local media including a brief write-up and any good photos of the public official, staff, or residents. A sample press release can be found on page 11 in the toolkit.
- ❖ Share the visit and any photos with Mass Senior Care and be sure to post them on your facility's website, newsletter and social media pages.



Sample Media Advisory

[PUT ON FACILITY LETTERHEAD]

For Immediate Release

Contact: [Name, Title], [Facility's Name], [Phone Number]

What: [Quality Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Facility] will host a facility tour for [Representative/Senator] [Last Name] to demonstrate the commitment to quality care for older adults and people with disabilities in our community, and how this reflects on state issues affecting long term care and the resources needed to meet this commitment.

Where: Name of Facility, Address

When: Date of Event, Time

Who: Name of the legislator and any other VIPs who will accompany him or her, as well as senior administrators in the facility who will participate.

Agenda: Briefly describe the tour schedule (e.g., viewing daily operations, meeting residents, lunch, and brief remarks to assembled employees).

Sample Press Release

[PUT ON FACILITY LETTERHEAD]

For Immediate Release

Contact: [Name, Title], [Facility's Name], [Phone Number]

Include Event Photos

[Quality Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Facility] hosted [Senator William Jones and/or State Representative Jill Smith] for a Legislative Breakfast event on [Date]. The Legislative Breakfast event was attended by staff, residents, family members and representatives from skilled nursing facilities in the community to discuss state funding for quality nursing home care.

“There is a crisis among long term care providers as nearly 70% of residents rely on MassHealth to pay for their care. It’s becoming more difficult to retain and recruit the staff we need to provide quality care to older adults and people with disabilities in our community. We need the state to provide investments in quality nursing home care.” said [NAME], Administrator at [FACILITY].



Sample Nursing Facility Profile

[PUT ON FACILITY LETTERHEAD]

Facility's Name, Address, Telephone Number, Website, Administrator's Name and Email

Include facility specific information such as:

- Number of Licensed Nursing Facility Beds
- Number of Residents Care For Annually
- Resident Services: Dementia Special Care Unit, Hospice Care, Short-Term Rehabilitation, Transportation Services
- Number/Percentage of Residents Relying on Medicaid
- Number of Employees

Sample Tour Thank You Letter

[PUT ON FACILITY LETTERHEAD]

[March 24, 2019]
Honorable [William Jones]
State House, Room [435]
Boston, MA 02133

Dear [Representative/Senator] [Last Name],

On behalf of the residents and staff of the [Quality Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Facility], I want to thank you for making time in your very busy schedule to visit with us on [March 23rd]. Everyone here greatly enjoyed meeting you and each of us was gratified by your commitment to issues affecting the quality and future of long term care in our community and our state. I look forward to further discussing how critical it is to our profession that proper investments in quality nursing home care are made in the FY 2020 budget.

I look forward to speaking with you again soon. If I can be of any assistance, in particular when technically complex issues involving long term care are before you, please call on me any time.

Sincerely yours,
[NAME]
Administrator