



Illinois Hospital Association

IHA's Grassroots Advocacy Tool Guide (Contact Your Legislators)

During Legislative Session, IHA sends **Advocacy Action Alerts (Alerts)** containing background information on State legislative and Congressional issues via Email and fax, and these **Alerts** are posted on the IHA web site home page (www.ihatoday.org) in the **Breaking News** box, under **What's New**, and in the **Advocacy** section (left-hand menu) - go to **Advocacy – State or Federal – Contact Your Legislators Advocacy Tool**.

Alerts posted in the **Breaking News** box can be viewed by clicking the “more>” link (in blue). **Alerts** posted under the **What's New** heading on the home page can be viewed by clicking on the title of the **Alert** (link in blue).

In each **Alert**, you will see a sentence similar to: “You can send an email or letter to your state representative and state senator by [clicking here](#).” When you click on the link, it will take you to the **Advocacy Tool** page for that particular issue.

Once there, follow the prompts to send your message:

1. Action Alert – Summary of bill(s).
2. Take Action – Compose Message
Message Recipients: Listing of lawmakers receiving your message.

Delivery Method – Email or Printed Letter: Default method is sending the message via Email. You can choose Printed Letter simply by clicking the button next to it (see **Printed Letter** instructions below).

Subject: Title of message and pre-drafted message that will be sent. In some instances, there will be two pre-drafted letters (example: Nurse Staffing Ratio bills – both the House and Senate are considering bills. Therefore, both the State House and State Senate will receive the message).

Your Closing/Your Name: “Sincerely” is the default closing (can be edited). Enter your name.

3. Sender Information: This section must be completed in order for the message to be sent. The fields marked with an Asterisk* are “required fields” and must be completed. Although the Prefix field is an option, it is required by some officials, so we suggest selecting an option.

Fill in your name, Email, street address, city, and zip code. **NOTE:** You can enter the address/city/zip for your hospital or your home information. The

difference is that if you live in a different district than your hospital is in, the message will go to the specific lawmaker(s) in district for the address you have entered.

Remember Me: Clicking on this option saves your personal information in the system so the next time you use the Advocacy Tool, the information is completed automatically.

A copy of your message will be sent to the e-mail address entered above. You will receive a copy of the message you are sending.

Send Message: Click only once – may take a moment. **NOTE:** Messages sent to some lawmakers prompt a screen asking for a Validation Code (appears on screen). Enter Code and click “Send Message.”

4. A screen will appear confirming that the message was sent. Scroll down to view:

Tell-A-Friend: Fill in Email addresses of the people (colleagues, relatives, or friends) that you think should take action on this issue.

Would You Like to Send Another Message?: Gives you the option to click on another pre-drafted message or “Compose Your Own Letter.” Choosing a pre-drafted message takes you through the same steps as above. Choosing “Compose Your Own Letter” allows you to draft a message using your hospital/community examples of how important this issue is to you.

Printed Letter Instructions

Once you have chosen the **Alert** you would like to send, the Advocacy Tool page is the same as sending an Email, but you **MUST** choose “Printed Letter” in the *Delivery Method* section. The pre-drafted letter(s) are the same so you can scroll down to the *Send Message* box at the bottom of the page. **NOTE:** If you chose “Remember Me” in a previous message, your personal information will automatically appear in the required fields. Otherwise, follow the steps above in Number 3.

1. After clicking *Send Message* box, the Printed Letter Option screen will appear.

Select Recipients: If more than one lawmaker, you can select who you want to send the letter to by clicking next to their name.

Select Your Letter Style: The default is Plain Paper Style. You can choose another style if you wish.

Select Your File Format: The default is Word Processor, which is recommended.

Click on Print Letter and a pop-up screen will appear asking “Do You Want to Open or Save the File?” We recommend choosing “save the file” in order to place the letter in your Word Processing files and you can edit the letter and print it on your hospital letterhead.

Minimize or close the Word Processing window to return to the Advocacy Tool message. At this point, you can send a “Tell A Friend” Email, Send Another Message, or close the program.

Thank you for using IHA’s Grassroots Advocacy Tool and if you need assistance, please contact Joanne Sterioti at (630) 276-5552 or jsterioti@ihastaff.org or Danny Chun at (630) 276-5558 (dchun@ihastaff.org).

3/07