



Heads Up

November 2008

Dear NAHU State and Local Legislative Chairs,

Legislative Report

Attached, you will find a legislative report for October. Congress was out of session in October, and returned to their home districts for the final election push. However, that doesn't mean that Members of Congress and their staff aren't actively working on legislation to introduce in January, and of course CMS has been busy relative to Medicare. This month's report will give you both an overview of recent legislative and regulatory developments and also a brief outlook on how we see policy issues taking shape in the next session of Congress under the new administration. Obviously the elections have not yet taken place, and nothing is set in stone, but the legislative report should give you a good idea of how NAHU sees things shaping up next year depending on the various election scenarios.

Speaking with One Voice

Also attached this month, is NAHU's guidelines on Speaking with One Voice. A number of our chapters have been having problems with speaking as one unit, which is only natural when discussing policy issues. However, in order for NAHU and its chapters to be most effective in the legislative debates taking place all over our country, each chapter must be able to present their point as a cohesive unit without bickering and discourse.

We strongly urge all of our chapters to develop firm policy and procedures on the legislative workings of their chapter. This means developing a system for how policy decisions are made, who sits on the Legislative Committee, and so on. If your chapter already has legislative guidelines we ask you to forward them along to Danielle (djaffee@nahu.org), or your State Director (abrackemyre@nahu.org, mmamarella@nahu.org, mkeegan@nahu.org) so that we can create a reference library to help other chapters develop their own policy and procedures.

Grasstops

Since we don't know the outcome of the election, and anxiety is high with so many health policy issues still left to be determined, now more than ever we need to organize. Keeping track of our member's grasstop relationships is key to acting quickly when health policy issues take the stage. A grasstop relationship is when one of our members

has a personal connection with a Congressman, Governor, State Legislator, or Insurance Commissioner of one of their key staff that extends to a level beyond normal constituent interaction. So for example, if you have a long-standing relationship with a congressional staffer with whom you trade emails and phone calls back and forth about health policy issues, that qualifies as a grasstop connection. If you have just received an email or two in response to an Operation Shout or had a meeting at Capitol Conference, that does not. In addition, more unique personal relationships also qualify, like if your neighbor is now a state Assemblyman or if you are a top fundraiser for a Congressional candidate, NAHU needs to know about it!

Just like we encourage all of our members to participate in grassroots activity like Operation Shouts!, we are also turning to all our members and asking for their help cataloging our member grasstop relationships. to our Grasstops forum (<http://capwiz.com/nahu/lrm/feedback.tt>) and enter your information!

Also, this month please make your fellow chapter members aware of this forum. Send an email out to your membership asking them to log on and provide us with an update, or conduct a grasstop survey at your next chapter meeting. A member doesn't even need to personally log in for us to record the relationship. If you know of a fellow member who has a grasstop relationship, please just send [Danielle Jaffee](#) an email and we can add it to our database.

Home Addresses

Another organization item we need your help with during the next few months is the collection of home addresses from our members. About half of NAHU members only provide us with their work address when they sign up for membership. Since many people work in a different Congressional or state legislative district than where they actually live, our grassroots database isn't as accurate as it could be. Considering the possible challenges ahead, we need to make sure our grassroots machine is well oiled. Please help us by updating your member record to include your home address and by encouraging all of your chapter members to do the same. Adding in your home address does not mean that you will start to receive NAHU information at home unless you specifically choose that option. But it does mean that our grassroots information will be much more accurate! Here's how you do it:

If You Know Your Password

Login to the *My NAHU* section of the website at <https://www.nahu.org/eSeries/source/security/member-logon.cfm?section=unknown&activesection=home> and select "My Information" to update your home address.

If You Do Not Know Your Password

You may reset it at the following link:
<https://www.nahu.org/eSeries/source/Library/FindPword.cfm?section=unknown&activesection=home&start=1>

A new password will be automatically emailed to you. Then you can go to the link above and select “My Information” to update your address.

Website

As always, the website is ever-changing and NAHU invites you to continually check out the improvements being made. Hopefully you’ve already checked out the Legislative Tools, Newsletter, and Grassroots sections since they’ve been updated, but be sure to keep checking the Highlights page.

Right now you can find lots of information, links, and analysis about the CMS regulations for Medicare Advantage on the Legislative Highlights page. Also be sure to continually check the issues page as we work our way through to provide the most up-to-date information- first up, Mental Health Parity and Medicare.

Furthermore, in the next few weeks we will be unveiling a new web-based legislative tool for members that we hope will be of great use to you as the state legislative sessions start to get underway. Soon all members will be able to access a new searchable database of all state and federal legislation NAHU is tracking right from the home page of our website. This database will replace the much more limited state legislative tracking tool we used to have in the member’s only section of the website. Not only is this new tool more comprehensive and user-friendly, it also won’t require you to log in to use it. We are finishing the final testing phase of the project now and will send all legislative chairs an email as soon as it is up and running!

Training Call Reminder

We hope you’ve all been able to take advantage of NAHU’s legislative training calls throughout the last few months, but if you’ve been unable to participate, don’t worry. The material covered, along with a recording of the call, is available in the Legislative Tools section of our website. NAHU legislative training calls that cover state and federal issues occur every second Wednesday of the month at 1pm EST, so mark your calendars and keep a lookout for e-mails with the call-in information and slides.

The next Legislative Training Call will take place November 12th at 1pm EST. The training call comes just after the elections, and is sure to be full of relevant information about election results and what that means for all the health policy issues we’ve been following.