Politics 101: What Every Physical Therapist Should Know

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Objectives
- Describe the legislative structure in Missouri
- Eliminate the fear of entering into conversations with your personal Missouri Senator and Representative
- Discuss ways to become active in protecting and expanding the Missouri Physical Therapy Practice Act
- Discuss the MO PT-PAC and its relationship to the legislative process
- Review MPTA political wins and discuss future possible legislation

My Personal Story

“If you don’t design your own life plan, chances are you’ll fall into someone else’s plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much.”

Jim Rohn, American Businessman

Missouri Legislative Structure

What’s the big deal about Jeff City?
- General Assembly – Senate + House of Representatives
- 197 Legislators, each serving a district
- 34 Senators
  - 4 Year Term, 2 Term Limit
- 163 Representatives
  - 2 Year Term, 4 Term Limit
- Currently Republican majority in both Chambers
MO State Legislators vs MO US Legislators

- Every Missouri resident has a Missouri senator and representative.
- Legislator look up link: [http://www.house.mo.gov/legislatorlookup.aspx](http://www.house.mo.gov/legislatorlookup.aspx)
- Missouri state legislator is different than Missouri US legislators.
- 2 MO Senators in US Senate (Blunt & McCaskill) and 8 MO Representatives in US House of Representative (Ann Wagner, Lacy Clay Jr, etc.).

Key Terms/Concepts

- Constituent
- Calendar of Events
- Bill and Turning Bill into Law

Constituent

- Any one of the people who live and vote in an area
- Will get you the meeting with your legislators....
- But may not keep you out of the rain!

Congressional Management Foundation Report, November 2014

- 450 surveys responses from legislative assistants 2010-2013
- "Number one factor in scheduling a meeting is if a constituent is in the group"
- "Constituents from our district take top priority over any other type of request."

Political Calendar of Events

- Senate bills can be pre-filed in July before start of Session
- House bills can be pre-filed in December before start of Session
- Session in Jefferson City runs from early January to Mid May
- Bills that passed turn into law end of August

Process of Turning a Bill into a Law

- "I'm Just a Bill"
- Every year ~2000 bills are files with "~100-150 turning into law
- Uphill battle with many twists and turns
- Typically takes a minimum of 23 years of pushing a bill before it passes into law
The Arduous Process

Keys to Success/Conquering the Mountain
- Must be organized!
- Easily understood message
- Effective Lobbyist and Effective Member lobbying
- Relationships, relationships, relationships
- Must impact the entire state

Getting to know your legislators...eliminate the fear

“You must do the things you think you cannot do.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

“You Got This”
- This is YOUR elected official
- They serve YOU
- Legislators are common people...lawyers, farmers, insurance salespeople, small business owners, electrical contractors...even two physical therapists!

Form the relationship
- Takes your commitment
- Not just a "seasonal" job
- Consistency is key
- June-December opens the doors for January-May
Just Two Extra Friends

• Learn about their backgrounds, interests, and records of support.
• Do your research before initial meeting...what positions they hold in legislature, committees they serve on.
• Potential meeting place: Starbucks, their office, or YOUR CLINIC!

Tips for a successful legislator meeting

• Set in advance with clear reason for meeting
• Do your research on your legislator viewpoints, past voting record
• Show up early and have professional dress/image
• Clearly state one issue and stick with that issue

Tips for a successful legislator meeting

• Relate the physical therapy issue back to the community and patient choice/accessibility
• Know the bill numbers (if applicable)
• Humanize the issue
• Make a clear, simple request
• Be sure to meet the Legislative Assistant before you leave the office
• Follow up!

Grassroots Advocacy: Getting Involved to Protect Our Profession

“Shrinking healthcare margins will lead other healthcare professions to limit the scope of the PT practice act and expand the scope of their own practice act.”

Michael Gorman, PhD, PT, DPT, FAAOMP
Grassroots Advocacy

• Relies almost entirely on the general public and not professional lobbyists to contact legislators regarding specific issues.
• Must involve many, not just a select few
• Important PT issue must be heard by legislator many, many times

How to get involved?

• Meet your MO senator and representative
• 1-2 face to face meetings or interactions June-December
• Attend political fundraisers when asked
• Respond to MPTA requests when needed
• Develop the relationship

Others Can Help Too

• Patients
• Family
• Friends
• Neighbors
• The more people involved the better with grassroots advocacy

Be Part of the MPTA Team

• Share your efforts with our team
• Key Legislative Contacts:
  • Paula Burnett, MPTA President
  • Chris Marsh, MPTA Government Affairs Chair
  • John Bardgett & Associates, Lobbyists for the MPTA
  • Carol Kemna, Executive Director for the MPTA
• PTaction appt-NEW FOR MO
• MPTA office phone number: 573.556.6730
• MPTA email: ckemna@bardgett.net

PT-PAC of MO

"We in America do not have a government by the majority, we have a government by the majority who participate."

Thomas Jefferson
What is this PT-PAC all about?

- PAC = Political Action Committee
- Raises funds for and provides financial assistance to Missouri public officials who actively support the PT profession.
- Helps give the PT profession a voice in helping elect lawmakers who pass laws and regulations that affect PTs and PTAs EVERY DAY.

Critical Concept to Understand

However...

- Political contribution does NOT buy you a vote, but it opens a door for a legislative meeting.
- Amount of contribution from PT PAC of MO is minimal compared to many other professions. $10,000 contribution from health insurance lobby is not uncommon.
- John Bardgett, MPTA Lobbyist, is very selective about which legislators receive a contribution from PT PAC of MO.

PT-PAC of MO Funding Crisis

- Woefully underfunded for years
- Typically $2000 or less in our state PAC at any given time
- Continuing Ed efforts in the past 6 months have brought money into the PAC.
- Balance as of March 20, 2016 is $28,000
- Goal is to always have a minimum of $25,000 in our PAC at all times, but especially during year of legislative battle.

PAC Math

- 4000 PTs in Missouri
- If every PT drank 1 less Starbucks/month → $5 saving
- Apply that $5 to the PT PAC → $20,000 contribution in the PAC every single month.
- Current reality...Only a handful of the 4000 PT’s regularly contribute to the PAC to protect their practice act!

MPTA Political Wins & Future Challenges
"Nothing ever comes to one, that is worth having, except as a result of hard work."

Booher T. Washington

MPTA Legislative Wins...How Has it Happened?

- Organized Plan
- Dedication
- Strong Lobbying from Bardgett & Associates
- Focused MPTA Board
- Strong Lobbying from PTs and PAs

Wins

- Anti-POPTS Law
- Fair CoPay Law

Anti-POPTS Law

- Passed in 1992
- Prohibits physician ownership of PT clinics
- Gives patient freedom to choose their PT provider
- MO was only 2nd state to pass this legislation
- Currently only 3 states with Anti-POPTS legislation (MO, Delaware, and South Carolina)

Fair Co-Pay Law

- Passed in 2013
- MO was the 2nd state to pass this legislation
- Patient’s co-pay for a PT visit can not be higher than co-pay for a PCP
- Improves patient accessibility to PT services

If these had not passed where would I be?
Current Battles

- POPTS legislation
  - Signature Medical Group has put forth POPTS legislation
  - SB 1019 and HB 2347
  - Has had Senate Committee Hearing
  - Likely will not pass this session, but not going away!

Current Battles

- Infringement on our Practice Act from ATCs
- PT COMPA
- Insurance Reimbursement Issues

Take Home Points

1. Get Involved - Remember this is OUR profession!
2. Meet your two MO legislators and develop a relationship
3. Learn what the MO PT PAC truly does for your career!
4. Stay alert for MO PT legislative issues and react accordingly!

Special Thanks to Bill Hopfinger, PT and John Bardgett, MPTA Lobbyist for their tremendous mentorship over the last 10 years

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Thank you to the MPTA for this opportunity!