State LEGISLATIVE Best Practices

Working Effectively With Your State Medical Society

As an ACOG Section or single-state District, your ability to influence legislation can be greater when you partner with your State Medical Society. The Society has already developed and implemented effective mechanisms for monitoring and influencing legislation. It has built relationships with state legislators, state health officials, and your governor. When you talk with legislators, they almost certainly will ask about the Society’s position on your ACOG issue. Consult the ACOG toolkit, Working Effectively With Your State Medical Society.

I. How do you interact with your State Medical Society officers and lobbying team?

✓ Are ob-gyns represented on the Society’s legislative committee? Inter-specialty council?
✓ Is the ACOG Legislative Chair a member of the Society? On a first-name basis with the Society’s lobbying team?
✓ What’s your Society’s track record on women’s health issues?
✓ Is the Society informed of the ACOG position and your legislative agenda & priorities?
✓ Does the Society’s lobbying team check-in with you ahead-of-time on bills?

II. Did you know that State Medical Societies:

✓ Often follow AMA policy when taking a position on legislation.
✓ Do NOT like to referee inter-specialty spats.
✓ May be reluctant to engage on an issue specific to a single specialty.
✓ May not “work” women’s health bills.
✓ Many have a “no position” policy on abortion legislation.
✓ May not be “over joyed” that you’ve hired your own lobbyist.

III. For ACOG’s legislative priorities:

✓ Seek State Medical Society support; or request neutrality.
✓ Consider pursuing a Resolution at the House of Delegates that commits the Society to support and actively lobby for the ACOG position/legislation.
✓ Even if you have your own lobbyist, stay connected to the Society.
✓ Your ability to shape and influence the Society’s legislative agenda will be greater if more ob-gyns are members.