

## **Content Of The Legislative Advocacy Letter**

The following guidelines will be helpful when drafting your letter.

### **Locate Your Legislators' Names And Addresses**

You have two state legislators, a Senator and a Representative. Usually your voter registration card lists your Senate and House districts. Most local telephone books have a section dedicated to the office addresses and telephone numbers of local elected officials. They may be listed by district numbers. Internet web sites can display this information based upon your zip code.

### **Use Formal Business Letter Style**

The date should be at the top of the page. The legislator's name and address should be just below, on the left margin, above the salutation. Close with a handwritten signature and your typed address, email, and phone number.

### **Introduce Yourself**

Begin your letter with a brief introduction including your name, city of residence, and indicating your credentials. Add the facility where you work, the type of facilities if more than one, and location. If you are in private practice, indicate where it is located. Add a broad statement about your primary client population.

### **Introduce Your Work**

The purpose of this letter is to create awareness of your work. You will need to define your therapy profession concisely with some descriptive phrases. For example, for music therapy, you might choose some, but not all, of the following defining points (try to state them in your own words).

Music therapy:

- a. is an established research-based therapy.
- b. has been practiced for over 50 years.
- c. provides planned treatment sessions using goals and objectives determined through individual client assessment and evaluation.
- d. uses music as a treatment tool.
- e. addresses the needs of children and adults with physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and communication challenges.
- f. also includes wellness programs to maintain good health.

### **Introduce Your Client Population**

Re-state your client population, this time with additional descriptive words, and give examples of some common goals you address with your clients. This should be just enough for the reader to better understand what you do. Don't overwhelm the reader. Include just enough for the legislator to become curious and want to learn more.

### **Follow-Up**

The last paragraph should tell the legislator that you look forward to meeting with him or her to discuss your therapy discipline and that you will telephone the local office to schedule a meeting. Also state that at that time you hope to arrange for the legislator to visit your facility and observe one of your therapy sessions, if that is allowed. As a closing, invite the legislator to contact you for further information.

**Include Enclosures**

Enclose your business card and an association PR brochure if available.

**Letter Length**

This letter should fit on one side of a page. Choose your words carefully, always looking for one word that can replace three. Each word should be essential to the purpose of that paragraph. You do not want the legislator to pass up your letter because it looks like it will take too long to read.

**Always Proofread**

Read your letter carefully. Along with looking for grammatical problems and typos, make sure that all points are made using the advocacy language. The focus of this letter should be the benefits of therapy to your clients.

**Share Your Results With Us**

Please communicate with your association Government Affairs leaders to let them know the names of legislators you contact as it is beneficial to keep track of these advocacy efforts. Even more importantly, share any responses you receive from your communication. This helps determine which legislators are potential supporters for future advocacy projects.