

Get Involved...



Grassroots Lobbying Manual

Strategies and Techniques
For Illinois' Long-Term
Care Community

February, 2002
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The Importance of Lobbying

Introduction

This manual has been prepared as a resource to support your lobbying efforts. Over the years, Illinois Health Care Association (IHCA) has asked our members to take part in the lobbying process and to work with the professional staff at IHCA to get our message across to our elected officials. It is this partnership...this working together over the years...that has made us so successful in our efforts to advocate for the residents of our facilities and programs.

Now more than ever, the part you play in the lobbying process is critical. Elected officials want to hear from their constituents. Your voice carries a great deal of weight as elected officials frame their positions on issues and determine how they will vote. Legislators want to know how an issue will "play" back home. That is where you come in.

This manual has been prepared to provide you with some essential tools needed to be effective in your lobbying efforts. Those of you who have been involved for many years know that this manual could not possibly present every detail of the lobbying process.

The goal of this manual is to provide the basics. It is designed as a review for those who have been actively involved for years. It is also meant to make the process seem less threatening for those of you who may be hesitant to get involved.

This manual focuses on legislative lobbying

directed primarily at the Illinois General Assembly. Legislative lobbying can take many forms, which can be either up front and in the open or behind the scenes...to enact favorable legislation or defeat unfavorable legislation. It can set up a new program, change an existing one, guarantee certain rights, appropriate funds or alter a governmental agency's function or jurisdiction. The principles of legislative lobbying described in this manual can be applied to lobbying at all levels of legislative and governmental decision-making.



How Can This Manual Help You?

Anyone who can make a phone call or write a letter can lobby. Lobbying today is a must. Any organization that does not lobby well is almost certain to be unheard and unrecognized in Springfield and Washington, DC. Lobbyists play many roles in their attempts to influence legislation and decision-making:

1. they act as cheerleaders by keeping legislators, allied groups and media excited about an issue;
2. they ensure that the voices of their constituents are heard;
3. they provide technical information and advice to legislators, news media and governmental personnel; and,
4. they pull together opposing interest groups to formulate compromises.

This manual is designed to help you lobby

effectively – to maximize your chances for success. The substantive part begins, appropriately enough, with the basics – what sort of legislative goals you can realistically set; a brief outline of how a bill becomes law; some key dos and don'ts; and basic tools of the trade. Then we move into a more detailed discussion of the legislative process, explaining how you can influence events at each stage.

IHCA members, owners, administrators and nurses must sustain their motivation to improve the long-term care environment for residents and to achieve adequate reimbursement in a changing profession. Lobbying efforts should be continuous, with peak periods of activity during the legislative session or in moments of crisis.

IHCA staff, in conjunction with the Association's committees and Board of Directors, will continue education and public relations efforts with elected officials and keep members abreast of all governmental activities that affect our profession. At regional meetings, legislative forums, and other activities, we will continuously be challenged to adjust to new trends, attitudes, and issues.

We will do our best to recognize your responsibility as a direct care provider – balancing the needs of lobbying for this profession with the hectic schedule you maintain in your facility or program. IHCA staff knows the frustrations lobbying presents.

Recent years have proven time and again that only through our repeated efforts and vigilance have important long-term care issues survived the Illinois legislative and political process.

You, the owners, administrators, and other key facility staff members are the reasons IHCA is recognized as a leader in the long-term care industry. Your credibility, knowledge, and tenacity are reflected in our successes.

These victories do not lighten our load. Medicaid, health care reform, and the state and the federal survey systems present numerous challenges for IHCA members. This guide is meant to make the tough job of lobbying a little easier.

What is Lobbying?

Lobbying is the attempt to influence an official's opinion or activity – in the legislature, city council, government agencies, or within your own organization.

In theory, lobbying is nothing more than a special, intensive exercise of the Constitutional right to petition one's government. In practice, lobbying contributes a great deal to governmental processes by making information available to public officials who cannot be expected to know how every law or regulation will affect all of their constituents.

Good lobbying is being able to make your point-of-view interesting and relevant; stating an argument, a perspective, or a strategy, in such a way that the person you are lobbying will sit up and listen.

Citizen Lobbying vs. Professional Lobbying

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution secures the right of citizens to communicate their views to legislative bodies and administrative agencies of government. When that amendment was adopted, the town meeting and other forms of direct participation were popular forms of government decision-making.

Today, many Americans have chosen to leave governmental processes to specialists – professional lobbyists and consultants. It is the belief of the Illinois Health Care Association that citizen lobbying is also critical to the direction and quality of long-term care. Citizen lobbying – carried out and supported by constituents like you – is critical to the legislative process. Constituents can and must maximize whatever power they have to make themselves heard.

Many grassroots organizations and community groups mistakenly assume that money and influence are the name of the game, with only the rich and powerful as players. However, all legislators – on the federal, state, or local level – are politicians whose continued success depends in large part on their ability to satisfy at least a majority of their constituents. The squeaky wheel gets the grease. Therefore, recognition, status, and re-election are often a few of the values that motivate politicians.

We continue to demonstrate that we have the winning formula...active and informed members speaking to their local elected officials about “home town” issues combined with the public relations and education activities conducted by IHCA’s professional

staff. This manual is intended to build on that winning formula. Together we can continue to make a difference.

Lobbying plays an important role in government, but the centralization of government and the reliance on salaried spokespeople to lobby those central governments brought about the potential for abuse. Consequently, law regulates the work of professional lobbyists. The laws regulating lobbyists do not in any way abridge the right of citizens to petition their governments. Some people may be wary of getting involved with lobbying for fear they will violate some unknown law. Such fears are unfounded. **Any citizen is free to communicate at any time with any legislative body or an individual legislator on virtually any issue.**

In fact, in the interests of good government and good long-term care, such communications are as much a duty as a right! There are restrictions in lobbying only when certain expenditures are made for lobbying or on behalf of an elected official. These restrictions will be discussed later.

Please take a few minutes to review this manual. Share it with key staff and family members who you may want to become part of your lobbying team. It might also be a good idea to place this manual in a central place so that many staff can take advantage of its contents.

As always, if we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to call upon IHCA staff.

Lobbying 101

Though you are familiar with the art of persuasion or good public relations, you may not have had the opportunity to apply your skills in the legislative process. Many people may feel hesitant about participating in lobbying at first, but it is not hard to do if you follow some basic rules.

The Ten Commandments of Lobbying and Much More

1. **Never lie or mislead** a legislator about the relative importance of an issue, the opposition's position or strength, or any other matter.
2. **Look for friends in unusual places.** In politics, a friend is someone who works with you on a particular issue – whether a Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative – even if that person or group opposes you on every other issue. The more “friends” you can gather on a particular issue, the greater your chances for success.

This also applies to working with IHCA staff. Often we will ask for your help on a particular issue. If we ask that you write letters or make phone calls, it is important for us to know that this was accomplished. It is helpful if you fax or e-mail to us copies of letters you send. The same is true for sending us a record of the phone calls you make. This is not necessary all the time. You will have many chances to speak to your local elected officials during regular community gatherings. It is helpful, though, when IHCA puts out a call for letters, faxes and phone calls on a special issue for you to let

us know what you have accomplished. This coordination helps us to follow-up with the legislator while he or she is in Springfield. If we have your information, we use your name and refer to your conversation. This helps us to bring the issue “home” to the legislator.



3. **Never cut off contact with anybody.** Do not let a legislator consider you a bitter enemy because you disagree; today's opponent may be tomorrow's ally. Sometimes you tell us that you do not like your legislator, or he or she has done nothing to help you. We understand that this can occur, but we still ask that you work on developing a relationship with that legislator. It is OK to agree to disagree, but it is important that the legislator knows who you are and what you represent in the community.
4. **Do not grab credit.** Nothing is impossible if it does not matter who gets the credit.
5. **Your word is your bond.** One of the problems with lobbying is that you can over promise and under deliver.

When working with elected officials, never promise anything you cannot deliver. This will increase your credibility, as the legislator will learn to rely on you for accurate, timely information that increases your access.

6. **Do not waste time on opponents who are publicly committed to their position.** Sometimes legislators will adopt opinions publicly on an issue. If this occurs, it is often more productive to shore up known allies and to lobby legislators who are less committed or who claim to be neutral or are keeping an open mind. If your legislator has adopted a public opinion that is contrary to yours, let that legislator know why you disagree, ask for reconsideration, and provide additional information. If you still make no progress, let IHCA know.
7. **Never forget to notice and thank anyone who has helped you.** The “good old boy/good old girl” system is alive and well in Springfield. Take the time to notice when your elected official votes favorably on an issue and drop them a note or make a phone call to say thank you. IHCA will normally print the voting record of all legislators on an important issue in Members Only. If you have a question about how your elected official voted, do not hesitate to give us a call.
8. **Do not gossip.** Knowing legislators’ peculiarities and peccadilloes is one thing; talking about them is another. Remember that discretion is the better part of valor. Keep what you know

personally about the legislator out of any conversation you have publicly or privately.

9. **“When you are crossed politically, don’t get mad. Get even.”** (said Bobby Kennedy) The power of the ballot box is yours. If your efforts to gain support from your legislator have been unsuccessful, you have the opportunity to work against that person when election time comes around. Your efforts may be instrumental in getting a new person elected who may be more sympathetic to the profession and your concerns.

10. **Carry a good luck charm.** In lobbying, you can know your opponent; you can develop imaginative and reasonable compromises; you can burn the midnight oil to digest all the arguments; but it can all go right down the drain if you don’t have a little luck.

This is Important Too!

Stay Current on Information About Your Facility/Program

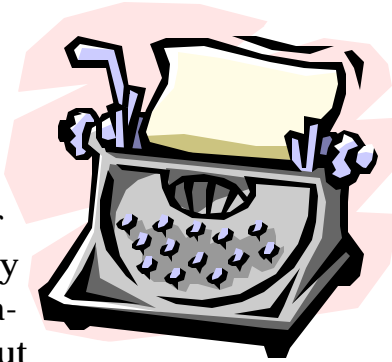
Keep current information about your facility or program available and ready to use whenever the opportunity arises. Key information includes:

- Number of residents, staff, and family members;
- Percentage of residents whose care is provided by the Medicaid and Medicare programs;
- Information of your staff salaries and benefits, and how you recruit and re-

- tain staff;
- Staff turnover information;
- Daily and annual losses your facility experiences in caring for Medicaid residents; and
- Unusual costs attributed to government requirements.

Letter Writing

One way to communicate your views to a legislator is by letter. You may write to any legislator in the state, but you will have more influence in the legislative district where you vote, or where your facility/program is located.



If you have never been involved in lobbying, letter writing is a good way to ease your way into the process. In most cases, you will receive a response from your legislator, after which a thank you note from you should be mailed to express your appreciation for his or her consideration.

Remember that a state legislator and his or her staff read hundreds of letters each week, so it is important to follow some simple guidelines.

The following are recommendations for writing effective letters to legislators:

- In most cases, **letters should be typed**. Keep your letter short and to the point. Handwritten letters can be effective if you have a particularly close relationship with a legislator.

- Always use your **personal stationery or business letterhead**. If you are writing as a representative of a group, use the organization's stationery. Type your full name and address at the bottom of the letter. Sign your letters personally. Make sure your phone number is printed prominently on the letterhead. All of this will make it easier for the legislator to respond.
- If you are a **constituent**, begin your letter by saying so.
- **Do not begin on the righteous note** of "As a citizen and a taxpayer . . ." The legislator assumes that you are not an alien and knows that we all pay taxes.
- **Do not use jargon**. Few legislators know "OBRA", "CMS", or XXX.
- If you are working with others on the issue, or if you are otherwise active in the community, say this too. Do not say you belong to a specific political or lobbying organization or association, since that may detract from the apparent spontaneity of your letter.
- **Make clear what your position is** and what exactly it is you would like your legislator to do. Whenever possible, refer to a specific legislation by bill number and not just to a general issue. Write about one bill or issue in each letter.
- **Make the letter entirely your own**. Express your thoughts and conclu-

sions in your own words. Do not use stereotyped phrases and sentences from form letters. They will be recognized as “pressure mail” and may get dumped in wastebaskets.

- **Your own personal experience is the best supporting evidence.** Tell your legislator how the issue would affect you as a long-term care provider, and how the issue affects your residents and their families, employees or the community.
- **Be reasonable;** do not seek impossible things. Do not threaten. Do not say, “I’ll never vote for you if you don’t do such and such.” We must keep in mind that there will always be another issue or piece of legislation.
- After you have told your legislator where you stand, **ask your legislator** to state his/her position in a reply.
- If your legislator pleases you with a vote on an issue, write and tell him/her so. In fact, be **appreciative of any positive votes** in the past.

Much of the mail received by Representatives and Senators is from displeased constituents; a letter complimenting your legislator will be remembered favorably the next time you write. Including the legislator’s positive response in a facility newsletter, and then sending him or her a copy, is always received well.

- **Timing is important.** If your letter arrives too early, it will be forgotten. If

your legislator is a member of a committee to which your bill has been referred, write just before the committee begins hearings. If your legislator is not a member of the committee handling the bill, write him/her just before the bill is to come to the floor for debate and vote. Time your letters with IHCA’s *Legislative Alerts* and *Legislative News in Members Only* to maximize our impact. Timing is key.

As IHCA staff monitors the bills, you will be advised through *Members Only*, FAX Alerts, by telephone or by e-mail to generate correspondence regarding our position on a bill.

- When writing to several legislators, **make each letter personal** and write to each legislator individually. Do not send photocopies of one letter to multiple legislators. In rare cases, it might be necessary to send your legislator photocopies of letters sent to others on a particular issue. If you must do this to make your point, make sure you send a separate letter to the legislator describing what you have enclosed and why.

- Address your legislators properly:

*The Honorable _____ (name)
State Senator (or State Representative) (or
Governor of Illinois)
State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706*

- **Write the Governor promptly** after the bill is passed by both houses if you want to influence his/her decision

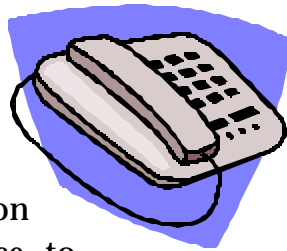
whether or not to sign it into law.

Letter-writing campaigns can be very effective if timed correctly. Legislators respond very well to facts you put on paper. Before you send your letter, review it one more time to make sure you have said what needs to be said. Read it from the perspective of the legislator, or have another staff person read it to make sure you have not included any language that will complicate the situation. Often when we get upset about an issue, we can say some things that are not completely helpful. This last check can keep your comments professional and on point.

Finally, sending letters through the mail is not always the best method. If time is short, you might want to consider faxing your letter directly to the legislator's Springfield office. If you do not have the fax number, call the legislator's office and ask his/her staff to provide you with the number.

Making Telephone Calls

All legislators have offices in their home districts. They can provide services and information for you. Call that office to find the immediate status of a bill, as well as to convey your opinion. If the Legislature is in session and action on a bill is pending, call your legislators at their Springfield offices. The following are recommendations for making telephone calls to your legislators.



- **Identify yourself** by name, facility or

program, and town within his/her legislative district.

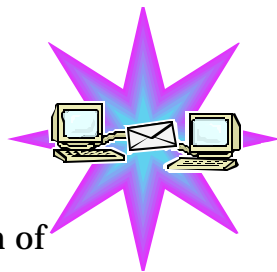
- **Identify the bill** by number, sponsor, and issue.
- **Briefly state your position** and that you would like your legislator to support that position.
- **Ask for your legislator's view** on the bill or issue. If his or her position is not supportive of yours, ask him or her to keep an open mind and that you and/or your association will provide additional information. **Immediately notify IHCA staff of that legislator's position.**
- **Show appreciation** for his/her service or past votes. Be positive.
- **Do not be abusive** and do not threaten your legislator if you do not get the response you want. You will have to work with him or her on other important issues in the future.
- **Secretaries and legislative aides can be very helpful.** If the legislature is in session, your legislator is probably at his/her desk on the floor of the chamber or in committee hearings. Even if you are not able to speak to your legislators directly, your messages will be relayed to them and can only add to the overall impact of your lobbying effort. **When talking to a secretary or legislative aide, extend them the same courtesies you would a legislator.** Identify yourself by name, facil-

ity, and town; identify the bill by number; and state how you would like your legislator to vote. Ask for a return call with the legislator's position before the vote is taken if possible. Notify IHCA staff of the position. Be polite. Rudeness, anger, or threats cannot only be damaging to your immediate issue, but future issues as well. Secretaries and legislative aides can be valuable allies - or your worst enemies. Do not demean them in any way.

- **Legislators can telephone you from the floor.** If you would like to discuss the bill more fully with your legislator, ask the secretary or legislative aide to relay your name and telephone number to your legislator and ask that your call be returned.
- If you do not have your legislator's Springfield office telephone number **call the Capitol switchboard at (217) 782-2000** and ask them to connect you with the legislator's office.

Telephone calls made immediately before a vote can be very effective. Often, legislators hold up their telephone messages during a floor debate to make their point about how important an issue is to their constituents. So your efforts do not and will not go unnoticed.

Sending E-mail Messages



This is a relatively new form of lobbying which is much less

personal than other approaches. It should be reserved for very short reminder notices.

As some legislators are more oriented to e-mail than others, it is important that e-mail not be the only method you use to communicate with a legislator, especially on an critical issue coming to a vote in a short time-frame.

Here are some tips for sending e-mail messages to legislators.

- Send an e-mail message to tell the legislator you sent a letter or made a phone call.
- Send a short e-mail message on the day before the vote on an important piece of legislation just to remind him/her of your past letters and telephone conversations.
- Send short e-mail messages asking if the legislator needs any additional information after you have sent a letter or made a phone call.
- Create a signature line at the end of your e-mail that includes your name, position, facility or program, address, and phone and fax numbers and e-mail address. This will make it easier for the legislator to respond when away from e-mail.
- Be specific in the subject line. You want to make sure your e-mail gets distinguished from the "junk" e-mail a legislator will get on any given day. The subject line should include your

name and the bill you are writing about.

For example: "Message from John Smith about HB 242"

Again, individual legislators have different attitudes toward e-mail. Some rely on it heavily. Some rely on their staff to keep them informed about e-mail messages. The use of e-mail to communicate with legislators will certainly increase over the next several years, but for right now it is recommended that e-mail be used in combination with other lobbying methods.

As always, there are exceptions. As you develop a relationship with your legislator, he or she may ask you to use e-mail messages more often. If that request is made, you should feel free to comply with that request from that individual legislator. However, those comments by individual legislators should not be taken to apply to all legislators.

The events surrounding the September 11, 2001, disaster were another exception to these e-mail guidelines. For many weeks, e-mail was the only method of communication available to communicate with Congressional representatives, primarily because post office locations were closed after anthrax was found on several letters entering the Congressional complex. Certain situations may dictate the used of e-mail as a means of communicating with legislators. However, to rely on it solely is still years away.

Facility Visits

It is important for your legislator to see firsthand the issues that you face on a day-to-day basis as a long-term care provider. Always invite your legislators to special events at your facility or program.

You will get even more mileage out of a special invitation to visit your facility/program. This gives you the opportunity to talk to the legislator without other distractions. As part of the visit, introduce the administrator, DON, nurses, therapists, dietitian, and owner so they can briefly explain their roles and how state government affects their tasks as caregivers. The owner and/or administrator should spend uninterrupted time in a private setting to discuss specific issues, especially pending legislative and regulatory action. It might also be appropriate for you to introduce the chairperson of your resident council or even have the legislator meet with the resident council. You will have to use your own judgment on this issue. Always check with IHCA staff prior to such a visit from your legislator in order that you can be updated on crucial issues and the legislator's positions on those issues (if known).

This type of visit/tour should occur at least annually in early spring, if possible, to coincide with the legislative session.

Other Personal Contacts

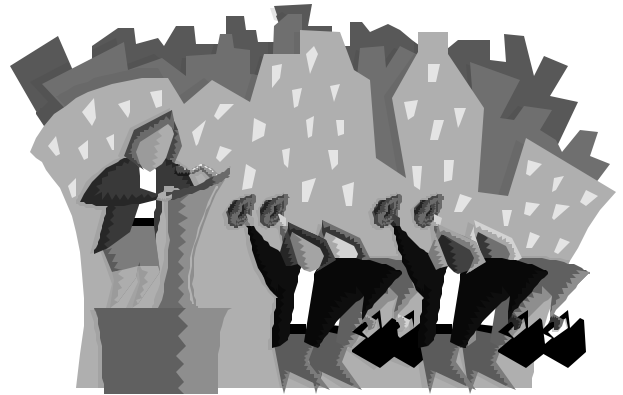
During the course of a year, legislators make public appearances; attend grand openings and other community events. They also may hold listening sessions, town meetings or campaign events. Your attendance at these events and your support (if he or she has been supportive of your issues) of their candidacy can make you their trusted expert on long-term care. Gaining that trust is valuable for you as a provider and for IHCA's lobbying efforts in Springfield.

It is important to communicate with your legislators periodically throughout the year, even if you are not asking for anything in particular. Intermittent contact with your legislator will erase the stigma that is associated with contacting a public official only when you need something. Frequent contacts where no specific needs or issues are at stake are good relationship builders.

Lobbying State Agencies

The Legislature typically gives state administrative agencies broad authority and discretion to implement laws. State agencies promulgate rules and regulations that have the force of law to carry out the mandates contained in statute.

A state agency, of course, cannot change a law. Its rules must conform to the law and carry out the Legislature's intent. Administrative rules are often as important as the statute itself in terms of impact on people's lives.



Administrative agency officials, like members of the Legislature, should be lobbied in order to produce necessary reforms. The development of rules and regulations should be subject to negotiation and compromise, the same as legislation. The same tools used in legislative lobbying are appropriate to agency lobbying.

At times, if IHCA and its members are unsuccessful in efforts to lobby for fair and proper rules with a state agency, it is possible to use another avenue of appeal. The Illinois Administrative Procedure Act (IAPA) sets forth the formal procedures for the adoption, amendment, or repeal of state agency administrative rules and regulations. The IAPA applies to all state agencies, boards, commissions or officers, other than the Governor, the legislature and the courts, which are authorized by law to make rules or to determine contested cases. The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) reviews the emergency, proposed, and adopted rules of all state agencies.

Opportunities To Influence Political Campaigns

As was mentioned earlier in this manual, every few years, you have the opportunity to determine who will represent you in the Legislature.

Prior to voting, you have yet another opportunity to expand your influence. Any election campaign succeeds or fails based upon the kind of volunteer network a candidate is able to create. Your involvement in the campaign activities of your local elected officials can be very important.

This section of the manual will outline some of the opportunities you have to get involved in the campaign activities of candidates. As members, you will have different party preferences. We are not advocating that you abandon any loyalties you may have in this area. However, sometimes certain candidates lean more favorably toward human services issues. These candidates are potentially more valuable to your on-going lobbying efforts.

This section is written from the perspective of state legislative candidates. However, the techniques talked about in this section can be applied to Congressional and local races.

You may choose to get involved in legislative races on your own, and we encourage this. IHCA will also be identifying key races in the state in which we need to get involved to improve our access. It is important for you to begin now to put some of the following activities in place. IHCA staff may be contacting your facility or program to ask for your help. The more ready you are, the greater the chance we will be able to put together a support system for a particular candidate.

Opportunity 1: *Host a Voter Registration Drive*

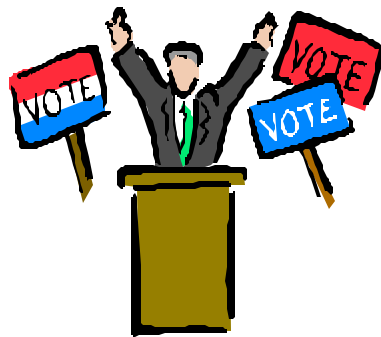
Elections cannot happen without voters, and you must be registered in order to make your opinions known through the ballot box.

Long-term care facilities are ideal places to hold voter registration drives as you can reach residents, staff, family members, and community volunteers all in one place. We encourage each of our members to hold a

voter registration drive in their facility. As always, IHCA staff is available to assist you in this effort. Here are a few basics you need to know to get started.

1. In order to hold a voter registration drive, you must first be **approved as a voter registrar**. This involves contacting your local county party (Democrat or Republican) chairperson and completing the necessary paperwork to get approved. Once approved, you are ready to start

- planning.
2. Get an ample supply of **voter registration cards** from the county so that you are not caught without the proper paperwork. Make sure you can make copies of the forms for registration purposes. If you must use all original forms, you want to know that up-front. Rules vary by county, but should be stated to you upon becoming a voter registrar.
 3. Make sure you understand how to **fill out the voter registration card** properly and that you know where to return the completed cards after your event.
 4. **Pick the date** or range of dates and the time of day you will hold your registration drive. It is sometimes beneficial to hold voter registration in conjunction with another event in the facility to increase the amount of traffic you will get on voter registration day.
 5. Make sure you have **enough lead-time** (normally at 3-4 weeks) to promote the drive in your newsletter to family members and to place notices in the local newspaper.
 6. **Post notices** to your staff in newsletters and on bulletin boards well in advance.
 7. Make sure your **announcements** include notification of the information a person must bring in order to be able to register. These items typically include a photo ID and some type of proof of residence.
 8. On the day(s) of the event, position the **registration table** in an easily visible high traffic area so that it is easily accessible to staff, residents, family members and community residents who may wish to register.
 9. Make sure you prepare a **highly visible sign** outside the facility to identify the entrance that should be used by those wishing to register.
 10. **Signage** inside the facility and on the registration table is an important thing to consider. Do not, however, allow “political” material at or near the table.
 11. Create a **work schedule** for the registration table to ensure there will always be help available for those wishing to register.
 12. Sometimes facilities identify staff members who will serve as **greeters** at the door of the facility to direct individuals to the registration area.
 13. You might also want to have information about **polling places** available at the table so those registering will have some idea of where they



may cast their vote. This is not an exact science, however. The county clerks office will send notices of polling places to those who register a few weeks after your event.

14. Immediately after the event, take all of your voter registration cards to the proper place for **verification and processing**.
15. Make sure your reception staff, and all of your staff, understands that you can **continue to register voters** after your event. That way if any interested person were to inquire later, your staff will know how to respond.
16. Do not mix voter registration with **political activities** or have literature present at your event. This is illegal.

As there is great potential for increasing the number of registered voters in your area through your drive, most local election officials will be happy to work with you to structure your voter registration drive. Your county may even have a specific package of information available to guide you through any special rules and regulations that exist in your area. Be sure you take advantage of all local resources at your disposal.

You might also consider running a contest among employees. Don't forget that employees may not be registered to vote and they may have family members in the same situation. A contest rewarding the department which produces the most new voter registrations can go a long way to improv-

ing the success of your event.

Tab 5 of this manual contains some sample materials that can be used to promote your voter registration drive.

Opportunity 2: *Serve as Polling Place*

Facilities are ideal places for people to vote. Your large size, ample parking, and the fact that you operate on a 24-hour basis all make your facility a desirable location. Your county may already have well established polling places; however, the needs of the county often change.

Before you volunteer, make sure you have the space available. Election officials will need a large room where they can set up the voting equipment. Large community rooms or dining rooms are ideal locations. If you volunteer, make sure you do not schedule any other events for that space on Election Day. If you volunteer your dining room, make sure you have alternate plans for feeding residents.

Opportunity 3: *Build a Network of Interested Staff*

You probably already have some staff that are actively involved in political campaigns, but you would probably have a lot more interested in the process if they understood how they could contribute.

Devote a section of your next staff meeting to political involvement. You can use sections of this manual to assist you in planning that session. If you do not have regular staff

meetings, use your normal means of communicating with your staff about important issues.

The important thing for staff to know is that they can devote as much or as little time to this effort as they choose. Involvement in campaigns does not require that you spend every available free moment working for a candidate. The important thing is that if a commitment of time is made, it is produced. Just as we have said in other sections of this manual, if you make a promise, you must follow through or your credibility can be damaged.

Outline for staff the kinds of activities that are available. These include posting yard signs, applying bumper stickers, making phone calls for candidates, helping to stuff mailings, polling, walking door-to-door, and engaging in other public relations activities for the candidate. Each one of these activities will be addressed separately in this section of the manual.

Keep a list of all interested staff with addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. The party affiliation of each staff member is important as this may influence the candidates for whom they are willing to work.

Having this information in one place makes it easier for you to demonstrate to a candidate the extent of your staff volunteer network. Remember, candidates have activities that require volunteers both day and night. Any staff working the night shift also has the opportunity to get involved.

A sample form to use for this purpose is included behind Tab 5.

Opportunity 4: *Build a Network of Interested Family Members*

Family members are another source of workers for campaigns. Although these family members may be asked to volunteer by their employers, the more interested parties you have who are knowledgeable about long-term care issues, the greater the impact you can have on a campaign.

Use the same principles discussed in the section about gaining support from staff above. Use your newsletter or a personal letter to each family member to solicit those interested in spending a little time working on a campaign. Maintain a list of interested family members, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and party affiliation. It would also be helpful to list the resident's name on the same sheet. Also, be sure to highlight for family members the kind of activities available to them for assisting campaigns. Having this information all in one place makes it easier for you to demonstrate to a candidate your family support network.

Opportunity 5: *Yard Signs & Bumper Stickers*

Your large staff and family network provide opportunities for candidates who need to place yard signs and/or distribute bumper stickers. These are definitely activities you can offer to staff members and family members who have expressed



an interest in participating in campaigns.

When you have identified a candidate you wish to support, contact their local campaign office and make an offer to support them by posting yard signs and distributing bumper stickers. Give them an idea of how many yard signs and bumper stickers you might be able to post using the homes and vehicles of staff and family members.

IHCA members have been very effective in the past by supporting yard signs for candidates. Several candidates have told us that the yard signs our members posted during election time made a difference. Your efforts in this area in the past have not gone unnoticed.

Opportunity 6: Facility Activities

Many facilities have residents who are fairly high functioning. Activities staff are always looking for new and different things for these residents to do at all hours of the day.

Assess your residents. Would they be able to assist candidates with mailings by folding letters and stuffing envelopes? Is this something of interest to your activities staff? If so, contact a candidate's office and offer your residents and activity staff as a location for production of a mailing or mailings throughout the campaign.

Opportunity 7: Offer your Phone Lines

At certain times during a campaign, candidates will make phone calls to residents in the area in an effort to as-

sess their campaign success. When this happens, candidates look for businesses that offer the use of their phone lines for an evening. The more callers a candidate can have on the phones at one time, the greater the number of voters that can be contacted in an evening.

If your facility has a large number of outgoing phone lines, you may have the type of set-up that would be helpful in these telephone campaigns. Contact the campaign headquarters of a candidate and let them know you are willing to volunteer your facility and your phone lines for an evening.

Opportunity 8: Host a Rally, Reception or Meet the Candidate Night

As a prominent member of the community, your facility or program may be the perfect place to host a candidate rally, reception, or "meet the candidate" night. These are also perfect opportunities to partner with other area businesses to hold a joint event for a candidate or group of candidates. Your relationship with the staff of any candidate will go a long way to securing one of these events at your facility.

A rally is a major event for which you can secure major media coverage. Work with the individual candidate to determine their level of interest in such an event. If you choose to participate, it will be your job to get good attendance by staff, residents, and family members. Don't forget to invite your key friends in the community. Producing a large number of attendees to



such an event is why partnering with other local businesses can be helpful.

A reception is normally a smaller group of more influential members of the community. Often a reception is also held to raise funds for a candidate. If you are interested in this type of activity, work with the candidate's staff to determine their needs. Often a candidate will have a minimum dollar amount for participation in such an event. Before you make such a commitment, make sure you can follow-through by producing the required number of participants and the necessary dollars for the candidate. Members of the media are not normally invited to attend in any official capacity at these events.

Holding a "Meet the Candidate night" is much like a rally in terms of the number of voters a candidate will expect to attend. However, these are normally more informal events. There may be a time when the candidate will make a short presentation followed by an opportunity for those in attendance to ask questions. The real benefit of these events is the opportunity for the candidate to shake hands with voters. It is another opportunity for you to showcase your facility to the community and the media. Ensuring high attendance at these events is imperative!

Opportunity 9: *Headquarters Volunteers*

The headquarters office of every candidate survives and thrives on volunteer involvement. Every day and night, the headquarters of the candidate is coordinating some kind of activity that is enhanced by volunteer involvement.

These activities include stuffing envelopes, making phone calls to residents of the area to gain support for the candidate, delivering yard signs, applying bumper stickers, polling, walking door-to-door, and engaging in other public relations activities for the candidate.

The needs of a campaign organization may vary. That is why it is best to place a call to the campaign headquarters and offer your assistance. Be sure to make it clear you have a network of staff and family members who may be willing to help. The campaign staff will alert you to their needs and give you specifics about what involvement they need from volunteers. It will then be up to you to match your staff and family member network to their needs. Don't forget that it will be your responsibility to follow-up with the people you place in a campaign office to ensure your volunteers are completing their commitments.

Opportunity 10: *Raising Money*

Campaigns rely on contributions to conduct their activities. The opportunities listed in items 1 through 9 represent in-kind contributions to campaigns. This means that they do not require a specific outlay of cash on your part but contribute to the campaign by offering things that would otherwise have to be paid for by the campaign. Some of these in-kind contributions may need to be reported. Contact IHCA staff for assistance.

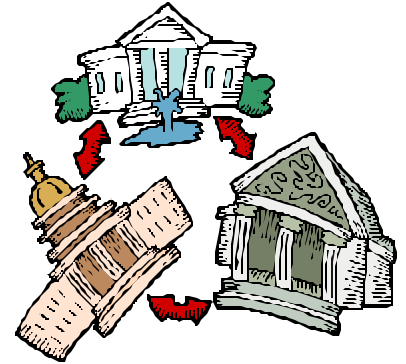
You may also choose to get involved in rais-



ing cash for a campaign. If this is your desire, make your wishes known to the candidate. The campaign committee will provide you with their guidelines and techniques for raising money.

How A Bill Becomes A Law

Passage of a Bill



1. Introduction of Bills

When a legislator wants to introduce a bill, he or she has an idea drafted into “bill” form by the Legislative Reference Bureau, and submits it to the clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate. The bill is then assigned a bill number, and is officially announced in the sponsor’s chamber. This announcement is called its First Reading. A bill retains its number throughout the two-year legislative session (a bill introduced in the Senate as “Senate Bill 1” remains “Senate Bill 1” even when it moves to the House of Representatives).

2. Committee Assignment

After First Reading, the bill is reviewed by the Rules Committee. In the House, the Rules Committee assigns the bill to a substantive committee. In the Senate, bills that are passed out of the Rules Committee move to the Committee on Assignment whereupon they are assigned to a substantive committee, which normally considers bills of a general subject area.

3. Committee Action

Immediately upon assignment to a committee, a bill is studied by the committee’s Republican and Democratic staff that issues an analysis to the committee members regarding the effect of the bill, who supports it and who opposes it.

When the sponsor is prepared to proceed, the bill is posted for a hearing - that is, notice is given that on a certain date, place and time, proponents and opponents will be afforded the opportunity to appear before the committee and give their views on the bill.

A bill must be posted at least six days prior to its hearing. This allows time for staff, other legislators, and interested groups to prepare for debate of the bill. This is a crucial time in the life of a bill, a short period of time to marshal support or opposition to a bill. When IHCA staff calls upon you to lobby a bill at this stage, please be aware of the necessity for a prompt response. Once a “bad” bill gets out of committee it becomes much more difficult to stop. (It’s easier to kill a “bad” bill in committee than on the floor.) Similarly, a “good” bill that may be controversial requires prompt support to get out of committee.

At the hearing, written and verbal testimony from proponents and opponents is considered and generally the committee votes on the bill, recommending: that the bill be passed by the

General Assembly in its current form; that it be passed with specific amendments; that it be sent to a subcommittee for further study; or that it not be passed or considered further.

4. Amending of Bills

When a committee sends a bill to the chamber floor, it is announced in much the same fashion as when it was first introduced, except that this stage is called Second Reading, and amendments, if drafted and offered, are sent to Rules Committee to be reviewed and may, if acceptable, be sent to the Chamber or to the substantive committee for debate. If the amendment is approved in committee, the bill, as amended, is sent to the full chamber for debate. After all amendments have been considered, or if no floor amendments are offered, the bill is advanced to Third Reading.

5. Passage of Bills

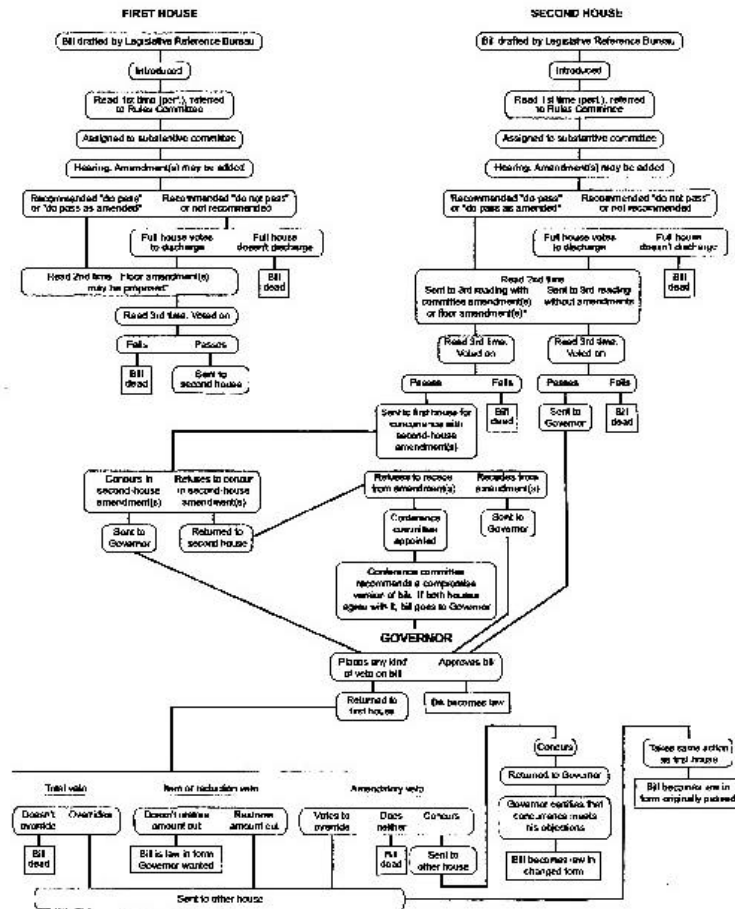
Third Reading is the “passage stage.” It is where the bill is finally debated and voted on by the full chamber. A bill may not be amended on Third Reading (but may be returned to Second Reading for the purpose of amendment). Passage is by roll call and for most legislation requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the elected members (30 in the Senate and 60 in the House).

The process is only half over at this point.

The final version of a bill passed in its chamber of origin is then ready to be introduced in the other chamber by one of its members. If it is so introduced, it begins the complete cycle of First Reading, committee hearing, etc. all over again in the second chamber. A bill not so introduced dies at this stage.

How A Bill Becomes A Law in Illinois

How A Bill Becomes A Law in Illinois:



*Amendments proposed on the floor must go to the Rules Committee for approval before being considered.

Concurrence by Originating Chamber

A bill that is amended in the second chamber must be sent back to the first chamber for agreement. This is called “concurrence.” If the first chamber does not concur, the bill is sent back to the second chamber to decide whether to recede from its amendment(s). If it refuses to recede, the bill is usually sent to a “conference committee” to attempt to work out a version agreeable to both chambers. The bill passes if such a conference report is agreed to by a majority of the members in each chamber.

Governor's Action

The legislation that is approved by both chambers moves to the Office of the Governor for approval or veto. Any bill which has passed both chambers must be presented to the Governor within 30 days of its passage. The Governor then has 60 more days to decide which of five actions to take. (For example, HB 101 passes the House May 15; it passes the Senate June 15. It must then be on the Governor's desk no later than July 15; and the Governor must act on it before September 16.)

The Governor has five alternatives that may be exercised when considering a bill:

- (1) The Governor may sign the bill. A signed bill becomes law in the form in which it passed the General Assembly.
- (2) It can become law without the Governor's

signature if the Governor fails or refuses to take action on the bill within 60 days.

- (3) The Governor may amendatorily veto the bill. In this manner, the Governor recommends to the General Assembly that specific changes be made in the bill.

The General Assembly may then elect to do any of the following:

- It can totally override the Governor's amendatory veto and reject the recommended changes by a 3/5 majority vote of both chambers, at which point the bill becomes law in the form in which the General Assembly initially passed it.
 - It can concur with the recommended changes by a full majority (one-half, plus one) of the membership of both chambers, at which point the bill becomes law in the form recommended by the Governor.
- (4) The Governor may totally veto a bill and return it with his objections to the General Assembly. The General Assembly may then elect to do one of the following:
 - Vote to override the Governor's veto by 3/5-majority vote of the members of both chambers, at which point the bill becomes law as the General Assembly initially passed it.
 - Fail (or elect not) to override the veto by a 3/5 vote in either chamber, at which

point the bill dies.

- (5) The Governor may reduce or veto any item of appropriations in a bill presented to him. Portions of an appropriations bill not reduced or vetoed become law upon being signed by the Governor (or within 60 days if no action is taken).

The General Assembly may then elect to do one of the following:

- It can fail (or elect not) to override the appropriation item reduced, at which point the bill becomes law in the reduced amount.
- It can vote to override and replace the vetoed appropriations item by a 3/5 vote of the membership of both chambers, at which point the bill becomes law in the form in which the General Assembly initially passed it.
- It can fail (or elect not) to override and replace the item vetoed, at which point the bill becomes law without the vetoed items.

When a bill is signed into law by the Governor or otherwise meets the constitutional requirements for become a law, it is assigned a Public Act number (i.e., Senate Bill 859 would thereafter be known and cited as Public Act 88-1046).

The bottom of the diagram on page 22 shows what can happen to a bill after it reaches the Governor.

Effective Date of New Laws

A bill which has passed both chambers of the General Assembly before July 1, and which does not provide for a specific effective date within the body of the bill, becomes effective on January 1 of the following year. A bill passed after July 1 does not become effective until July 1 of the following year, unless an earlier effective date is specified in the bill and the bill is approved by 3/5 of the members.



Other Information, Facts & Resources

Joint Committee on Administrative Rules

The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) was created to monitor and investigate the compliance of agencies with the provisions of the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act. The Committee reviews the statutory authority on which any administrative rule is based; it does not determine whether a rule is good or bad from a policy standpoint.

The Joint Committee has the authority to examine any proposed rule, to make objections to the rule and to temporarily delay implementation of a rule. While the Joint Committee does not have veto power over agency rules, its legislative members are in many cases the legislators who sit on appropriations committees before which agencies bring budget requests. This “power of the purse-string” can be an effective tool for encouraging agency compliance with the Joint Committee’s objections.

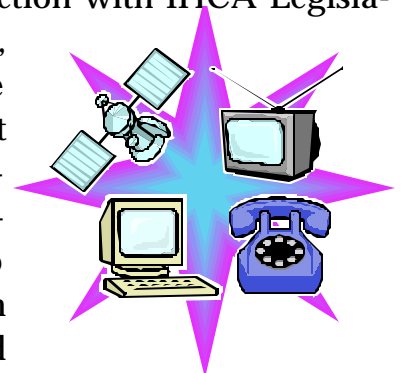
In addition to the above responsibilities, the Joint Committee is required to evaluate all of the rules of each agency every five years and to study the impact of legislative changes, court rulings and administrative action. At times, IHCA staff will encourage members to exert influence on members of JCAR to urge the addition of appropriate and fair rules. This activity can be even more crucial to long-term care providers than legislative activity. If you receive direction from IHCA to begin lobbying activity with JCAR members, your prompt cooperation may be criti-

cal to our goals. A current list of JCAR members appears in the IHCA web site at <http://www.ihca.com/members/gov-jcar.htm> and in Appendix B.

Registration Requirements for Lobbyists

In Illinois, any business or individual compensated to lobby on behalf of another business or individual must register with the Illinois Secretary of State as a registered lobbyist. This includes facility or corporate employees whose duties include lobbying as a frequent employment requirement. Businesses or individuals, who in the course of lobbying make expenditures for meals, entertainment, transportation or gifts that benefit legislators, state constitutional officers and certain executive branch employees must report such expenditures to the Secretary of State.

Few IHCA member facility employees and owners engage in lobbying to the extent that would require registration as a lobbyist. However, any individual who on behalf of his or her facility *and in response* to an IHCA Legislative Alert or other mobilizing request, or in conjunction with IHCA Legislative Day activities, makes a reportable expenditure, must complete a grassroots lobbying expenditure report to be submitted with the next required IHCA expenditure



report. Don't worry about this. If you have to report something that takes place in association with an IHCA function, we will give you the form you need and assist you in preparing your response. This does not apply in any way to your letter writing, telephone calls, e-mail messages, or other communication efforts. This only applies to situations in which you spend money on the legislator for lunch, dinner, or gifts. This does not apply to refreshments you may serve the legislator while they are in your facility for a visit.

Please keep two things in mind regarding this reporting requirement:

1. **It is very simple.** Do not be discouraged from lobbying because of this requirement.
2. **Always contact IHCA staff if you are in doubt about how the lobbyist and registration laws and expenditure reporting requirements may affect you.**

Fact About Illinois' Long Term Care Facilities

In addition to specific information about your facility, you may want to use some/all of the following facts about Illinois long-term care facilities:

General Information

- Illinois ranks 46th among states in nursing home Medicaid rates. (Arthur Anderson 2000 Guide to the Nursing Home Industry)
- Medicare does not address the long-term care and nursing home needs of our nation's elderly. Medicare covers only those nursing facility services rendered to help a resident recover from an acute illness or injury. In most cases, Medicare at a maximum provides for the first 100 days of care and only if certain conditions are met. (Health Care Financing Administration, 1996)
- Two out of every three nursing home residents rely on Medicaid to pay for their care. (Ibid.)
- In order to qualify for Medicaid, seniors are forced to "spend down" their assets to less than \$2,000 in most states to get the long-term care they need. (Ibid.)
- More than eight of every ten Americans believe it is wrong for seniors to impoverish themselves to go on a government program for nursing home care. (1995 Luntz Research)

The Demographic Dilemma

- Every eight seconds in America, a

baby boomer turns fifty. (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996)

- Americans aged 85 and older are the fastest growing segment of population and the heaviest users of long-term health care services. From 1960-1994, the 85 and older age group increased by more than 274 percent. Longevity is expected to rise for all ages. (Ibid.)
- Two out of five Americans will need long-term care at some point in their lives. (Health Care Financing Administration, 1996)
- In 1996, the average cost of stay in a nursing facility was \$41,000 per year. Only one in four Americans can afford private nursing home care for one year, yet the average length of stay in 1995 for a nursing facility resident was 2.3 years. (Ibid.)

Long-Term Care Affects Women and Families

- Family members are often the primary caregivers of long-term health care. Increasingly, women—the traditional family caregiver—are working outside the home. A national study found that 80 percent of working caregivers reported emotional strain, 50 percent reported financial strain, while 40 percent missed work on a regular basis due to the health needs of an elderly loved one. (American Association of Retired Persons, 1997)
- Three out of four nursing facility residents are women. (U.S. Census Bureau, 1996)

FY'00 Rates by Component

	Total	Capital	Support	Nursing/ Program
Nursing Facilities	\$ 94.86	11.11	35.74	48.01
SNFs for Pediatric Residents	\$167.49	10.12	42.66	114.71
ICFs for Persons with DDs	\$120.93	10.43	33.93	76.57
Specialized Living Centers	\$141.94	2.99	47.08	91.87
ICFs for 16 or Fewer Persons with DDs	\$114.45	11.18	38.00	65.27
ICFs for 4 & 6 Persons with DDs	\$181.14	16.99	46.06	118.09

(Source: IDPA)

(Rates were effective 7/1/01)

NOTE: Rates include provider tax/assessment.

Resources for Hosting a Voter Registration Drive

Sample Voter Registration Notice/Announcement:

VOTE YES!

Are you ready to cast your vote
in the election this fall?

Are you a registered voter?

(Name of Facility) will host a voter registration drive!

Date:

Time:

You must have a valid photo ID and some proof of residence to register. Contact (insert name) at (insert phone number) with questions.

Register NOW...so you can cast your vote in November!

Sample Staff Newsletter Announcement - Can Be Adapted for Family Newsletter Article:

Vote for Those Who Vote For Us!

It's Election Time Again! This is our opportunity to cast our vote for candidates who either have or will support long-term care issues in Illinois. But, you can't vote if you don't register!

(Name of Facility) will host a voter registration drive on (date). The drive will be held from (insert times) in the (insert location in facility...example: dining room). If your work shift does not fall between these times, please see (insert name) before your shift to register.

(Name of Facility) will be working with Illinois Health Care Association during the election cycle to identify candidates who are supportive of long-term care issues. We are in a great position to really have an impact on those who will represent our interests in Springfield in the coming years.

In order to register, you must have a valid photo ID and some proof of residence. A utility bill, credit card bill, or other bill containing your correct name and address is sufficient as proof of residence.

We have to be prepared to act with our vote in November. Please help by ensuring that you and all of your eligible family members are registered to vote.

Sample Press Release:

**(Print on Facility Letterhead)
(Double Spaced)**

For Immediate Release

Contact:
Name & Telephone Number

(Name of Facility) will host a voter registration drive on (insert date) from (insert times). The drive is open to all in the community who are eligible to register. You must have a valid photo ID and some proof of residence in order to register. A utility bill, credit card bill, or other bill containing your correct name and address is sufficient as proof of residence.

“We think it is very important to have the opportunity to vote for those individuals who will represent us in Springfield,” said (insert name of administrator or owner). “That is why we are providing another outlet in the community where voter registration can take place,” (he/she) added.

Visitors who register will also have the opportunity to tour the facility and meet the staff that care for the elderly in the community. “We hope to make this a real community event,” said (insert either administrator’s name again or use another staff member like a DON).

(Name of Facility) is located at (insert address). Contact (insert name) at (insert phone number) with any questions.

Fact Sheets on Long-Term Care Reimbursement

Following are additional fact sheets on long-term care reimbursement.