



Advocacy (Case 5)
Answer Key

HT is a third-year pharmacy student, who is really involved in her Student Society of Health-System Pharmacy (SSHP) and tries to support the causes of the organization. Her SSHP works closely with the state pharmacy association that is currently supporting a bill mandating government funded insurance companies to reimburse for pharmacists for pharmacy services in the outpatient setting, essentially granting pharmacists provider status. The law is currently in its infancy regarding support, with only a few individuals considering co-signing the bill. To support the cause, the state pharmacy association is hosting a Legislative Day at the capitol building. They are inviting all students from across the state to participate and to talk to their representatives in congress. As a student, HT is limited in her knowledge about the bill, what it will do for pharmacy, or who her state representative is. Furthermore, she is really nervous about meeting her representative, who she assumes knows more about the bill than her. She needs to start preparing to be able to show the value of pharmacists.

General Case Questions: Advocacy

1. What is the fastest way to find out who your legislator is?
 - State and National Legislature websites
2. What steps can you take to help you prepare to meet your legislator?
 - Research the topic: know your topic really well. The legislator your meeting with probably does not know the topic well and will ask questions regarding the bill as well as general pharmacy questions
 - Call your state pharmacy organization: learn what current resources they have on the topic or if they have any tips on the legislator you are meeting with. Also, they may send someone to meet with the legislator with you
 - Research your legislator: understanding what their voting record is, what kinds of bills they support, and what their understanding of a topic is a good start to learning more about them
 - Bring a thank you card: bring a thank you card or small gift (usually something from your school if it falls in their district) to give to them for taking the time to meet with you
3. Where would you find resources to help educate yourself regarding this bill?
 - State pharmacy association website
 - National pharmacy association websites (ASHP, APhA, etc)
 - Political newspapers/website
 - State congress website: will have the verbiage of the bill and who introduced the bill
4. What is provider status?
 - In general, provider status allows an individual to bill insurance for patient care services
 - Becoming a “provider” in the Social Security Act means that pharmacists can participate in Part B of the Medicare program and bill Medicare for services that are allowed under their state scope of practice
 - The name of the bill, who is sponsoring it (bipartisanship is a bonus), where the bill is art in the process of becoming a law
 - Key highlights of the bill: what does it do, who does it apply to, does it cost money
 - Who is supporting the bill from an organizational standpoint (ASHP, APhA, AMA, etc)
 - Pharmacy education: pharmacist have doctoral degrees and can pursue advanced training and certification, like residency, fellowship, and board certification
 - Pertinent Pharmacist Facts: Pharmacists are one of the most accessible healthcare professionals, pharmacists continually are ranked as one of the most trusted professions
 - Ask if the Member of Congress is willing to support the bill by cosigning or voting to pass the bill
 - Offer your contact information in case they have any follow-up questions

5. How does provider status work on a state and national level?
 - Provider status is different from state to state
 - For example, a provider status bill that was enacted in Ohio in 2018 permits and encourages state-ran Medicaid to reimburse pharmacists for specific services
 - In regards to government owned insurance, state provider status laws would only apply to state-ran Medicaid programs
 - National provider status would apply to the federally-ran Medicare program

6. What is the process of a bill, from its authorship to signing?
 - Bill is Drafted: Members of Congress, the Executive Branch, and even outside groups can draft (write or draw up) bills
 - Introduced in House: Representative introduces the bill in the House. Only members can introduce bills
 - Sent to Committee: The Speaker of the House sends the bill to a committee
 - Committee Action: Most bills die here. The committee may pigeonhole, table, amend, or vote on the bill. If bill passes, it goes to Rules Committee
 - Rules Committee: It decides the rules for debate, and when the bill will come up for debate
 - Floor Action: House debates the bill, and may add amendments. If a majority votes in favor of the bill, it goes to the Senate
 - Introduced in Senate: A Senator introduces the bill, which is sent to a committee
 - Committee Action: Same procedure as in the House. If the committee majority votes for the bill, it goes to the whole Senate
 - Bill Called Up: Majority floor leader decides when the whole Senate will consider the bill
 - Floor Action: The Bill is debated, and amendments may be added. If a majority votes in favor of the bill, it is returned to the House
 - Conference Committee: If the House rejects any of the changes, the bill goes to a conference committee of members from both houses. It works out a compromise
 - Vote on Compromise: Both houses must approve changes made by the conference committee. If approved, the bill goes to the president
 - Presidential Action: The president may sign (approve) the bill or veto (reject) it. If approved, it becomes law
 - Vote to Override: If the president vetoes the bill, it can still become law if two thirds of both houses vote to override the veto

7. Who are the key stakeholders in getting a bill passed?
 - Members of Congress: can introduce, co-sign, support/oppose, and vote on the bill
 - Committee Members: can help push bills through committee
 - President: ultimately will sign/veto the bill
 - Political Action Committee (PAC): support Members of Congress who support bills of keen interest to the PAC

- Lobbyist(s): build relationships with Members of Congress to help influence and educate Members of Congress
- Constituent: a voter of a Member of Congress

8. What is a Political Action Committee (PAC) and its role?

- Political action committee, or PAC, supports congressional candidates who support or champion specific interests important to the PAC or parent organization

Focused Case Scenario

HT is about to walk into the meeting with her legislator. She was able to bring along a few other students from other schools of pharmacy from her area of the state. Furthermore, the lobbyist for the state pharmacy organization is going to join them as well. HT has been tasked with leading the meeting. During the meeting, the legislator starts by saying he does not know a lot about pharmacy or the bill in question.

9. What are the key points HT should mention regarding the profession of pharmacy and provider status during the meeting?
 - Profession of pharmacy
 - Pharmacy is practiced in a wide range of settings: community pharmacies, hospitals, long term care facilities, the pharmaceutical industry, mail service, managed care, and government (Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Indian Health Service, Public Health Service).
 - Pharmacists undergo 4-years of professional schooling and some may complete 1 or 2-year residency programs to allow them to be the most knowledgeable health care professional when it comes to medicines and their use.
 - The pharmacist is a key health care professional in helping people achieve the best results from their medications. Pharmacists help provide care for patients while developing relationships and building a partnership for good health.
 - Achieving provider status is about giving patients access to the valuable care that you provide. Becoming a “provider” in the Social Security Act means that pharmacists can participate in Part B of the Medicare program and bill Medicare for services that are allowed under their state scope of practice.
 - About the bill:
 - The Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act (H.R. 592/ S. 109) is bipartisan legislation that will amend section 1861 (s) (2) of the Social Security Act to include pharmacists on the list of recognized healthcare providers.

FAQ on provider status

- What does the bill do?
 - The legislation will allow pharmacists to deliver care to patients in federally defined medically underserved communities. Pharmacists would be able to offer Medicare beneficiaries the same services that they are authorized to provide by their state pharmacy practice acts.
10. What are medically underserved communities?
 - Medically underserved communities--medically underserved areas, underserved populations, and health professional shortage areas are designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration and have the greatest need for healthcare

services. H.R. 592 and S. 109 can help address provider shortages and access issues for Medicare beneficiaries living in these communities.

11. Why does the bill only cover pharmacists' services in medically underserved communities?
 - The legislation would help meet unmet health care needs in underserved areas, a significant first step toward broader provider status. This strategy follows a similar successful path taken by other health care professionals to gain recognition under Medicare. Nurse practitioners initially received the ability to provide services in rural health clinics. Later they were granted provider status in any setting.

12. Create a 4-sentence pitch that is succinct but would help HT drive home the value of pharmacy.
 - Pharmacists play a vital role in the healthcare system through the medicine information they provide. Pharmacists practice in nearly all areas and specialties in healthcare as the medication expert on the healthcare team. Pharmacist responsibilities include a range of care for patients, from dispensing medications to monitoring patient health and progress to optimize their responses to medication therapies. Pharmacists also play a vital role in controlling the cost of healthcare by optimizing the cost of medications to the patient and health-system.

13. What type of physical materials should HT have with her during the meeting?
 - Updated information about the bill
 - Page of resources the legislator can use for more information
 - Business cards

14. If the legislator would like to hear more or follow-up with someone, who is the person to get him or her in contact with?
 - Lobbyist will be able to access additional pharmacy organizational support and/or contact additional pharmacists to information.

15. What are you going to do to follow up with him or her?
 - Email a thank you after the interview and follow-up with the importance of the bill to the profession