

Communicating with Legislators



Presented by:



Consortium for Idahoans
with Disabilities



Today you will learn



- How to tell your story
- How to meet 1:1 with your Legislator
- How to write, call and e-mail your Legislator
- How to testify at the Capitol

Comfort Zone



Why Tell Your Story?



**Each of us has a story that can
help move others to action**

How to get people to take action



- Tell a story about yourself
 - About the things you care about
 - What you think needs to be done and
 - Why you feel the need to speak out about it

Storytelling Template



- **Storytelling Template – a tool to help you communicate your message in:**
 - 1:1 meetings with Legislators
 - Written correspondence with Legislators
 - Testimony at the Legislature
- **Story Outline –**
 - The Beginning
 - The Middle
 - The End

Story Outline – The Beginning



- Who are you?
- What do you care so much about that you are willing to speak out?

Story Outline – The Middle



- Describe the problem
- What isn't working?
- Give real examples
- What are some ways to fix the problem?

Story Outline – The End



- Say thank you and ask:
 - Do you need more information?
 - Do you agree there is a problem that needs to be fixed?
 - Are you willing to work on solving the problem?



John's Story

John's Story



- The Beginning
- The Middle
- The End

Meeting with Your Legislator



- **Requesting to meet**
- **Meeting in person**

Requesting to Meet Face to Face: Email



From: John Kihara

Sent: Monday, November 07, 2012 12:21 PM

To: Senator Malepeai, District 30

Subject: Concerns about Medicaid Managed Care

Dear Senator Malepeai:

My name is John Kihara and I live in Pocatello, District 30. I have learned that Managed Care is coming to Medicaid in Idaho, and I am very concerned about how that will affect the Mental Health services I receive. I would like to meet with you about what this will do to my health and my ability to live independently in my own home in our community.

Please let me know a date and time I can meet with you.

Sincerely,

John Kihara, 123 4th St, Pocatello, ID 83210 208-333-3333

Calling Your Legislator to Set Up a Meeting



Good morning, Senator Malepeai. My name is John Kihara, and I live in Pocatello and District 30. I would like to schedule a time to meet with you to discuss Managed Care and Idaho Medicaid.

I use mental health services, and I am concerned that recent funding cuts, and now, Managed Care, will affect my ability to live independently in the community, and may result in costly institutional placements.

Please give me a call at 208-333-3333 so we can set a time and date to meet. Thank you very much, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Requesting to Meet Face to Face in a Letter

Senator Edgar Malepeai

585 South 19th

Pocatello, Idaho 83210



Dear Senator Malepeai:

My Name is John Kihara, and I live in Pocatello and your legislative district. I am a person who uses mental health services, and recent funding cuts to these services and dental care have made it difficult for me to stay healthy and live independently in our community. I have also learned that Managed Care is coming to Idaho Medicaid, and I want to make sure we take the time to build a quality service system. I would like to meet with you to discuss no more cuts to services, restoring services that have been cut, and the issues with Managed Care.

Please let me know when it is convenient for you to meet with me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John Kihara, 123 4th St, Pocatello, Idaho 83201 208-333-3333

Video Vignette



Discussion Questions



- What did John do well?
- What could he have done differently?
- Did John follow his story outline?
- Other observations

Follow-up Letter or e-mail



Senator Edgar Malepeai

585 South 19th

Pocatello, Idaho 83210

Dear Senator Malepeai:

I really appreciate the time you took to meet with me to discuss 1) Medicaid cuts to mental health services, 2) restoring dental services to adults with disabilities, 3) the issues with Managed Care, and how these affect me and people like me who have mental health issues. I am very pleased that you are committed to working on these issues this legislative session on behalf of me and your constituents.

Please contact me if you have any questions or a need for more information. I am very excited that we can work together on these issues that are so important to Idahoans with disabilities.

Sincerely,

John Kihara, 123 4th St, Pocatello, Idaho 83201 208-333-3333

Communicating Your Message in Writing



- Letter to Legislator (Example in packet)
- Follow Your Outline
 - The Beginning
 - ✦ Who are you? What do you care about?
 - The Middle
 - ✦ Describe the problem. What isn't working. Give examples. What are your solutions
 - The End
 - ✦ Say thank you. Ask if they need more information. State again what you want them to do.

How to send a Letter or E-mail



www.legislature.idaho.gov

Click on “Contacting Legislators”

Click on “Contact by Name”, type in the legislator’s last name, and click on Search

Click on the highlighted and underlined **E-mail**

Fill in all the boxes on the Legislative Contact Form, type your message, and click on **Submit E-mail**

You can get your legislator’s address to mail a letter by clicking on “Contact by Name”

OR

You can send an email through the Legislative Information Center

idleginfo@lso.idaho.gov

“All mail and e-mail must contain the sender's name and address. To help us forward your message appropriately, please include your legislator's name and/or legislative district.”

Communicating Your message in Testimony



- Legislators want to hear from people in their districts and those impacted by the legislation.
- Follow your Storytelling Template.
- Tell them how the bill will affect you, your family, or your friends.
- They like stories (short ones).

How to Testify at the Capitol



- **Do not** be partisan, angry or criticize.
- Practice your testimony (especially if you need to keep it limited to 3 minutes)
- **Hint:** if you want more time to speak, ask a friendly legislator to ask you a follow up question
- If you are asked a question, it is okay to say, **“I don’t know.”**

How to Testify at the Capitol



- **Say:**
 - “Good Morning (or afternoon) Madam Chair or Chairman_____ and Members of the Committee.”
 - “Thank you for your time today.”
- **Use your story to make your point**
- “I urge you to support/oppose_____. I am willing to answer any questions you might have. Thank you for listening to me.”

John's Testimony



Example of John's Testimony



- What did John do well?
- What could he have done differently?
- Did John follow his Storytelling Outline?
- Other observations...

Practice – Your first step to moving outside your Comfort Zone



Helpful info...



○ www.icdd.idaho.gov/



○ www.medicaidmattersinidaho.com/

○ www.legislature.idaho.gov

Please join us...



**Disability Advocacy Day
at the Capitol
Thursday, January 24th**

