Internal Communications

When issues arise that affect dental care for patients with disabilities, how do we communicate with each other to spread the word on ways we might help to influence the process? How do we notify each other of meetings, hearings, actions, and last-minute changes?

Website Forum - www.saiddent.org press the button that says Forum. Compose your message and it will be sent automatically via email to all members who subscribe. It is available to be viewed by anyone who accesses the website.

Phone Pyramid - When a situation requires an immediate response, a phone pyramid is an alternative to an e-mail action alert and offers an opportunity to guarantee an immediate response. A phone pyramid is a prearranged, pyramid-shaped system for activating a group of people by telephone.

A. RESOURCES NEEDED

- *People*: A coordinator and a network of reliable people (Key Group) form the skeleton of the phone pyramid.
- *Time*: The coordinator will spend time organizing the people in the call sequence, and the order of calls. (This process should be done prior to serious activation of the pyramid.) Once it's set up, the pyramid can do dozens or even hundreds of hours of work with only five to 50 minutes of involvement by each member, depending on the frequency and number of calls each member is assigned.
- *Legislator Contact Information*: Names, districts, phone numbers (home, office and statehouse), addresses (home, office and statehouse) and e-mail for every state legislator can be accessed by contacting the state's website.

B. USING THE PYRAMID

- A Coordinator makes the first calls using a brief script complete with the specific action each member needs to accomplish (calling the legislature, writing a letter to the editor, etc). The Coordinator will also share a sample script that every person making calls to elected officials will use to ensure consistency in message.
- Certain key group members will receive the script, including the time frame for action, and make their calls.
- Spot-check the pyramid's effectiveness by calling a few people down on the list to be sure they have received an accurate and complete message. Also, you can prearrange with folks down the list to contact you once they have received the message.
- Train the folks in your phone pyramid to keep trying each person on their list until they make contact. If a member of the phone pyramid cannot be reached, have the caller notify you as the coordinator so you can fill in or delegate the responsibility to another member. If a legislator cannot be reached, consider hand-delivering the message to the legislator's home or office.
- Ask the membership chair to keep you informed of changes in membership so you can keep your communications network up-to-date.