

## **Tips on how to make the request**

- You can find your member of the Indiana House and Senate at these links:
  - Indiana Legislators: <http://district.iga.in.gov/DistrictLookup/>
  - Click on your legislator to go to their home page
  - Once you are on their home page, click on email or contact to initiate a discussion
  - You may also review the IDA Legislator Listing 2013 directory
- Email your Indiana Legislator (Senator and Representative) or make a personal phone call.
- State your name, your purpose and describe why you are making contact (See script below).
- If you have time and the legislator has time, make a request for a meeting to discuss licensing of dietitians in the 2013 General Assembly Session.
- State that you are requesting a fifteen minutes up to a half hour of meeting time. *If you can find other dietitians that live in your legislators' district, ask them to come along with you.*
- The scheduler may ask for additional information, so be prepared.
- Record the name and e-mail address of the scheduler.

## **Sample Phone Script – with Indiana Legislator/Scheduler:**

Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a registered dietitian from the Senator or Representative \_\_\_\_\_. *(a good hint is to mention your House district number and Senate district number.)* I would like to schedule a meeting with the Senator or Representative. I'm a member of the Indiana Dietetic Association – and we're the state's largest food and nutrition professional association in the state – with over 1,100 members working to improve the health of Hoosiers through food and nutrition expertise.

I would like to schedule a meeting *(If you are bringing other constituent dietitians, mention this so the legislator is prepared)* to discuss the 2013 General Assembly Session and the prospect of a bill to introduce dietitian licensing. Is there a good date and time to meet? Thank you.

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**This may be the point where the legislator/scheduler asks for you to identify which issue areas that will be discussed.**

- Reasons why we need dietitian licensing in Indiana include:
  - The need for a licensed professional starts when healthcare treatment starts
  - Once a medical condition is involved, dietitians provide the medical expertise to deliver Medical Nutrition Therapy
  - Hoosier consumers count on licensing of physicians, nurses and pharmacists to determine qualified professionals. The licensing of dietitians ensures a rigorous set of standards have been met.

- Licensing of dietitians ensures our Hoosier public that Hoosier dietitians have met the standards to become a registered dietitian and they abide by a code of conduct.
  - There are three levels of state regulation for dietitians: state licensing, state certification, and registration. Licensing is desired to establish a defined scope of practice. Certification (which we have in Indiana) only defines the term dietitian and does not include a scope of practice. Registration is the least restrictive and is minimally enforced.
  - Dietitians are one of the few healthcare professionals that are not licensed in Indiana.
- If the scheduler asks you to identify the issues, or transfers you to one of the Legislative Assistants you can briefly describe the issues and restate that you would like time to talk about the importance of these issues as they pertain to improving the health of Hoosiers through food and nutrition.

**Sample e-mail: If the scheduler asks you to put your request in writing to him/her or one of the legislative assistants**

Dear *Senator or Representative* \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a registered dietitian from the *Senator or Representative* \_\_\_\_\_. I would like to schedule a meeting with the *Senator or Representative*. I'm a member of the Indiana Dietetic Association – and we're the state's largest food and nutrition professional association in the state – with over 1,100 members working to improve the health of Hoosiers through food and nutrition expertise.

I would like to schedule a meeting to discuss the 2013 General Assembly Session and the prospect of a bill to introduce dietitian licensing. (*Mention these reasons why you are requesting support for dietitian licensing:*)

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    - The need for a licensed professional starts when healthcare treatment starts
    - Once a medical condition is involved, dietitians provide the medical expertise to deliver Medical Nutrition Therapy
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    - Licensing of dietitians ensures our Hoosier public that Hoosier dietitians have met the standards to become a registered dietitian and they abide by a code of conduct.
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Thank you.

### At the Meeting

- *What to bring*
  - Bring some business cards, and other materials to give to the legislator after the meeting!
  - Bring notes of your talking points to point out relevant statistics.
  - Show excitement and passion for what you do; it's what you want the member to see!
- *What to say*
  - Familiarize yourself with the talking points on the various issues and always relate those issues back to you and what you do as an RD!
  - Have a personal and or professional story ready to tell, preferably one that relates to one of the specific pieces of legislation. Personal stories from the workplace always resonate more deeply than facts or figures. These members care about the people they represent and so by telling a story about one of their constituents (your patients/clients) you will be able to make a stronger connection from the member's understanding of the issue to the actual policy.
  - Always share your story **first** and then follow it with the relevant facts and figures.
  - Do not be afraid to say "I don't know". Nothing is worse than providing false information to a member/staffer. Simply say "I'm not quite sure about that, but I can get you the answer later."

### Follow-up

- **Always follow up 1 to 2 days later with a thank-you email!**
- Reiterate your messaging on things discussed in the meeting/visit.
- Make sure to state that you will be reaching out the member's relevant staffer (**state their name**) to answer any questions the member had, or to provide supporting materials that were requested.
- Inquire to your district board/treasurer to see if mileage reimbursement can be provided for travel to the meeting (if public policy events are budgeted).