

Dear AORN Grassroots and Advocacy Leaders,

Influence the Future of Safe Patient Care: Contact Your Newly Elected Legislators

As an AORN grassroots advocacy leader we have a special “assignment” for you to celebrate Perioperative Nurse Week 2008 and to support our theme this year: Influence the Future of Safe Patient Care.

As you well know, our politicians have had a lot to say about health care during the months leading up to the November election. After the election it is up to us to educate our elected representatives – both in Congress and in your state Capitol – and to make our expertise on patient safety available to them throughout 2009 as they discuss and debate changes to health care. I can assure you, they will be eager to have a citizen advocate who cares for the safety of the patient help them understand.

So here is your special assignment:

- 1) On Wednesday, November 5 (the day after the election) take from your local newspaper the names of the winners for where you live: a) US Representative to Congress; b) US Senator to Congress; c) State District Representative (or Assembly person) for you state; d) State Senator for you state (Note: some states may not have all four categories running).
- 2) Using the AORN advocacy web page look up the email of the winner that is the incumbent (i.e.; they were re-elected) by entering your home zip code in the following [AORN Capwiz Web Page](#). For winners that are not the incumbent, call the local newspaper and ask for the phone number or email of the winners campaign office.
- 3) Call or email the winner for each office using the model letter/ template below.
- 4) If you are having an open house, invite them to drop by.
- 5) If they respond to your call or email, build on that relationship and make a note to contact them at least every 45 days and to remind them that if THEY are setting up a task force or advisory group on health care issues – you would be interested in helping out and serving as the patient safety advocate in the discussions.
- 6) Drop an email note to [AORN GA](#) to report on your success with contacts.

Model Letter/ Template email from #3 above:

Dear < name of winner >

Congratulations on your election victory!!

As you well know changes in health care will be a topic of discussion in both Washington and our state capitol. While many will contact you regarding their interest as a hospital, or ambulatory surgery center; or as a physician or health insurance company, I want you to recognize my name as a perioperative nurse whose first interest is patient safety.

That is because patient safety is the most important role I have in the operating room during surgery. And while I work collaboratively every day with all the other interests to achieve a positive outcome for the patient during surgery, I want to make sure that the public policy discussion on health care includes my direct involvement – to be watchful of patient safety as change decisions in health care are made.

As you become involved in these health care discussions during the coming year, I hope you will call on me to give you my perspective on the discussion, or to include me on a health care task force or advisory body that you form.

Congratulations again on your recent election success. I look forward to working with you on health care issues during the coming year.

Sincerely,
< you name, credentials, and home address >

Many thanks to AORN Grassroots and Advocacy Leaders for their help in educating our elected leaders.

Best,
Craig Jeffries, Acting Director of Government Affairs