



# As You Sow, So Shall You Reap

By Michael F. Conlan

**I**t was a Republican senator speaking about Teddy Roosevelt's Progressive Party (Bull Moose) who declared in 1912, "This party has come from the grassroots. It has grown from the soil of people's hard necessities."

Then as now, grassroots grow from people's hard necessities away from the halls of Congress and state legislatures. Grassroots lobbying localizes and personalizes national and state issues, and demands attention from politicians because it comes from "back home."

As a community pharmacist, you have a great story to tell. You are an integral part of your community because you care for local patients, provide local jobs, make large contributions to the local economy and tax base, and provide an essential local need—easily accessible community pharmacy care.

As a local business leader and health care professional, whose efforts generate enormous benefits for your community, people will appreciate your participation in community affairs. Make the most of it. These activities can not only protect your ability to provide quality care, but also help establish publicly the link between community pharmacy and the well being of your patients.

The primary goal of any lobbyist is to advance their issues through the legislative process. For the grassroots lobbyist, in particular, this means providing local insight and personal expertise on community pharmacy's issues.


Nothing is more important than access to legislators and their key staff. Constituents enjoy a special access to elected officials that others do not. Effective NCPA grassroots lobbyists seek to inform and persuade their elected officials, in order to influence the outcome of laws and regulations that affect community pharmacy. They use their local leadership, professional credentials, and expertise as levers for access:

- Access refers to the ability to get an appointment with legislators or their staffs.
- As a local constituent, who represents an important health care sector and small business area, you can

bring community pharmacy's concerns to the attention of your elected officials.

- When members of Congress are in Washington, or your state legislators are at the state capital, e-mail and call them.
- When federal and state elected officials are in your local area, meet them...become a familiar name and face.
- Become recognized as a subject-matter "expert" and establish a mutually beneficial relationship as a valuable information resource on complex health care issues.
- Develop a professional, working relationship with your elected representatives.
- That's ACCESS!

The NCPA grassroots program seeks to establish, develop, and sustain a strong link between the NCPA government affairs staff, your local pharmacy organizations, and the grassroots of community pharmacy. That grassroots is you—and we welcome your participation in bringing a dose of hands-on reality to any national or state-level policy discussion of Medicare, Medicaid, pharmacy benefit managers, and other relevant health care issues.

A team approach represents our best chance of success. Go to the government affairs section of [www.ncpanet.org](http://www.ncpanet.org) and get started today. 

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