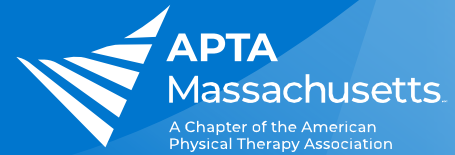


Advocacy 101:

Crafting Your Message



Advocacy is how PTs, PTAs, and students use their professional expertise to inform public policy decisions that affect patients, communities, and our profession.

It can be as simple as sending an email, sharing a story, or meeting with a legislator.

Your Advocacy Story personalizes the impact of physical therapy and helps legislators understand why access and reimbursement issues matter.

Three Steps to a Strong Story

1. Start with the patient: Describe a real (but de-identified) patient experience that shows why the issue you are discussing matters and to frame your ask.

Example: “Through direct access, a patient came to physical therapy after a severe ankle sprain and wasn’t sure if she had a fracture”

2. Connect it to the issue: Explain how policy affects your ability to provide care using simple terms and straightforward

Example: “I did an exam and found she met the clinical criteria for an x-ray and it was very likely she had a fracture. Because PTs cannot order imaging, I had to send her back to her PCP for them to order an x-ray. This was inefficient care, and led to higher health costs for the patient”

3. End with the solution: Ask for specific legislative support.

Example: “To streamline care for your constituents and decrease healthcare utilization costs, I ask you to cosponsor S.215, An Act relative to physical therapy”

APTA Massachusetts (APTA MA) is the state chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association, representing PTs, PTAs, and students across the Commonwealth. We work to ensure that every Massachusetts resident has access to high-quality, cost-effective rehabilitation care. APTA MA members are clinicians, educators, researchers, and students who use their collective voice to influence policy, strengthen practice, and promote movement as a foundation for health.

Key Legislative Terms to Know

- **Bill:** A proposed law filed by a legislator.
- **Committee:** A group of legislators who review bills before they move forward.
- **Testimony:** Written or spoken input to a committee explaining how a bill impacts patients or providers.
- **Co-sponsorship:** When a legislator publicly supports a bill before it is heard.
- **Stakeholder:** Anyone directly affected by policy: such as PTs, patients, or payers.