



# Legislative Tour Guide



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# Introduction

## ***Hosting Legislators in Your Skilled Nursing Center or Assisted Living Community***

Legislative visits in GHCA member centers play a critical role in GHCA's legislative efforts and help to educate policy makers on issues affecting the long term and post-acute care profession in our state. Many lawmakers have never been inside a skilled nursing center or assisted living community, are unfamiliar with the complexities of care you provide, and may not understand all you do on a daily basis to enhance the lives of the residents in your center. As such, inviting legislators into your center is an excellent opportunity to help them see the services you provide and further understand our issues.

Locate the contact information for your local legislators through the online GHCA Action Center: <https://www.ghca.info/action-center>. For assistance in setting up a tour, please contact GHCA VP of Governmental Relations Seth Coker at [scoker@ghca.info](mailto:scoker@ghca.info) or 706-975-1824.

## **Tips for a Successful Legislative Visit**

- Ahead of the visit, familiarize yourself with your legislator and alert your staff about the tour and provide them with background information on the visitors.
- Consider contacting your local media and inviting them to join you for the legislative visit. If they don't have a reporter/photographer available to send, follow up with them by sending photographs from the visit. If you need help with reaching out to your local media, feel free to contact GHCA Director of Communications Devon Barill at [dbarill@ghca.info](mailto:dbarill@ghca.info) or (678) 783-1703.
- When the legislator arrives, take him/her on a tour of your center just as you would a potential new resident and family members. Set aside at least one hour for the tour. Consider inviting along your DON, Activity Director, Marketing Director or other staff to help you with the tour and answer questions.
- As you conduct the tour, remember to greet your staff and residents by name.
- Gather your residents so they have an opportunity to meet the legislator. Consider hosting a breakfast, lunch or other special activity to make the meeting interactive. This helps personalize the experience for everyone and makes it much more memorable for the legislator.
- Don't use acronyms or medical terminology. It is important to remember your legislator may not be familiar with long term care, so it's important to help them understand what you do without overwhelming them.
- Remember to take photographs and send them to GHCA for sharing on GHCA's social media pages and in our weekly eNewsletter. Invite the legislator to be photographed with your residents for a more personalized touch. As a reminder, you must have a written authorization form for every resident and family member in the photo, even those in the background. Please send photos to GHCA Director of Communications Devon Barill at [dbarill@ghca.info](mailto:dbarill@ghca.info).

## **What to Discuss**

- Ask the legislator about his/her experience with nursing centers. He or she may have a relative who is or has been in a center and this may be a good lead in to discuss long term care issues.
- Emphasize the quality of care you provide, highlight any special awards you have received (i.e. AHCA/NCAL National Quality Awards, Georgia Quality Award, etc.) discuss any future goals you have for your center.
- Show the legislator some of the realities of resident care and compliance with new or changing regulations.
- Show the legislator areas of the center that are changing due to legislation, regulations, survey focus, or to address a community need, such as a new therapy department. Be sure to discuss quality as part of the conversation as well as items related to cost/benefits.
- Point out the volume, time, and personnel that are needed to complete mandated paperwork, especially in areas of redundancy.

## **What to Showcase**

- Be sure to show off your dining room, talk about any specialized meal functions, opportunities for family members to come in and dine with residents.
- Showcase your activities board and activities center. Talk about community involvement and any outside groups or volunteers that visit the center. Talk about opportunities you offer to take residents on visits outside the center, such as to parks, community outings, etc.
- Highlight skilled services your center offers.

## **After the Visit**

- Send a thank you note to the legislator after the event and any photographs you may have taken. This is an important gesture that will help him/her remember the visit.

For additional information, contact GHCA VP of Governmental Relations Seth Coker at [scoker@ghca.info](mailto:scoker@ghca.info) or 706-975-1824.

# Checklist for Hosting a Legislative Visit

Below is a checklist designed to assist you in the planning and execution of a successful legislative visit in your skilled nursing center or assisted living community:

## **Setting Up the Tour**

- ☐ Decide who to invite
- ☐ Send the invitation to elected officials and other guests
- ☐ Track and confirm RSVP's and follow up as necessary
- ☐ Coordinate length of event with the lawmaker's staff
- ☐ Inform your employees of the visit
- ☐ Determine the format of the event

- ☐ Determine what areas of your center you would like to showcase to the legislator
- ☐ Designate a photographer to document the visit
- ☐ Prepare to discuss issues of concern to long term care (for assistance in developing talking points for your visit please contact GHCA VP of Governmental Relations Seth Coker at [scoker@ghca.info](mailto:scoker@ghca.info) or 706-975-1824)

## **Plan for the Media**

- ☐ Clear media participation/attendance with legislator
- ☐ Draft a media advisory, if desired (see pg. 7)
- ☐ Prepare area for news media to set up
- ☐ Be prepared to answer questions from the media

## **Organizing the Tour**

- ☐ Create an event agenda/plan
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with the legislator
- ☐ Decide who will greet the legislator and participate in the tour
- ☐ Craft lawmaker introduction
- ☐ Establish a welcome/departure area for the legislator
- ☐ Allow the guest to address center staff either before or after the tour
- ☐ Create name badges for guest and staff

## **Conducting the Tour**

- ☐ Emphasize the quality of care you provide, highlight any special awards you have received
- ☐ Show the legislator some of the realities of resident care and compliance with new or changing regulations
- ☐ Gather your residents so they have an opportunity to meet the legislator
- ☐ Provide an opportunity for the legislator to address your residents and staff

## **Following Up After the Tour**

- ☐ Send thank-you note to guest(s)
- ☐ Send photos taken during the visit to your guest
- ☐ Tell the GHCA about the tour
- ☐ Provide photos to local media
- ☐ Continue to communicate with the lawmaker post-event

## Sample Invitation — On Center Letterhead

[Date]

[Title] [First Name] [Last Name]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Title] [Last Name]:

I would like to invite you to visit [Center Name] in [Center City], GA, on [Suggested Date] or another date of your convenience to speak to residents, family members, and caregivers and learn more about long term care in our state and local community. We would appreciate the opportunity to showcase the quality advancements being made in our center and discuss issues of concern to our profession.

Along with our colleagues at the Georgia Health Care Association, we are steadfast in our mission to maintain and improve quality care for the residents in our center and the growing population of seniors we will serve in the coming years. It is our hope that a visit to our center will help you better understand what we do and how important long term care is to our state and the elderly and vulnerable individuals we serve.

We hope you will be able to join us for a tour of our center on [Suggested Date] or another date in the near future. Please feel free to contact me directly at [Phone] or [Email] to discuss your availability.

Sincerely,

[First Name] [Last Name]

Administrator

# Sample Media Advisory - On Center Letterhead

For Immediate Release

[Date]

Contact

[Name, Title of Contact]

[Phone]

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### [Legislator] to Visit Local Nursing Center

**WHAT:** [Center Name] will host a tour for [Legislator] to demonstrate our commitment to quality care for the community's most vulnerable citizens and discuss the importance of long term care in Georgia.

**WHEN:** [Date and Time of Event]

**WHERE:** [Center Name]  
[Address 1]  
[Address 2]  
[City, State Zip]

**WHO:** [Name of the legislator and any other VIPs who will accompany him or her, as well as senior administrators in the facility who will participate]

**AGENDA:** [Briefly describe the tour schedule (e.g. viewing daily operations, meeting residents, lunch, and brief remarks to assembled employees)]

## Sample Follow Up letter — On Center Letterhead

[Date]

[Title] [First Name] [Last Name]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Title] [Last Name]:

On behalf of the residents and staff of the [Center Name], I want to thank you for visiting with us on [Date of Visit]. We enjoyed meeting you and appreciate your attention to the issues affecting the quality and future of long term care in our community, state, and nation.

I know that your most valuable commodity is time, and we all appreciate that you have shared some of it with us. I look forward to speaking with you again soon. If I can be of any assistance, particularly when technically complex issues involving long term care are before you, please call on me at any time.

Enclosed are some of the best photos we took during your tour of the [Center Name]. I hope these will be of use to your staff for publicity purposes in the future.

Sincerely,

[First Name] [Last Name]

Administrator



# GHCA Action Center

Visit the GHCA Action Center at <https://www.ghca.info/action-center> for tools to assist you in your advocacy efforts.

## Action Center

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