



# Brown Bag Advocacy Sessions

February 15, 2023

Communicating with your legislators &  
Policy updates

# Housekeeping

- This is a safe space to ask questions. Even if it's *for a friend*.
- Drop questions in the chat or use the 'raise your hand' feature and we will make sure to connect.
- Please mute yourself unless you are speaking with the group.
- If you are having lunch, feel free to turn off your camera.
- This session is being recorded and will be posted on our website, along with any links mentioned today.
- Jargon can cause confusion. We strive to make advocacy accessible to everyone. Please let us know if we are using terms or acronyms that you would like for us to define.

# Today's Agenda

- Taking a Break
- Written communication
- Meetings with Legislative Staffers
- Testimony 101
- Policy Updates & Committee Assignments

# Writing to our Legislators & Staff

- Tips for email communications
  - Be brief
  - Be direct
  - Be clear
  - Be a resource
- Limit number of attachments
- Know your Audience

## What to include:

- Professional greeting
- LIMIT use of exclamation points
- Who are you?
- What is your issue?
- Why is it important to *them*?
- What do you want them to do about it?

# Sample Email

Good afternoon Senator Schwertner,

Today I am writing to you as a constituent and an advocate for Texans in recovery. We need your help with illegal overregulation by the City of Houston. The City of Houston is claiming that SB 500 (attached) gives them the ability to enforce boarding home regulations on recovery housing. However, recovery homes are not boarding homes. Recovery housing provides a safe, family-like, drug free living environment to people in recovery, who are a protected class in Texas and federally. As a physician, I am sure you are well aware of the shortage of recovery support services in Texas and the need to protect these limited valuable resources, like recovery housing, from discrimination and over regulation.

Houston is targeting a recovery home that is certified by the National Alliance of Recovery Residences (NARR) as meeting national best practices and one of the most well respected providers in Houston. We are working hard to get NARR certification recognized by the state to help prevent over regulation of recovery housing.

While this may not be in your district, this type of illegal activity sets a dangerous precedent for other cities to overregulate recovery housing.

I have attached a Texas Fair Housing legal brief that further emphasizes this as illegal enforcement.

Can you please help stop this overregulation?

Please let me know if you have any questions. I am happy to meet and discuss this further.



# Sample Email- meeting

Good morning Leah and Lola,

My name is Elizabeth Henry and I am a constituent of Sen. Schwertner. The senator was the sponsor and champion of [HB 1486](#) during the 85th legislative session. We are very grateful for his work and support of the peer recovery community.

Currently, I work for [RecoveryPeople](#) as their policy director and we have some concerns regarding protection and fidelity of our peer-directed organizations. I have included our peer policy fellow, Chelsea Biggerstaff, as she has direct experience in this area.

Would you have some time to meet with us in the next week or so? We are located in Round Rock and happy to meet virtually or in-person.

Please let me know if there is a time we could meet and if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time.



Meetings with  
Staffers-  
Legislature's front line  
workers!

# Staffers are people, too

- Be mindful of their time;
- Be polite;
- Let them know why you asked to meet with them;
- Tell them your issue;
- Connect with them through an experience;
- Let them know what you would like them to do (or not do) about it;
- Be a resource!

\*\*\* Follow up with a thank you email and brief recap. \*\*\*



# Testimony

**Be  
Prepared  
and  
Be Patient**

## Preparation is KEY

- Understanding the committee process
- Write what you are going to say
- Practice, Practice, Practice
- Keep to your time limit
- Offer to be a resource

## What to expect on the day of the hearing:

- Register to testify
- Sit, wait, hurry
- Appearance- first impressions
- Stay nourished and hydrated

# Basics of Testimony

What goes into testimony?

- Name
- Bill # and Position
- Why it matters
- What you want

[HB 3331- Patient Brokering, 87th](#)

[HB 544- Recovery housing, 87th](#)

A great resource for testimony and prep: [Equality Texas](#)

# Legislative Updates

Committee Assignments have been made

Sign up for alerts in [Texas Legislature Online](#)

Bills are beginning to be assigned to committees

Meetings are scheduled quickly

Bills of Note: <https://recoverypeople.org/88th-texas-legislative-session-2023/>

- HB 299- recovery housing
- HB 248- Patient brokering and exploitation
- HB 1987- regulation of structure sober living

# Let's connect!

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