

Fighting OPA Legislation

Quick Reference Guide

BEFORE A THREAT APPEARS

1. Build Relationships Now

- Introduce yourself to lawmakers in your district
- Share patient stories, dental images and instruments
- Attend fundraisers to show support; offer your expertise as a resource
- **Goal:** Every legislator should know their local dental hygienists by name

2. Strengthen Your State Association

- Show up session after session
- Develop strong leaders and intentional mentoring
- Maintain a legislative agenda and respected lobby team
- Push proactive legislation (self-regulation, expanded scope)

3. Connect with ADHA Early

- Schedule calls with ADHA staff before OPA language appears
- Plan proactive legislation for your state
- Use ADHA's model legislation and advocacy resources

WHEN A THREAT EMERGES

4. Call ADHA—Immediately

- Assess the language, risks and strategic response together
- Activate national partners, VoterVOICE and social media
- Coordinate testimony and media outreach

5. Educate Lawmakers Like Patients

- Host an oral health day at the legislature
- Bring typodonts, scalers and hand instruments
- Let students and new grads share their concerns
- Be patient—many lawmakers have never seen an RDH at work

6. Show Up in Person

- Social posts support advocacy but don't replace it
- Be present day after day: offices, hearing rooms, everywhere
- Submit official written testimony

WHEN IT GETS HARD

7. Lean on Your Team

- Trust your association's lobbyist
- Coordinate with paid staff and volunteers
- You cannot do this alone

8. Do Not Quit

- Expect setbacks and even personal attacks
- Do not take it personally
- Keep standing up for patients and the profession

9. Do Not Compromise Patient Protection

When compromises weaken protections, say **NO**.

- No public harm
- No language that diminishes expertise
- No fear-based policymaking

10. Use ADHA's Model Legislation

Go on the offense. Fight for what you do want.

- Recognizes RDHs as primary prevention providers
- Promotes professional autonomy
- Honors education, skill sets and clinical judgment
- Places dental hygienists in every setting where health happens

RESOURCES

Advocacy Action Center: adha.org/TakeAction

OPA Information: adha.org/OPA

Contribute to Advocacy: adha.org/Contribute

General Advocacy Inquiries: advocacy@adha.net

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