**Written and Oral Testimony Guide**

**How to Find Legislation to Write About**

You can choose a bill (legislation) that is before Congress in Washington DC, or that is before the Massachusetts state legislature or if you live in another state, before your state legislature. The bill you choose should have implications for cost, quality, and/or access to health care.

For example, you may want to testify on a health reform bill that is before Congress, like a Medicare for All proposal. You can be for or against or recommend some modifications to the legislation.  You can see examples of actual testimony at the links on the Moodle page.

Or you may want to choose a bill before a state legislature. In Massachusetts, go to the state legislature's website and look for legislation listed under one of the Joint Committees like Public Health, Health Care Financing, Children and Families, Elder Affairs

Mental Health and Substance Use.  The Mass. Legislature's website is at [Malegislature.gov](https://www.malegislature.gov/).

Another way to identify legislation is to go to the website of an advocacy organization/special interest group and select a bill on the legislative agenda of that group.  It can be a national organization (like the American Public Health Association) or one that is state-specific (like the Mass. Public Health Association). Many interest groups have both a national organization (that lobbies for federal legislation) and a state affiliate (that lobbies for state legislation). There are many nursing interest groups on the federal level, such as the American Nurses Association, and Nurses United, and they usually have state affiliates.

**Guidelines for Written Testimony**

(3-5 pages long, double spaced, 12 font Times Roman)

**Introduce yourself!**

Include your full name, and the name of the organization you are representing. Assuming you are testifying on a health care issue, say you are an RN, or a student nurse, a health administration student, and/or state what you do professionally, if applicable. You may have some other expertise worth sharing personal or professional. – if you are the parent of a disabled child testifying on disability legislation, say so.

**What does the legislation do, what is your opinion and why, and what are you recommending legislators do?**

At the beginning of your testimony, state clearly what the legislation does and your position on it. Are you there to speak for it, or against it, or recommend some changes? Do not assume the committee members are familiar with the legislation, so a brief explanation of what the legislation does is needed.

What is the rationale for your position? For example, why the legislation is needed, or not needed, or why it should be changed and how? In this section, you should provide supporting information for your position, including evidence, statistics, and make other cogent arguments. This should not be just about your opinion or your emotional reaction to a policy issue. You need to back up your position with facts and supporting evidence. What are its implications for improving health care? Use APA citations and references. Watch the sources you are citing – use credible sources!

Make recommendations to legislators on how you want legislators to act in relation to the legislation - oppose or support it; make changes in it or proceed with caution because of certain concerns with it that you have raised with them.

**Thank you!**

Thank members of the legislative committee for listening to you and let them know that you can be contacted for more information (your contact information should be at the end of your written testimony).

**Guidelines for Oral Testimony**

* Introduce yourself and the organization you are representing.
* Do NOT read your written testimony – make a few notes to refer to, if needed.
* Summarize your testimony in 2 – 3 minutes.
* Look at the committee members and speak loudly and clearly.
* Thank the committee members and ask if they have any questions.

Please refer to the [Grading Rubric](https://lmscontent.embanet.com/RC/MSHA/HP609/Rubrics/HP609_Testimony_Presentation_Rubric.html) for details on how this activity will be graded.