



"Making Behavioral Health a Community Priority"

Adopt a Legislator!

Politics is personal. Politics is about relationships. Political advocacy is about developing relationships by getting personal.

Our legislators and policy makers work for us. Sometimes it doesn't feel like it, but they are elected by us, and our tax dollars pay for the work they do.

Behavioral health matters to us. Behavioral health matters to everyone, but people don't always know why it matters, or why it should matter. Because we are an enlightened bunch, we are in a unique position to share why behavioral health matters, and why our legislators should care. Education is the key to stigma reduction and to informed governmental spending.

We encourage you to adopt your legislators. How, may you ask, does one adopt a legislator? It's simple! And, it's fun!

First, find out who your legislators are. Go to the legislative website:
<http://legis.state.nm.us/lcs/legislatorsearch.asp>

You will need to enter your zip code, and you may need to also enter your zip code plus the 4 digit identifier. If you don't know the last 4 numbers, you can find them on a piece of mail sent to you, or you can find them at the postal service website:
<http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp>

You can also adopt your city counselor or county commissioner. To find out who your city counselor is, go here:
<http://www.cabq.gov/council/councilors>

To find out who your county commissioner is, go here:
<http://bernco.gov/live/departments.asp?dept=2350>

If you do not live in Albuquerque or Bernalillo County you can contact your local county clerk. For a listing of NM county clerks, go here:
<http://www.sos.state.nm.us/sos-CClerk.html>

Once you know who these people are, you are ready to adopt! This is where you get to be creative. Think of the things that make you feel special, noticed, loved. Remember, politicians are people, too. They get catered to an awful lot, but they have heart strings—pull!

- ◆ Write a letter, introduce yourself, your animals, and your family
- ◆ Tell your story
- ◆ Get or make some cards, just to say “have a great day, and we are grateful for the work you do”
- ◆ Send pictures
- ◆ Send holiday cards
- ◆ Keep them updated on your progress, or on the progress of your clients or your family
- ◆ If things are difficult because of the system, tell them
- ◆ If something good happens, tell them that, too
- ◆ Pretend your legislator is like a pen pal and share, share, share
- ◆ Invite your legislator to coffee or lunch
- ◆ Ask your legislator if there is anything you can do to help them
- ◆ Get creative—have fun!

If you need any help with any of this, we can help!!

By working together we can make behavioral health a community priority and we can let our legislature know that behavioral health matters!

