

2024
MISSOURI ORAL HEALTH
POLICY CONFERENCE

Capturing the Future

DoubleTree by Hilton, Jefferson City, MO

March 7-8, 2024

oral health advocacy skill development – working with legislators +

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This presentation will be recorded



- The Missouri Coalition for Oral Health is a non-profit advocacy agency - a statewide network of advocates working to improve Missouri's oral health through system change
- Mission - To improve oral health with all Missourians by advocating for sound public policy
- Vision – Oral Health for all Missourians

Policy Goals

- Reduction of tobacco use and vaping to improve Missouri oral health
- Incorporation of oral health care in school-based health care
- Expanded coverage of and access to silver diamine fluoride for all Missourians
- Improvement of MO HealthNet by implementing best practices and system improvements to increase provider participation and MO HealthNet participant usage
- Inclusion of a comprehensive dental benefit in MO HealthNet
- Protection and expansion of public water system fluoridation
- Expansion of access to dental sealants for children without routine dental care
- Inclusion of a comprehensive dental benefit in Medicare
- Implementation of a statewide public awareness campaign about the importance of oral health to overall health
- Strengthening provider networks and expansion of service delivery of dental care for high-risk, vulnerable, MO HealthNet and uninsured populations, including people with disabilities and special health care needs
- Incorporation of oral health in the patient-centered medical home

Advocacy

- Advocacy is raising awareness about an issue that is important to you.
- Contacts with state and federal legislators, city council members, county commission members, elected and appointed government members show that oral health is important to you and to Missourians.
- Advocacy can also be about specifically requesting an action, such as passing a law, funding a project or program, or changing a regulation.
- Decision-makers need to know that oral health is important to Missourians and important to you .
- Without your voice it is easy for decision-makers to forget about oral health.

Prepare

- Before making contact with a decision-maker, do some background research
 - You can find a great deal of information online
 - Most important information to find: the interest of the decision-maker
 - This will help you understand their priorities
- Look up your Senator and Representative ahead of time
 - Committee assignments
 - Legislation
 - Bio
 - Photo
 - Address & Room Number
 - Phone Number

Your Voice Matters

- Most decision-makers understand that they are working in a government position to serve the public interest – elected or otherwise
- Most Legislators like to hear from constituents and concerned citizens
- Most will listen to you
- Think of your legislative contact in terms of longevity - Making a connection now can help later
- Your voice as an individual citizen can carry more weight than lobbyists or professional advocacy staff

Talking with Legislators

- Introduce yourself and say you are with the Missouri Coalition for Oral Health
- Refer to legislators as Senator x or Representative x
- Legislators expect to be asked to do something
- Expect interruptions
- Legislators often have many issues in mind – they may talk with you about something that is important to them
 - If you wish to engage with them on issues not related to Coalition priorities, try to make it clear that you are speaking as an individual at that point
 - Your conversation on an unrelated issue may have an impact on the conversation about oral health

Talking with Legislators

- If you cannot talk with the legislator, talking with the LA (Legislative Assistant) or other staff and interns can be just as beneficial
 - Never refer to an LA as a secretary
- Staff members can make sure your issue is raised and remembered
- If you get a question you cannot answer that is fine – note it on the Feedback survey
- Making a connection on a personal level is good
- Always be polite and thank them for their time

Writing to Legislators

- Most communication now happens by email
- MCOH recommends writing a letter to your legislators
- Letters are somewhat unusual and more likely to make an impression
 - A hand-written note is likely to stand out, but ensure it is legible
- Be clear and to the point
- Introduce yourself
- If you get a response, please drop us a note at info@oralhealthmissouri.org, particularly if there is follow-up that needs to happen
- Be polite
- You may include information on the 2024 Legislative priorities

2024 Legislative Priorities

- Support SB 778 and HB 2075 - Establishes the Dental and Dental Hygienist Compact
- SB 778, Sen. Karla Eslinger (R, District 33, Majority Caucus Whip)
https://www.senate.mo.gov/24info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=382
- HB 2075, Rep. Jeff Coleman (R, Grain Valley, District 032)
<https://house.mo.gov/Bill.aspx?bill=HB2075&year=2024&code=R>
- These identical bills will allow Missouri to participate in an interstate dental compact. Passage of SB 778 & HB 2075 will lead to increased access to care through removing barriers to care provision by dental professionals from other states. Access to dental care is impacted by a limited number of providers throughout Missouri, but most acutely felt in rural areas of the state. Passage of SB 778 & HB 2075 will help to increase access to oral health care, an essential health care need. Good overall health is not possible without good oral health.

2024 Legislative Priorities

- Support HB 1621, Rep. Doyle Justus (R, Troy, District 041)
- This bill supports local decision-making by ensuring information is provided to the decision-makers by the local health department.
<https://house.mo.gov/Bill.aspx?bill=HB1621&year=2024&code=R>
- Support SB 1215, Sen. Steven Roberts (D, District 5, Minority Caucus Whip)
- Creates provisions relating to vaccine administration by dentists. This will allow for greater access to vaccines and will be a convenience for patients seeking vaccines.
https://www.senate.mo.gov/24info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=9

2024 Legislative Priorities

- Let us know about legislative contacts by filling out the feedback form and turning it in at the conference registration desk at the hotel

Schedule/Impromptu

- Please consider setting appointments with your Senator and Representative
- Even with an appointment, you may miss your Senator or Representative
 - Spend time with the LA or staffer/intern if you can
 - You may find the office locked – come back later
- The LA may pull the legislator off the floor to speak with you or take you to a committee room
- Please also visit other legislators - If you have extra time, it is OK to politely walk into another legislator's office, introduce yourself and ask to speak with the Senator or Representative
 - Be especially polite and thank them for their time

MCOH Overview

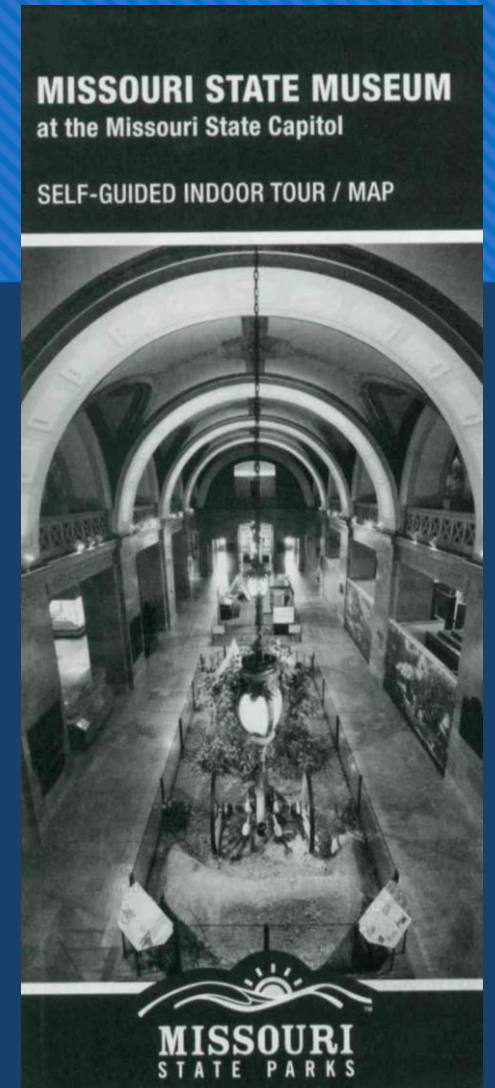
- This brief document can be left with each office
- It serves to establish that -
 - Oral health is important as a policy issue
 - Oral health policy can and should be addressed by policy-makers
 - Oral health of interest as a policy issue to many organizations and individuals
- Logos on back page help to create leverage and draw attention

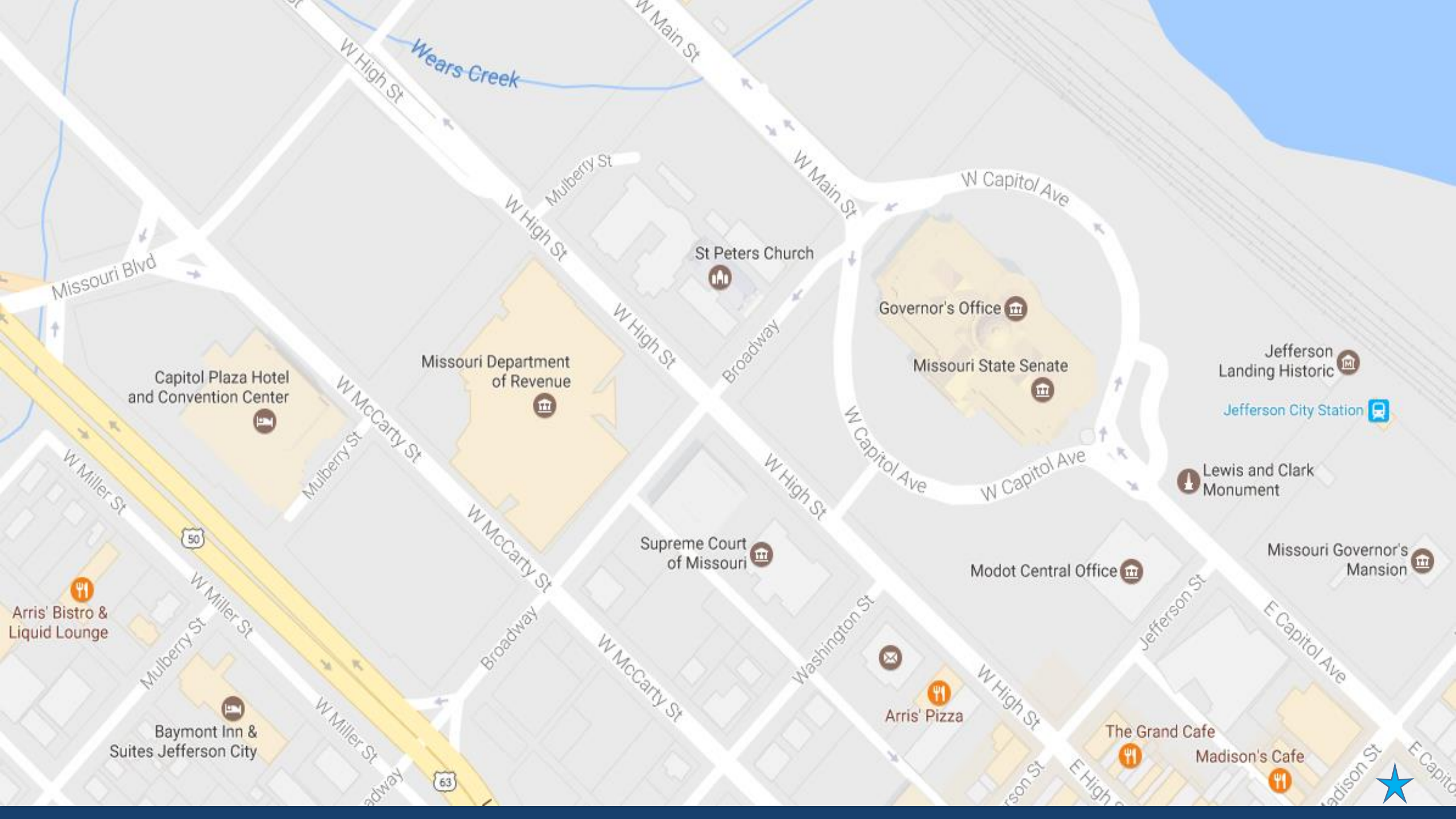
Logistics

- Parking can be challenging near the Capitol – metered parking on nearby streets – read signs closely – some free parking – some metered parking is only 1 hour – parking places you cannot use - Police are vigilant & reliably ticket
- Walking up from the DoubleTree may be easiest option – free parking at the hotel/surrounding streets

Logistics

- Enter the Capitol building through doors under stairs on south side - facing High St and the Supreme Court Building – opposite MO River side – watch for signs
- You will go through security
 - similar to airport security - allow extra time
- Once through security you can find elevators near the ends of each hallway to your right and left – elevator straight ahead on the other side of building
- You can take the stairs accessed from the hallway, also to your right and left as you exit security and just around the corner from security
- There is a Missouri State Museum tour desk straight ahead from security. They have maps that may be helpful, and legislator lists with room numbers.





Wears Creek

W High St

W Main St

Missouri Blvd

Mulberry St

W Main St

W Capitol Ave

St Peters Church

Governor's Office

Missouri State Senate

Capitol Plaza Hotel and Convention Center

Missouri Department of Revenue

Jefferson Landing Historic

Jefferson City Station

Lewis and Clark Monument

Supreme Court of Missouri

Modot Central Office

Missouri Governor's Mansion

Arris' Bistro & Liquid Lounge

50

W McCarty St

W High St

W Capitol Ave

Jefferson St

E Capitol Ave

W Miller St

Broadway

Washington St

W High St

E High St

The Grand Cafe

Madison's Cafe

Baymont Inn & Suites Jefferson City

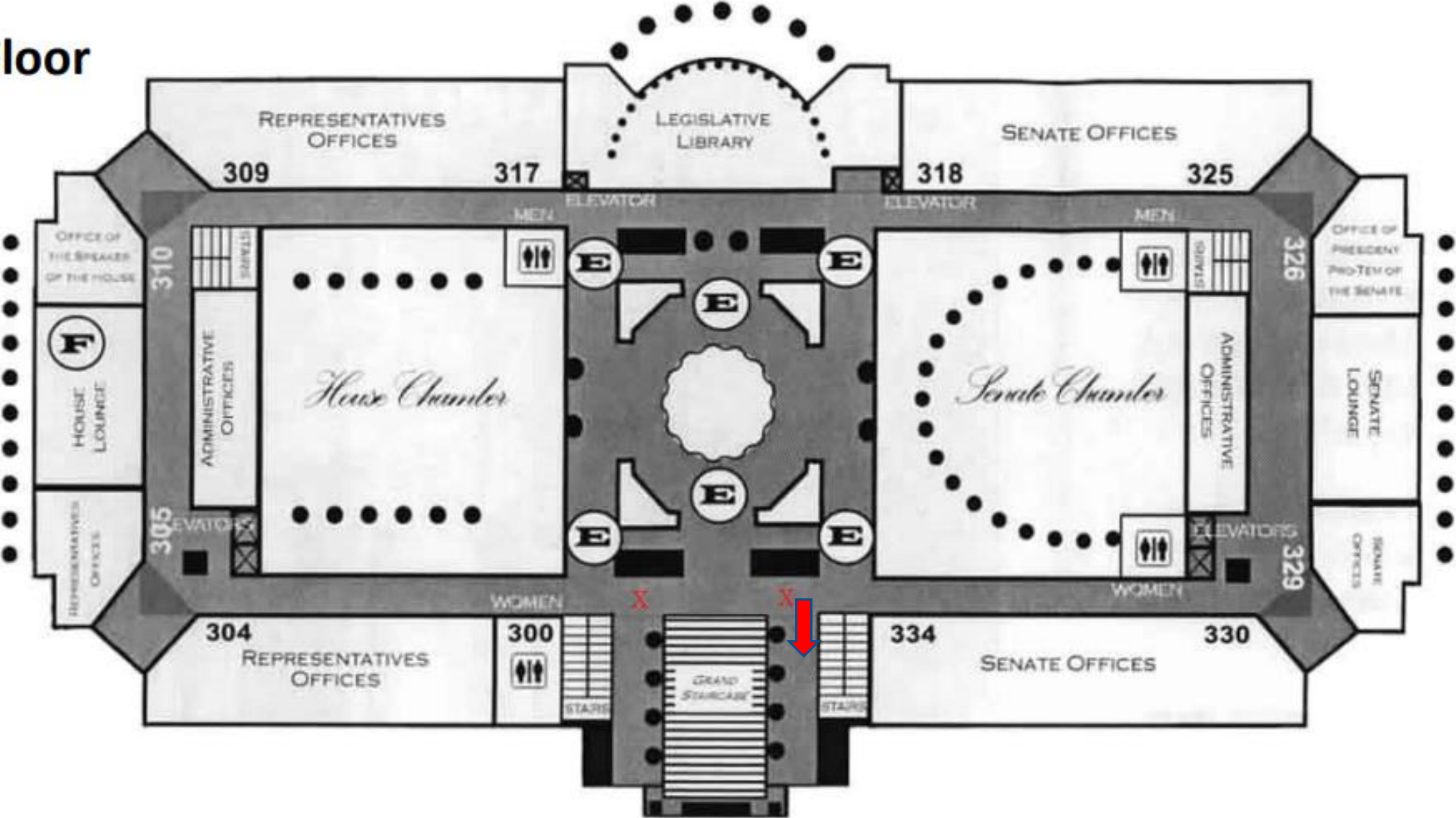
Arris' Pizza

63



MCOH will be in 3rd floor alcove on the Senate side – check to the east of the grand staircase – to the right below

3rd Floor



Logistics

- Gary will be in the rotunda area by about 8 AM & will be there for about 90 minutes - answer questions and provide guidance
- There will be some copies of needed material, but look for material sent to you ahead of time –
 - 2024 Legislative Priorities
 - MCOH Overview
 - Legislative Feedback Form
 - Please watch for a link to the form
 - Include any questions you were unable to address
 - Legislature will usually go into session at 10 AM – consider leaving at that time

Follow Through

- A personal thank-you note will make a great impression
- When you get home, write a thank-you note for each Legislator and/or LA with whom you spoke
- Hand-written notes are unusual and more likely to be read and remembered

The Honorable Senator's First and Last Names

The Honorable Representative's First and Last Names

The State Senate Rm. Room Number

Missouri House of Representatives Rm. Room Number

Jefferson City, MO 65101

Jefferson City MO 65101

- You can find addresses on the House and Senate websites
- If you have questions or need assistance, drop us a line at info@oralhealthmissouri.org

Discussion Questions and a few notes

- What concerns do you have in regards to talking with elected officials?
- What successes and challenges have you had in previous legislative visits?
- How can MCOH better assist you in your advocacy outreach efforts?
- Please note –
 - Your voice can make more of a difference than you have imagined
 - Working together, the sky is the limit
 - There are no bad questions
 - Anxiety about something new is par for the course – expect it – turn it into energy
 - Some attendees have a lot of experience, some have none

info@oralhealthmissouri.org

Thank you for all you do for Missouri oral health!



www.oralhealthmissouri.org

