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truly comprehensive care. One of the things they did to help build their campaign was to reach out to the ACA for assistance with their efforts to pass parity into law.

The ACA was involved in a variety of ways including generating letters, e-mail messages, and calls from ACA members and lobbying the governor's office for a signature.

On July 7, 2006, Rhode Island became the fourth state to pass prosthetic parity into law, a bill to ensure that private health insurance plans will provide medical coverage for orthotic and prosthetic (O&P) devices that equal benefits provided under federal Medicare and Medicaid laws.

### Pennsylvania Lays the Groundwork

Pennsylvania is well on its way to becoming the next state to celebrate a parity victory. The Pennsylvania bill was inspired by Rep. Bernie O'Neill's (R-PA) legislative aide, Nick Antonini, whose son David is an amputee. David's insurance challenges opened the Buck County legislator's eyes to the need for insurance parity for prosthetics.

O'Neill's staff approached the ACA last February to help champion a bill. Over the spring, the ACA helped gather information to draft the bill and reached out to its members to start to build a campaign committee. The ACA then worked with O'Neill's office and local ACA members to organize a series of meetings in the summer of 2006. They convened gatherings in Philadelphia, Middletown, Pittsburgh, and Nanticoke to raise awareness about prosthetic parity and identify leaders and activists to help further the campaign.

The meetings were successful. The bill was introduced during that same week. After the bill was referred to the Health & Human Services Committee, the ACA helped to lobby committee members, generate calls, letters, and e-mail messages as well as prepare testimony for the hearing. The lead sponsor and committee vice-chair publicly committed to passing the bill in 2007.

Pennsylvania stands out as one of the most successful parity campaigns. With a strong campaign committee, it has had over a dozen letters printed in papers throughout the state and recently gathered hundreds of signatures during an incredibly successful petition drive. Pennsylvania is currently planning a rally and lobby day in April.

### Continuing the Fight

Last year eight states introduced bills into their legislatures. In addition to the six states with laws on the book, as of January 2007, an additional 22 states are working with the ACA to develop and implement a campaign plan that will advance prosthetic coverage.

Over half of the country is now part of the campaign for prosthetic parity. It just goes to show that when advocates, individuals, practitioners, and industry partners work together, great things can—and do—happen. **QUICK FIND: EDPAR0407**

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