

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY VISITS

The following Advocacy Tip Sheet stems from knowledge I learned attending grassroots advocacy seminars, legislative visits, and suggestions from lobbyists and other professionals. Thanks to Lobbyist Caren Robinson, AkPha lobbyist, and Lis Houchen, Regional Director, State Government Affairs, NACDS, for their useful and practical input.

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BE PREPARED

- Limit your topics to one or two, max of three per visit.
- Define the issue and have ready all important facts.
- Decide and outline “talking points” prior to visit.
- Anticipate questions; decide answers prior to visit.
- Immediately share your talking points.
- Be aware of the time allotted. Most appointments are 15 minutes.
- Stay on message. Stay short, focused and on topic.
- Before leaving, ask the legislator/staffer, his/her position on issues.
- If response is uncertain, immediately volunteer to provide additional information or return with information for further dialogue.

BE REAL

- Be honest, courteous, and positive.
- Tell your story: How will the issues impact your practice or your patient’s health and wellbeing?
- Find areas of agreement to help legislators understand your points.
- Never promise anything you cannot deliver.
- If you cannot answer a question, offer to find/provide the answer.

FOLLOW UP

- Send a Thank You letter. Include requested information.
- If legislator did not commit on this visit, contact office to update.
- Keep the relationship going with frequent contacts.
- Prepare for the next legislative session

TOP 10 RULES WHEN WORKING WITH LEGISLATORS

- 1 Think about/know what you wish to accomplish.
- 2 Know what you are talking about.
- 3 If you don’t have an answer, don’t make it up. Find out and provide.
- 4 Ask for the legislator’s help, and their vote.
- 5 Target your efforts.
- 6 Show R*E*S*P*E*C*T for legislators, staffers, yourself, and others.
- 7 Remember: All politics is Local.
- 8 Be yourself; be positive.
- 9 Stick to a concise THREE minutes explanation of talking points.
- 10 Have fun!

TOP 10 MISTAKES

- 1 Whining, arguing, acting like a jerk.
- 2 Too long-winded.
- 3 Unorganized.
- 4 Bad-mouthing other legislators.
- 5 Bad-mouthing legislators family or personal affronts.
- 6 Accusing a legislator of wrongdoing.
- 7 Underestimating a legislator.
- 8 Not following-up.
- 9 Not remembering that the worm turns.
- 10 Not thanking those who helped you. ■