

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY



Things to Do:

- ✓ Start and end the meeting on time.
- ✓ Thank your legislator for meeting with you.
- ✓ Use the proper form of address for your legislator (Senator or Representative).
- ✓ Know the issues and be prepared to discuss opposing viewpoints.
- ✓ Stay focused on the priorities and manage your time to ensure you cover the main points. On average, legislator meetings will only last 15 to 30 minutes.
- ✓ Keep your comments brief and be a good listener.
- ✓ Share a personal story about how the issue affects your patients or your ability to care for your patients.
- ✓ Be specific about the action you are requesting from your legislator.
- ✓ Always be professional, courteous, and polite even when you disagree.
- ✓ Follow up promptly with any additional information you have promised.
- ✓ Send a handwritten note thanking your legislator after your meeting.

Mistakes to Avoid:

- ⊗ Do not assume your legislator is an expert on every issue.
- ⊗ Do not "talk down" to your legislator; instead, explain the issue and your position as if he or she is a patient.
- ⊗ Do not assume you know your legislator's position.
- ⊗ Do not expect a commitment on the spot. Effective advocacy often requires multiple conversations.
- ⊗ Do not give inaccurate information. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so and plan to follow up later.
- ⊗ Do not be abrasive or argumentative.
- ⊗ Do not forget there is always another side to the issue.
- ⊗ Do not make derogatory comments about your legislator's political affiliation or make other personal remarks that could alienate them.
- ⊗ Do not run down the opposition. Legislators often have family or friends who are on the opposite side of your issue.
- ⊗ Do not burn bridges. A legislator who disagrees with you today may be your biggest champion tomorrow.
- ⊗ Do not fail to say "thank you" even if you did not get the results you wanted.



VIRTUAL MEETING ETIQUETTE

- Join the meeting five minutes before the start time to resolve any technical or connectivity problems on your end.
- Dress in professional or business casual attire even if you are not in the office. Consider wearing your White Coat.
- Choose a quiet location in your home or office where you can limit interruptions.
- Make sure your background is neat and free of visual distractions. [View this tutorial](#) on how you can download and install a KMA virtual background for Zoom.
- Turn on your video and position your camera at eye level, if possible, to better engage with your legislator.
- Be aware of your audio and video settings at all times. Check that your microphone is unmuted before speaking.
- Limit background noise when your microphone is not muted. Avoid activities that create additional noise, such as shuffling papers. Be sure to silence your phone and turn off notifications and reminders on your computer or tablet.
- Avoid multi-tasking. Give your legislator your full attention and listen carefully just as you would at an in-person meeting.