



Congressional District Work periods are excellent opportunities for you to reach out to your legislators about important family medicine issues. Senators and Members of Congress are home in their districts to attend a variety of events -- and your office or clinic could be one of their stops. Federal lawmakers always are looking for information about our health care system -- and, as a practicing family physician, you know what's happening in health care. You live it every day. You know what works. And what doesn't.

What better way to give your lawmakers a first-hand look at the value of primary care than inviting them to your facility for a visit? These work periods are the perfect time to host a site visit for your Member of Congress or Senator.

How do I schedule a visit with my lawmaker?

1. Contact the district or Washington office of your legislator. Use the [Congressional Directory](#) on Speak Out for contact information.
2. Ask to speak with the scheduler at either office. Identify yourself as a constituent and family physician.
3. Extend the invitation to the lawmaker and any staff members who may be interested. Provide several dates when you would be available to host the visit.
4. Follow-up the phone call with a written invitation. Don't be discouraged if it takes several invitations before he or she accepts your offer.

What should I do to prepare?

1. Contact the AAFP. The Government Relations office can provide you with biographical and legislative information.
2. Concentrate your discussions on three key points or less. While you will use the AAFP legislative one-pagers as background, your legislator will be mainly interested in your personal experience.
3. Develop a schedule that allows enough time to tour your practice and to enjoy informal discussions.
4. Prepare a fact sheet for the legislator with relevant local statistics such as the number of patient visits, number of staff, reasons for visits, etc.

What do I do on the day of the tour?

1. Brief the legislator on the role of family medicine in the community and then talk specifically about your practice, clinic, school, or residency program.
2. Include the following activities if appropriate: tour of the facility, introductions and discussions with staff, discussions with patients or their family members.

4. Keep the visit focused while encouraging questions and open discussion. Keep close track of time.
5. Try to leave one or two clear messages or impressions with the lawmaker.
6. Provide the legislator with materials on the AAFP's legislative agenda. Contact the AAFP Government Relations office for issue papers.

What do I need to do to follow up?

1. Send a thank-you letter and any photographs taken during the visit.
2. Report back to the AAFP Government Relations office and your state chapter. Let us know if any follow-up might be necessary in Washington.
3. Keep in regular contact with your lawmaker and their staff. Establish yourself as a resource for the legislator.

Hosting a visit can help you establish a personal relationship with your legislator. I hope you take advantage of an upcoming recess to host a site visit at your facility.

Congressional District Work Periods:

April 6 - April 17	Spring District Work Period
May 25 - May 29	Memorial Day District Work Period
June 29 - July 3	Independence Day District Work Period
August 3 - September 4	Summer District Work Period

Sincerely,
Erica Fischer
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