

## Best Practices for a Virtual Meeting with a Member of Congress

### Preparing for a meeting with a member of Congress or staff

Prior to meeting a member of Congress or his or her staff, evaluate that office's priorities and any recent efforts related to your issue. Consider how you might convey the following elements in telling your story, highlighting your personal connections to the office.

1. **Make a geographic connection.** Mention where you're from.
2. **Acknowledge the member's work.** Summarize the member's connection to the issue.
3. **Establish urgency.** Provide an overview of why this meeting is important now.
4. **Provide additional details.** Share your story and your call to action, offering access to more information as appropriate.
5. **Initiate future contact.** Reference any upcoming outreach that you may take part in.

### Dos and don'ts in a meeting with a member of Congress or staff

Advocates can leverage meetings with members of Congress and staff to communicate their positions and build relationships. Because members and staff are busy, advocates should keep the following in mind to get the most out of their meetings.

#### DO

- **Be prompt.** Inform the scheduler and/or staff if you're going to be late.
- **Be flexible.** Prepare to meet virtually with either the member or staff.
- **Stay on topic.** Raise only the issue you were scheduled to discuss with the member or staff to keep the meeting focused and persuasive.
- **Provide leave behind information.** These virtual resources include relevant information for the member and serve as a resource for staff as the issue moves through Congress.

#### DON'T

- **Make it political.** Do *not* discuss elections or campaign support in your meeting. Respect the member's political views and relationships outside the issue at hand.

### After your meeting

As physicians and community leaders, advocates can become trusted resources for lawmakers and staff by following up and keeping in touch.

1. **Always send a thank-you email.** Thank the member or staff for their time and include a reminder of the meeting topic for the office's reference.
2. **Tell the AAFP how your meeting went.** Don't forget to [report back](#) any follow-up items. Our lobbyists will follow up with the office.
3. **Attend events in the district.** Attend virtual town halls or other events to increase visibility and build rapport with your member of Congress and his or her district staff.
4. **Stay in touch.** Don't over-communicate with members, but do pass along new information about your issue as it's released.