

## **LOBBYING “DOs” and “DON’Ts”**

### **DO**

1. Do spend time in developing relationships with Members of Congress and their staff.
2. Do say thank you for any support that a congressional office has provided to you or the PA profession.
3. Do learn Members’ committee assignments and where their specialties lie.
4. Do present the need for what you’re asking the Member of Congress to do. Use data or cases you know.
5. Do relate situations in his/her home state or district.
6. Do ask the Representative’s or Senator’s position and why.
7. Do — in the case of voting records — ask why he/she voted a particular way.
8. Do show openness to the knowledge of counterarguments and respond to them.
9. Do admit it when you don’t know the answer to a question. Offer to try to find out the answer and send information back to the office.
10. Do spend time with a Member whose position is against yours. You can lessen the intensity of the opposition and perhaps change it.

### **DON’T**

1. Don’t overload a Congressional visit with too many issues.
2. Don’t confront, threaten, pressure or beg.
3. Don’t be argumentative. Speak with calmness and commitment so as not to put him/her on the defensive.
4. Don’t overstate the case. Members are very busy and you’re apt to lose their attention if too wordy.
5. Don’t expect Members of Congress to be specialists. Their schedules and work loads tend to make them generalists.
6. Don’t be put off by smokescreens or long-winded answers. Bring the Members back to the point. Maintain control of the meeting.
7. Don’t make promises you can’t deliver.
8. Don’t be afraid to take a stand on the issues.
9. Don’t shy away from meetings with legislators with known views opposite your own.
10. Don’t be offended if a legislator is unable to meet and requests that you meet with his/her staff.

## **SCHEDULING CONGRESSIONAL VISITS**

Scheduling congressional visits is not difficult, but first-timers often request guidance. Following are the basic steps for making appointments with legislators.

1. Call or email the legislator’s office. All legislators’ offices may be reached by calling the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121. (The operator will answer the call saying, “Capitol Switchboard;” the caller requests, “Will you please connect me to Senator/ Representative \_\_\_\_\_’s office.”)

2. Once connected to the legislator's office, the PA should request to speak with the legislator's scheduler or appointments' secretary.
3. The PA should identify herself as a physician assistant who is a constituent of the legislator, let the scheduler know that he or she'll be visiting Washington, DC and ask for an appointment with the legislator.
4. If asked whether there are any issues that she would like to address, the PA should indicate that she would like to share information on federal health issues that currently affect PAs. Generally, schedulers will go out of their way to try to set up an appointment between a legislator and constituent. However, legislators' schedules can be very tight, and the PA may be told that the legislator is not available. If this happens, the PA should ask to meet with the staff person who handles health issues.
5. The PA should confirm the time and location of the meeting. If the PA is meeting with a staff person, she should also confirm the name, before thanking the scheduler and ending the call.

\*- PAs should try to avoid scheduling more than 2 meetings/ hour and need to allow between 20 - 30 minutes to walk from the House to the Senate (and vice versa) for meetings.