

## How to Set Up Your Congressional Visits

### **Guidance on Congressional Meetings:**

To reach a congressional office, call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected with the office you want or call the office directly. For direct dial numbers, refer to the attached phone lists for the House of Representatives and the Senate. Once you reach the intended office, ask to speak with the lawmaker's scheduler. Request a 20-30 minute meeting on May 20. Indicate that you are a constituent and an ACP member who would like to discuss health care reform and other practice issues **with the Member**. The legislative assistant who handles health will probably participate in the meeting and may stand-in for the Member if an unanticipated conflict arises. But, again, to schedule a meeting with the Member, you will need to speak with either the Member's personal assistant or scheduler.

Follow-up the phone request with a letter written on ACP stationery, if you are a Governor or Regent, or stationery used for your practice. Refer to the sample letter enclosed in this packet. Use the enclosed "Appointments Arranged Form" to keep track of your schedule.

If you are bringing several ACP members with you, be sure to have the member who is a constituent of the House member take a lead role in that meeting. When the appointment is made, it also would be appropriate to mention that someone from "the district" will be participating. In putting your delegation together, you may even want to consider asking someone to attend if he or she is a constituent of an important Member of Congress such as the Chairman or Ranking Member of a key health committee or subcommittee.

Most meetings should last about 20-30 minutes. Try to schedule your Senate meetings together and House meetings together since Senate office buildings are located on one side of the Capitol and House office buildings are located on the other (see enclosed map of Capitol Hill). It is roughly a 15 minute walk from the House office buildings to the Senate office buildings (not including time to go through security). You may want to divide up the meetings if there is more than one member of your delegation. If there is more than one of you from a state, please coordinate setting up appointments. In most cases the Governor will be the lead in the meeting unless there is an ACP member who is a constituent.

Finally, while we strongly encourage you to be persistent in seeking a meeting with the Senator or Representative (you are a voter!), an appointment with health staff is an acceptable alternative. Staff members are responsible for advising lawmakers on health policy and legislation, among other issues, and therefore are quite capable of discussing issues with you.

### **Background on Congressional Committees:**

In the Senate, the important health committees are Finance and Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP). In the House, Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce are the primary health committees. The members of the Health Subcommittees of the Ways and Means and the Energy and Commerce Committees are especially important targets, due to their jurisdiction over specific health issues. The Labor/Health and Human Services Subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees determine levels of discretionary funding for AHRQ, health professions programs, NIH and many other important health programs. The Veterans' affairs subcommittees determine funding levels for veterans' medical care and research.

In addition to all 100 senators, members of these key House Committees are considered ACP priority targets. Members of the House and Senate leadership (list enclosed) also are critical contacts. While all members are important, the enclosed target list should help you assess which are the most important. Lists of committee members also are contained in the pocket-size 111<sup>th</sup> Congressional Directory, which will be distributed prior to Leadership Day. To find out who your member of congress is, enter your zip code on the Legislative Action Center (LAC), accessible through the Advocacy section of ACP Online, or at <http://www.acponline.org/lac>. To log on to the LAC, enter your email address and ACP as the password.).