

Checklist for Delivering Your Message

Increase the effectiveness of your meetings with lawmakers

1. Tell them who you are and the city in which you live/work: Tell them a little about yourself, your practice and the community in which you live/work. You want them to know you as a person and a constituent from home, not just an advocate for physician issues. Make sure they know you represent the American College of Physicians, so that they connect you to the College's lobbyists from the Washington Office.
2. Include an anecdote or story: Bring your issues to life in human terms. Tell them about your patients and colleagues—real people in his/her district or state who are or will be affected by the issues/policies you raise. Make it come alive with details, names, dates and places.
3. Tell them what you want: Make sure they know exactly what you came for: vote yes, vote no, co-sponsor, speak to someone on the committee, co-sponsor a bill, etc. Members of Congress want a recommendation from you. They want to know what you would like them to do.
4. Tell them why it is a good idea: Have several sound reasons why they should support the College's position, especially focusing on the impact the issue will have on the home district/state.
5. Ask for support: Be direct and specific. "Will you co-sponsor a bill or sign on to a letter? etc."
6. Remember to follow-up with thank you emails to staff/lawmakers, which can be done through the Web-based portal where you find your meeting schedules. They will appreciate the thank you and it serves as a reminder of who you are and what you discussed during your meeting. The letter in the portal will be pre-populated with a thank you message that can be customized and it will include a link to all the issue briefs for the event.
7. Follow-up with ACP's Washington Office: The Washington Office would like you to complete the Congressional Meeting Reporting Form for each office you visited, which is available electronically through the portal. Please send any additional follow-up to Shuan Tomlinson at stomlinson@acponline.org.