



Scheduling In-District Congressional Meetings

Nothing replaces direct interaction between a constituent and their member of Congress when attempting to influence policy. Constituent meetings help members of Congress get a crucial sense of constituent priorities and helps make the issues in question a priority. As a physician constituent, your member of Congress wants to meet with you.

Mechanics of Scheduling a District Meeting, Virtual Meeting or Site Visit:

- 1) Contact the district office or appropriate scheduler, looping in the District Director if needed.
- 2) Be very clear on your ask and make it compelling – relay what is in it for the member (exposure, contact with influential voters and potential supporters, optics of working with physicians, etc.)
- 3) First priority should be an in-person meeting with the member, but limitations attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic are likely, therefore virtual Zoom meetings or a site visit are potential alternatives.
- 4) Be firm that you want to meet with the member of Congress rather than staff.
- 5) If in-person meetings at a district office are not possible, offer to host the member via Zoom.
- 6) If considering a site visit at a physician office, make the option compelling by emphasizing the importance of seeing the community. Think about effective optics – wearing scrubs, white coats, equipment and patients.
- 7) Have a specific goal for the meeting.
- 8) Be flexible, the schedules of members of Congress are very hectic.
- 9) Once scheduled, get the cell number and name of your contact for last-minute communications.

Preparing for Meeting/Messaging:

- 1) Do your homework – read background material from the AAOS Office of Government Relations, the member's biography and look up the staff on LinkedIn.
- 2) Make sure the messaging is simple and consistent, tell personal stories (they are more likely to remember this) and practice, practice, practice.
- 3) Be positive, humanize, connect, personalize, find commonalities – this is about relationship building.
- 4) Deliver the key message in the first 5 minutes.
- 5) Make sure to relate the issue to the impact on the district or state – why the member should care.
- 6) Always have a clear ask.
- 7) Take photos, post to Twitter, tag the member of Congress and @AAOSAdvocacy!
- 8) Follow-up – remember that this is long-term relationship building.