



Talking Points for an Initial Meeting with a Lawmaker

1. Lawmakers are people from the community they serve. They are generally very approachable and enjoy talking with and helping the people who live in their districts. They also will appreciate the opportunity to hear some of your concerns about local and state issues.
2. Be sure to convey the importance of health care as an industry. Physician offices are small businesses that have employees, purchase health insurance, and pay taxes. You are a business that has a very considerable amount of expertise in health care.
3. Learn about their background. Due to term limits, a career as a public servant is becoming less and less common. Understanding that a representative or senator was previously a teacher, insurance agent, or even a physician is helpful in understanding their approach to legislation.
4. Don't hold a grudge. No legislator can make everyone happy all of the time. Always look toward the next vote that they could be an ally. Don't be afraid to discuss past issues or votes and why it was contrary to the position of organized medicine. Ask for an opportunity to present your case the next time a similar issue may come up in the legislature, and then move on.
5. Choose a few issues that are important to you and discuss them with your legislator. In many cases, this will be the first time that the lawmaker has heard about an issue. There are thousands of pieces of legislation that are introduced each year; no lawmaker can remember them all. Taking the time to meet personally with your legislator will give important issues greater significance.
6. Learn the issues yourself. The MSMS Action Center at msms.org is a fantastic way to learn about important and timely issues. Ask your colleagues what are some of the problems they face. And, always feel free to contact the Government Relations Staff at MSMS to get a greater understanding of the key issues facing organized medicine.