

# Tips for Conducting Effective Congressional Meetings



## Meeting Expectations

- ✓ Arrive 5-10 minutes early with adequate leave-behind materials on hand.
- ✓ If meeting in a Washington congressional office, in particular, they are small.
  - You may have to meet in hallway or high-traffic area such as the cafeteria.
  - Don't be discouraged – it can still be a productive meeting.
- ✓ You are likely to meet with congressional staff.
  - Approx. 25-30 years old.
  - Very influential with the member of Congress.
- ✓ Be flexible and beware of changes in schedule – caused by votes or hearings (if mtg is in DC) or other meetings running long.

## Meeting Do's and Don'ts

### Introduction & Constituent Connection

**DO:** Address staff formally and with respect.

**DO:** Make constituent or personal connection.

**DON'T:** Assume a meeting with a staffer is less productive than one with a Member.

**DON'T:** Bring up campaign matters; it's illegal!

### Who You Are, What You Do, Why it's Important

**DO:** Give a brief overview of OMS and share personal experiences about what you see in your practice.

- Many congressional staff are likely to have had recent third-molar surgery.

**DO:** Stay on message. Pinpoint the purpose of your meeting and refrain from straying off-topic.

**DON'T:** Assume staffers know about OMS or will feel slighted if you need to catch them up.

- Explain medical terms.
- Keep explanation brief (1-2 minutes).

### Making the Asks

**DO:** Provide staff/legislator with leave-behind talking points to follow along.

**DO:** Ask directly, but politely for co-sponsorship. Thank them if they've already co-sponsored.

**DO:** Consider political party affiliation when discussing each issue.

**DO:** Offer yourself and AAOMS staff as a resource for additional information.

- Provide contact information or personally connect them with AAOMS staff via email.

**DON'T:** Press if they refuse to commit co-sponsorship or convey that they are on the opposite side of the issue.

**DON'T:** Be afraid if they ask questions.

- Refer to the pocket card provided by AAOMS for answers to questions.
- If you're still unclear, offer for AAOMS staff to follow-up.

### Closing & Follow-up

**DO:** Remember to leave the leave-behind materials and your business card.

**DO:** Ask before leaving if the legislator has a free minute to say hello and/or take a photo.

**DO:** Send them a follow-up e-mail, thanking them for their time and again offering up yourself and AAOMS as a resource.

**DON'T:** Leave without their business card.

For more tips on conducting a legislator visit, please check out the [AAOMS Grassroots Toolkit](#).