



Dental Day at the Capitol

Legislative Meeting Tips

Review the following tips to make the greatest impact while speaking to legislators. Your personal visit is the single most effective lobbying technique!

Common Sense Rules of Courtesy and Respect

- Arrive about 5 minutes early.
- Be fair, realistic and reasonable.
- Address your legislator as “Representative” or “Senator”.
- Introduce yourself.
- Ask them a question about themselves.
- Be honest. If you lose your credibility, you won’t get it back.
- Be a good listener. Don’t do all the talking; have a conversation.

Discussing Your Issues

- Be prepared when you arrive: Know what you are going to say.
- Present your opinion, followed by facts, figures and a PERSONAL STORY.
- Know and understand opposing arguments: Be prepared to discuss them.
- Fifteen minutes is a realistic expectation for your meeting:
 - Be brief; don’t let the legislator or staffer sidetrack the meeting.
 - Do not be surprised (or disappointed) if your meeting starts a bit late, is cut short, or you are not able to speak directly to the legislator. Their daily schedule is sometimes in flux or changing.
 - Often it is the legislator’s staff who meet with constituents – treat them in the same manner you would the legislator.
- Never lie, never guess; just say “I don’t know, but I’ll get back to you” and then get back to them.
- Be passionate (not emotional) and never leave in anger. Remember they may be in opposition on one issue but could be your champion on another.

Closing Your Meeting

- Leave when your time is over.
- Ask for a commitment from the legislator to support your position but do not apply pressure or be threatening.

- Have the bill number or bill language itself as well as a short statement or fact sheet to leave behind. If it is in writing, it has a better chance of being remembered.
- Never end with harsh words or personal remarks. You will damage your credibility and hamper further communications.
- Say “Thank You” and indicate you are looking forward to following up on the issue.
- Leave your contact information or business card and offer yourself as a resource to an issue.

After Your Meeting

- Send a brief thank you note (by mail or email).
- Indicate you will be monitoring the issue closely.
- Answer any questions you couldn’t answer in the meeting.
- You may want to personally invite the member and his or her staff to an informal tour of your dental practice.