



Tips to Ensure a Successful Virtual Meeting with Your Legislator

As with many things, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult to advocate for our patients and the pharmacy profession. To protect themselves and their constituents, many legislators are now conducting business remotely. Here are some key steps to take to ensure a successful remote visit with a legislator.

Establishing the Meeting

- Know which bills you would like to discuss
 - [What's New](#) with ASHP Advocacy
- Locate your legislator(s):
 - House of Representatives: [Find Your Representative | house.gov](#)
 - Senate: [U.S. Senate: Senators](#)
- Know your legislator(s) stance on topic(s) of interest
- Plan to have other individuals supporting you during the discussion
- Know the availability of the individuals and understand everyone's availability
- Email or call the legislator offices to request a time to discuss the bills with the legislator and provide them your group's availability

Preparing for the Meeting

- Choose a location that minimizes distractions and provides a professional background
- Establish talking points and questions prior to the meeting while keeping in mind the length of the meeting.
 - Position your key discussion points near the beginning of the meeting.
- Train all participating individuals on the talking points and decide on who is leading the discussion for certain talking points (i.e. provide a summary of the topic, create a short video describing the topics, etc.)
- Test the virtual meeting platform at least a day prior
- Have all individuals in your group join 15 minutes prior to the scheduled meeting to address any technical issues

During the Meeting

- Lead member should ask for permission to take a screenshot of the group for socializing the meeting
- Have the lead member, or designee act as a moderator for the meeting to ensure a smooth transition between topics
- When speaking, focus on the camera not the screen
- Speak clearly and a bit louder than normal conversational tone
- Stay muted when not speaking to minimize potential distractions

After the Meeting

- Debrief with the individuals that participated in the meeting
- Send an email or handwritten letter to the legislator providing a summary of what was learned and thanking them for their time

- Consider tagging and engaging the legislator on social media to thank them and continue discussions on topics of interest

Resources

- Berger K, S Kaplan A. Advocacy during crisis: Maintaining a legislative presence during the COVID-19 pandemic. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*. 2020;77(22):1830-1833.
- Kaplan AS, Berger K. Expanding advocacy to the grassroots level: The New York State model. *Journal of Pharmacy Practice*. 2020
- Schwartzberg J. How to Elevate Your Presence in a Virtual Meeting. *Harvard Business Review*. Published online April 8, 2020.
- Understanding Policy Priorities and Advocacy Opportunities During COVID-19. *American Pharmacist Association*. Published 2020.
- Planning a Virtual Legislative Meeting for Your Advocates. *Public Affairs Council*. Published 2020.

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