



Guidelines for Building Long Lasting and Effective Relationships with Elected Officials

DO:

- Prior to your meeting, study the elected official's biography and the committees that they serve on and the issues they support. In addition, research what social media they are on, follow them.
- Be prepared. Know your topic/bills that you will be talking about.
- Bring plenty of business cards.
- Dress appropriately (i.e. business attire and no jeans or t-shirts).
- Arrive 5 to 10 minutes ahead of your scheduled appointment.
- Greet elected officials and their staff as applicable with a firm handshake, have good eye contact, and introduce yourself.
- Designate a lead person if meeting with a group of people to act as the moderator.
- Be polite and courteous.
- Know the specific bill name, bill number, sponsors and co-sponsors and main talking points.
- Be clear and concise and incorporate personal stories and patient stories as able (paint the picture of the impact the topic/bill has on the elected official's constituents).
- Be attentive to the elected official's positions, comments, and questions. It is ok if you do not know the answer to a question at the time of the meeting, it is better to get back to them with the answer than to provide inaccurate information.
- Prepare a packet to leave with your elected official on the topics/bills that you met about.
- Offer to provide any additional information or follow up on any questions they may have.
- Offer to be included as a resource for health care matters for the elected official's office.
- Ensure that you follow up.
 - Get the business card of person you meet with.
 - Ask when a good time would be to follow up.
 - Ask what the best method of communication is for follow up (e-mail, phone, text messaging, etc.).
 - Send a thank you note within 24 hours of your meeting.
 - Email them if there is any progress on the topic/bills that you discussed.

DO NOT:

- Do not get discouraged if your elected official or their staff is late to the meeting.
- Do not get discouraged if you are unable to meet with the elected official and instead you meet with a member of their staff.
 - Staff members have the direct ear of the elected official and building these relationships is just as important as building a relationship with the elected official.
- Do not overstay your welcome.
- Do not assume the elected official knows about physical therapy, occupational therapy, or speech therapy.
- Do not assume that the elected official is familiar with the topic/bills that you are going to present on.
- Do not consider your meeting as a one-time event. Advocacy is constant and does not end after one meeting.