

Checklist for Delivering Your Message

Increase the effectiveness of your Capitol Hill visits

1. Tell them who you are and where you're from: Tell them a little about yourself, your practice and the community you come from. You want them to know you as a person and a constituent from home, not just an advocate for physician issues. Make sure they know you represent the American College of Physicians, so that they connect you to the College's lobbyists from the Washington Office.
2. Include an anecdote or story: Bring your issues to life in human terms. Tell them about your patients and colleagues—real people in his/her district or state who are or will be affected. Make it come alive with details, names, dates and places.
3. Tell them what you want: Make sure they know exactly what you came for: vote yes, vote no, co-sponsor, speak to someone on the committee, co-sponsor a bill, etc. Members of Congress want a recommendation from you. They want to know what you would like them to do.
4. Tell them why it is a good idea: Have several sound reasons why they should support the College's position, especially focusing on the impact the issue will have on the home district/state.
5. Ask for support: Be direct. "Will you support our position? Co-sponsor our bill? etc."
6. Remember to follow-up with thank you letters: Don't forget to send a follow-up letter to your legislator and/or staff. They will appreciate the thank you and it serves as a reminder of who you are and what you discussed during your meeting. The letter should recap the highlights of your meeting, including the specific actions the Member committed to taking. Remember to thank the Member and/or staff for their time (a sample letter, which you should personalize and print on your letterhead, is included with these materials).
7. Follow-up with ACP's Washington Office: The Washington Office would appreciate it if you would forward copies of your letters to Shuan Tomlinson at stomlinson@acponline.org and complete the Congressional Visit Reporting Form for each office you visited. Copies of the form will be included in the Leadership Day registration packet.