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.
  o You may have to meet in hallway or high-traffic area such as the cafeteria.
  o Don’t be discouraged – it can still be a productive meeting.
✓ You are likely to meet with congressional staff.
  o Approx. 25-30 years old.
  o 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](#).