

DO's

&

DON'Ts



When Dealing with Legislators



- Make contact early.
- Know what hospital issues the legislator has or has not supported. Be familiar with any health-related statements he or she has made.
- Determine in advance how much time you have been allotted, so you can pace yourself. You will never have as much time as you want, so be prepared to stick to a few key points. Know the legislator's past record enough to anticipate questions he or she will may ask.
- Be kind and polite. These individuals are human beings that like to be treated with respect, as we all do. Always say thank you.
- Lead into the topic at hand. He or she knows why you are there.
- Lay out the case clearly and factually and support your argument wherever possible with local information. Remember that all politics are local.
- Tell the legislator exactly what you would like him or her to do.
- Listen very carefully and respectfully to his or her response.
- Answer the legislator's arguments where possible; if you cannot, tell him or her you will get back with him or her as soon as possible with the information and make sure you do.
- Ask for a decision and be assertive in either concluding the deal on the spot or on establishing a framework for your follow-up. Members are experts at giving vague reassurances, but hard work can turn vague remarks into concrete commitments.
- Be sure to tell both sides of the issue and who the likely opponents will be.
- Identify yourself, sign all correspondence and include address and phone number.
- Use proper formats and proper form of address (Honorable Joe Smith). If you don't know a legislator on a personal basis, use their title and last name, spelled correctly.
- Be neat. Be specific. Be cordial. Be logical. Be brief. Be positive.



- Be partisan, you need both sides' votes.
- Discuss fundraising while you are discussing a hospital issue with your legislator.
- Enter into a discussion with your legislator without doing your homework.
- Misrepresent or distort the facts in any way.
- "Blindside" the member by omitting important information.
- Make threats.
- Burn bridges or berate a legislator if they don't vote your way. There will be another vote on another issue when you may need their vote again.