



10 Steps toward a Great Site or Facility Tour For Your Members of Congress

A tour of your facility is one important way to put a face on homecare issues. A tour can highlight the importance of homecare in the state or your Congressional district. Here are a few guidelines to consider when arranging a tour for your U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, or state and local officials.

1. Fax or email a polite, professional invitation letter to the Member of Congress in care of the staff person who schedules meetings. You might want to cc the Legislative Assistant (LA) for health issues as well as the District Director who manages the Member's offices in the state. Mention the number of patients served by your facility, your service area, and the number of employees.
2. Be as flexible as you can about the timing which would likely occur during one of the district work periods when Congress is not in session. Allow for adequate time for the Member and his or her staff to get a sense of your operation and leave some time for questions.
3. In conversations with staff about a potential tour, offer to invite the local media or photographer to accompany the Member on the tour. If a tour is scheduled, alert the press beforehand about the tour and how Medicare policy affects your organization.
4. During the tour, involve employees – and patients if possible – to let the Member of Congress meet some of the people involved in your enterprise. Your Member represents employees, patients, and their families.
5. Share key facts, such as what types of patients your organization serves, what types of services and equipment are provided, how many employees work at the facility, the economic impact of facility in the region, and other information about the role that your organization plays in the community and in the individual lives of patients and their families.
6. In the tour, show all the components that go into providing homecare such as key services, after-hours responsibilities, medical equipment, regulatory compliance, billing, deliveries, and maintenance. Some homecare providers have spread out on large tables all the paper-work required for a single Medicare patient.
7. Make a connection between your organization's work and the critical homecare issues before Congress. Connect the dots for the Member of Congress and staff.
8. Ask for the Member's help with specific legislative or regulatory issues affecting homecare.
9. Also offer to help the Member of Congress in whatever way you can.
10. Follow up with thank-you's to the Member of Congress and everyone who helped with the tour.