



## 10 Steps to Effective Meetings with Your Members of Congress

1. **Call to request a personal meeting with your member of Congress.** Call the scheduler or chief of staff to schedule a brief meeting. Coordinate and attend with other providers from your state or congressional district, if possible, to demonstrate that the issue affects many organizations and different types of people. A meeting with the legislative assistant who handles healthcare issues (health LA) or the legislative director is a good alternative if your Senator or Representative is not available to meet. The Capitol switchboard number is 202-224-3121.
2. **At your meeting, briefly and succinctly describe the key issue.** Focus on only one or two key issues. Your time may be limited to 10 or 15 minutes. Include points about how the issue affects the Member's constituents, including your patients, your company, and your employees. Always come with a proposed solution for every problem you present.
3. **Ask for a commitment or action from your member of Congress.** For example, you may request that the Senator or Representative write a letter to the Secretary of Health and Human Services or to the leadership of a key congressional committee. Or you may ask the member to cosponsor a specific bill. Check the American Association for Homecare website, [www.aahomecare.org](http://www.aahomecare.org), for specific requests.
4. **Describe the role your organization plays in the community.** Describe the population you serve, the types of services you provide, number of patients, number of employees served, areas in which you provide services, the cost-effectiveness of homecare, and the difference that your services make in your patients' lives.
5. **Put a face on homecare consumers.** Include patients or their family members in your meeting, if possible. Provide testimonials. Mention patients' situations and how homecare affects their lives.
6. **Stick to the facts.** Tell a compelling story and provide good information, but do not exaggerate.
7. **Be firm, be polite.** Lobbying is a First Amendment right. Effective lobbying requires diplomacy.
8. **Bring written materials to leave behind with your member of Congress.** Include a brief summary with attachments expanding on your key points. For your own use, develop simple talking points and stick with your message.
9. **Ask how you can help your member of Congress.** Establish a good relationship with your members of Congress and their staff, and be available as a resource on healthcare issues.
10. **Follow up.** Within a few days of your visit, send a letter thanking the member for his or her time and briefly restate your issue and request. Follow up a week later with a phone call to see if you can provide any additional information.