



Tips to Ensure a Successful Virtual Meeting with Your Legislator

With technological advances, many legislators are now offer virtual visits. Here are some key steps to take to ensure a successful remote visit with a legislator.

Establishing the Meeting

- Know which bills you would like to discuss
 - [What's New](#) with ASHP Advocacy
- Locate your legislator(s):
 - House of Representatives: [Find Your Representative | house.gov](#)
 - Senate: [U.S. Senate: Senators](#)
- Know your legislator(s) stance on topic(s) of interest
- Plan to have other individuals supporting you during the discussion
- Know the availability of the individuals and understand everyone's availability
- Email or call the legislator offices to request a time to discuss the bills with the legislator and provide them your group's availability

Preparing for the Meeting

- Choose a location that minimizes distractions and provides a professional background
- Establish talking points and questions prior to the meeting while keeping in mind the length of the meeting.
 - Position your key discussion points near the beginning of the meeting.
- Train all participating individuals on the talking points and decide on who is leading the discussion for certain talking points (i.e. provide a summary of the topic, create a short video describing the topics, etc.)
- Test the virtual meeting platform at least a day prior
- Have all individuals in your group join 15 minutes prior to the scheduled meeting to address any technical issues

During the Meeting

- Lead member should ask for permission to take a screenshot of the group for socializing the meeting
- Have the lead member, or designee act as a moderator for the meeting to ensure a smooth transition between topics
- When speaking, focus on the camera not the screen
- Speak clearly and a bit louder than normal conversational tone
- Stay muted when not speaking to minimize potential distractions

After the Meeting

- Debrief with the individuals that participated in the meeting
- Send an email or handwritten letter to the legislator providing a summary of what was learned and thanking them for their time
- Consider tagging and engaging the legislator on social media to thank them and continue discussions on topics of interest

Resources

- Berger K, S Kaplan A. Advocacy during crisis: Maintaining a legislative presence during the COVID-19 pandemic. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*. 2020;77(22):1830-1833.
- Kaplan AS, Berger K. Expanding advocacy to the grassroots level: The New York State model. *Journal of Pharmacy Practice*. 2020
- Schwartzberg J. How to Elevate Your Presence in a Virtual Meeting. *Harvard Business Review*. Published online April 8, 2020.
- Understanding Policy Priorities and Advocacy Opportunities During COVID-19. *American Pharmacist Association*. Published 2020.
- Planning a Virtual Legislative Meeting for Your Advocates. *Public Affairs Council*. Published 2020.

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