

2019 AHA Annual Advocacy Program



April 7 - 10, 2019, Washington, D.C.

How to Make Your Congressional Visits a Success

The following information will help make your congressional visits a success. Try to keep your meeting brief and to the point, while covering all the key messages.

- Prior to the meeting, review the 2019 AHA Message Card and hospital data reports.
- Do not be disappointed if you meet with a staff person instead of the congressional representative. Often, staff members are more knowledgeable on the issues and might be able to spend more time with you in discussions. The staff will remember your conversation when making position recommendations to the representative.
- The team leader for your visit is indicated on the visit schedule that will be provided to you at the caucus meeting. This person will help guide the meeting.
- The team leader will introduce himself/herself first and then ask the team members to introduce themselves. Be sure to state your name, hospital or health system, and city of business, and provide the representative with your business card.
- Keep the conversation focused on the issues and share your hospital's perspective or stories. Remember, you are not expected to be an expert on specific legislation or the legislative process.
- The team leader will give the congressional representative a packet that includes priority messages and hospital data reports for their district.
- As the meeting winds down, the team leader will ask the congressional representative if he/she would like to ask the group any questions. If no one is certain of the answer(s), the team leader will politely tell the representative that Anne O'Rourke, CHA's senior vice president of federal relations, will follow up with him/her. Please indicate the unanswered question on your congressional visit form.
- At the conclusion, thank the congressional representative for taking time out of his/her schedule to meet with you.
- After you return home, please write a letter to your representative thanking him/her for taking time to meet with you, and his/her continued interest in issues important to hospitals and health systems. Feel free to invite him/her to visit your hospital.