

ADVOCACY TIPS

ARRANGING A MEETING IN YOUR MEMBER'S DISTRICT



Every Member has at least one office in his or her home state/ district. Those from large or rural states often have more than one office. It is worthwhile to develop a relationship with the staff of those offices and with the Member directly.

Call the home state or district office and let them know you would like to set up a meeting—preferably with the Senator/or Representative directly or with the appropriate staffer who handles issues related to health. Let them know what you want to discuss.

To maximize the impact of the few hours we will spend on Capitol Hill this May, it is vitally important to successfully utilize all avenues available to us to have our voices heard. Social media is a powerful tool to amplify our messages. Every office you will visit will have (at the very least) an active Twitter and Facebook account and at least one staff member is devoted to monitoring the social media. Also, some social media accounts are run by your members of Congress themselves!

Other ways to develop relationships with your Member in the home state or district:

- Be in touch with home office staff. Ask the staff person when the legislator will be there. Consult the legislative calendar (Senate / House of Representatives) to see when the legislator will be in Washington, DC rather than at home.
- Ask the home office staff if the legislator will be speaking at any public events/meetings—including town hall meetings.
- Show up at public meetings. Introduce yourself to your legislator. Explain your issue and say you'd like to set up a meeting to talk. Find out who on his/her staff to contact to set up a meeting.
- If your local hemophilia chapter is hosting or participating in an event, meeting or summit, invite your legislator to attend. If he/she comes, give them an opportunity to say a few words or to be the keynote speaker.
- If you know anyone who has a personal connection with your legislator, ask them to introduce you. It's also useful for that person to send an email to the legislator explaining who you are and why you would like to meet with him/her. Then you can follow-up on the email and ask for a meeting.
- If your local chapter has a newsletter, include a photo and article on your legislator, especially if s/he has supported a position that is helpful to people with bleeding disorders. Send a copy to the legislator.