



Communicating with your Legislator

Keep in mind that your goal is to develop an ongoing personal relationship with your elected official, as well as to assist them in making well-educated choices on specific issues. Here are a few pointers:

- ◆ Assume your legislator does not know very much about the issues. Speak to him or her in simple terms – avoid technical or medical language.
- ◆ Help the legislator understand the complexity of the medical care delivery system, including the diversity of your patients and their needs.
- ◆ Remember that there are two sides to every issue – keep an open mind when discussing the issues. Avoid being confrontational.
- ◆ Don't damage your relationship with a legislator over **one** issue. He/she is obviously in a position to help (or hurt) your cause – there will be other issues to negotiate and if there is resentment from a past meeting your chances of being effective are limited.
- ◆ Ask open-ended questions and listen to the answers he or she gives for an indication of how they “really” feel about a particular issue or physicians in general.