



Maryland Academy of Family Physicians

Legislative Guide

Family Medicine
Advocacy Day 2026

Before

- **Prepare.** Look up the legislator's district and their voting record. Rehearse your talking points, keeping it to 10 minutes
- **Know both sides.** Acknowledge the other side's view and then counter it.

During

- **Present the need.** Use data and personal stories to illustrate why you are passionate about an issue
- **Ask.** Get to the bottom by asking the legislator directly to take a stance on your issue, and come up with a next step
- **Listen.** Just as you listen to your patients, listen to the legislators and have a conversation. You may find a new angle to your issue, or obstacle to overcome

After

- **Thank.** Even if the meeting didn't go as planned, thank the lawmaker for their time and for their support on past issues in a follow-up note or email. Highlighting the lawmakers' past accomplishments is effective. We all respond well to positive feedback.

Do's

- **Keep it local.** Remember who the legislator answers to, their local constituents. If you're meeting with state legislators, don't bring up legislation unless it affects the legislator's current work.

Do's

- **Do bring a leave-behind.** A hard copy fact sheet, including your contact info, will help you stay on point during the meeting and will make it easier for their staffers to remember your issue. If there is a specific bill in question, use it's full title and bill number.

Do's

- **Do be on time.** Your practice may be busy, but clear your schedule for this meeting. Legislators are often scheduled to the minute; you don't want to lose any time.

Do's

- **Do seek out the MDAFP.** Working with a the coalition is more effective and capitalizes on your time. The MDAFP can provide you with a list of key partners in a legislators' district, and other supportive materials.

Don'ts

- **Don't involve gifts and meals** since they are under heavy scrutiny and can send the wrong message.
- **Don't make promises you can't deliver** – speak only for yourself and not the MDAFP or your colleagues

Don'ts

- **Don't be offended** if a legislator is unable to meet with you personally, but instead has a staffer meet with you. Just like medicine, lawmaking is a team sport
- **Don't overload with too many issues.** Keep your meeting focused on the issue and avoid bringing up other issues.

Don'ts

- **Don't confront**, threaten, pressure or beg.
Avoid using your political contributions as a reason to take a stance on an issue

What you can ask for

- An entry in the official record
- A visit to your institution
- A meeting or event in the home district
- Write an op-ed piece
- A vote on current legislation
- Present new legislation

Know the Lingo

- Avoid using words like “educating”
- Instead try words like “partnering”, “supporting,” and “informing”

**Thank you for
participating in this
important activity!**