



5 Steps to a Great Facility Visit with a Legislative Office

Advocacy isn't always about supporting specific policies. Effective education and connecting leaders with everyday people connected to your cause is also a great way to advocate. A visit from a legislator to your facility is a great opportunity for a legislator to learn about a form of care they may otherwise know very little about or have limited exposure to. To learn who your facility's federal legislators are, go to hospiceactionnetwork.org/take-action/#/legislators.

1. Invite

Email a polite, professional invitation letter to the Member of Congress in care of the staff person who schedules meetings (Scheduler). If possible, CC the Legislative Assistant (LA) of the office that handles health issues, as well as the District Director, who manages the Member's in-district offices. In your letter, be sure to say the number of patients served by your facility, your service area, and the number of employees. You might not get the legislator themselves to make the visit, but rather a staff member. This is also a good "get"!

2. Scheduling

Try to schedule the visit during a district work period, when Congress is not in session (recess). The best possible recess to aim for is during the month-long break in August. Be as flexible as possible in the scheduling of the visit. Be sure to try to schedule reasonably far in advance to allow for adequate time for the Member and their staff to determine their own schedule and correspond with questions about your organization / facility.

3. Media

In conversations with staff about a potential visit by the legislator, offer to invite the local media or a photographer for the visit. When the visit is scheduled, alert the press about it. In the alert to media, include language about the benefits your organization provides to the community.

4. Interactions

Let the Member meet some of the people involved in your program, including employees and volunteers. Remember, your employees, volunteers, patients, and their families are constituents whom the Member represents. The Member wants to meet constituents to learn more about their experiences, needs, and what they've gotten out of hospice and palliative care.

5. Education

Share information about hospice care – how it is interdisciplinary, how it is centered on patient needs and preferences, and the function and value of the Medicare hospice benefit. Share key facts about your program. These include: what types of patients your organization serves, what types of services and equipment are provided, how many employees work at the facility, the economic impact of the facility in the region, and other information about the role that your organization plays in the community, and in the lives of patients and their families. Don't be afraid to share some of the challenges your program faces, such as workforce difficulties.

For more information about how your facility can have a successful facility visit, contact smarburger@nhpco.org.