



5 Steps to Effective Meetings with Legislative Offices

Advocacy is primarily about building relationships. As an advocate, some of the most important and effective relationships you can build are with your elected representatives. As a constituent, your legislators want to hear from you. They want to hear your story and what matters to you.

Before your meeting: Be prepared! Know what issues you are supporting and why. Learn about priority federal bills at the HAN Action center at hospiceactionnetwork.org/take-action/#/bills. You can bring written materials or talking points to help you through the meeting—what matters most is your genuine passion for hospice and palliative care.

1. Introduce hospice

First, you might need to introduce what hospice care is to the person you are meeting with. Start out by asking, “What do you know about hospice?” Fit your organization into this introduction as well, including the population you serve, the types of services you provide, the number of employees and volunteers utilized by your organization, and the difference you make in the community.

2. Educate about our issues

Meetings with legislative offices tend to be only 15 – 20 minutes, so get to the point quickly. Briefly describe the priorities bringing you to the meeting that day. Focus on just 1 – 2 key issues. If possible, include information about how the issue affects the legislator’s constituents, including your patients and employees. If there is a past or current bill related to the issue, describe it and the impact it would have for hospice and palliative care, especially in your community / district.

3. Gather information

Once you have made your case as an advocate, gather additional information about the office’s position on our issues. Ask if the legislator or staffer has a connection to hospice and palliative care. Ask if they are interested in learning more about our issues.

4. Gain support for our issues

The meeting is centered on this: the ask. Ask for the office’s support and action (a vote on a bill, a signature on a letter, etc.) on the key issues you’ve discussed at this meeting. You might not get a “yes” that day, but it is important that your visit has put this issue on the office’s radar. A “no” today may not be a “no” tomorrow. The office can always learn more from you and your expertise as an advocate. They may lend support in the future.

5. Build a Relationship and Follow Up

Make sure the person you are meeting with knows your name, what organization you represent (if you are not there on behalf of your organization, you can say you are an advocate with HAN), and that you can be relied upon for future outreach. Having a business card to leave with that office can help. After, follow up with the office. Within a few days of your visit, send a letter thanking the legislator or staffer for their time. Briefly restate your issue and request. See if there are additional questions you can answer or information you can provide.

After your meeting: Let HAN know about your meeting! We’re here to support our advocates in building relationships with legislators. By keeping us informed, you are helping us strategize to bolster our cause and policy priorities. We can assist with any necessary follow-up with a Congressional legislative office.

Email smarburger@nhpco.org if any follow up is needed.

