



5 Steps to Effective Meetings with Members of Congress

Note: Please contact NHPCO's Public Policy Team at advocacy@nhpco.org for the latest on what is happening on Capitol Hill, and where your Member of Congress fits into the current hospice advocacy efforts.

1. **At your meeting, briefly and sufficiently describe the key issue.** Focus on only one or two key issues. Your time may be limited to 10 or 15 minutes. Include points about how the issue affects the Member's constituents, including your patients and employees. Always prepare a solution for every problem you present. (See Public Policy Webpage for position papers/talking points.)
2. **Bring written materials to leave with your Member of Congress.** Include a brief cover memo with attachments expanding on your key issues. For your own use, develop talking points and stick with your message.
3. **Tell your Member of Congress how important your organization is to the district and/or state.** Describe the population you serve, types of services you provide, numbers of patients and employees served in areas where you operate, the cost-effectiveness of hospice care, and the difference that your services make in your patients' lives.
4. **Ask for a commitment regarding how your Member of Congress will help.** For example, depending on what the issue is and how it can be resolved, you might want to ask him or her to cosponsor a specific bill, write about your concerns to the CMS Administrator, talk to the chairman of a committee that handles the issue, or go on a site tour or home visit with you. Check the NHPCO Advocacy Webpage for specific "asks."
5. **Follow up, and follow up again.** Within a few days of your visit, send a letter thanking the Member of Congress for his or her time, and briefly restate your issue and request. Follow up a week later with a phone call to see if you can provide any additional information.

