

**BE THE**

MAKING THE MOST.

**CHANGE.**

Making the Most of Meetings with

**LEGISLATORS.**

Meeting with elected officials is an important part of effective advocacy. Make the most

of these meetings by following these guidelines.

1. **Establish a goal and an agenda for the meeting.**

Keep the meeting focused on the issues and keep the issues to a minimum. Don’t spend too much time socializing, but do be cordial. A legislator’s time is valuable, so make the most of the time you have.

1. **Listen, Listen, Listen.**

Good listening skills are essential. Watch for non-verbal cues about how the legislator feels about the subject. Be prepared to draw out the silent legislator or to politely interrupt the long-winded legislator.

1. **Personal stories are persuasive.**

Putting the human face on an issue makes it more real. Explain how a proposed bill or concept affects you in your daily life.

1. **Don’t pretend to be the expert.**

Make sure you are familiar with all the elements of a proposal and have enough factual information to support your position. If you cannot answer a question, say so and offer to get the information needed. Don’t fake it and do follow-up.

1. **Remember, you are there to build a relationship.**

We do not all agree on every issue every time. Today’s opponents may be tomorrow’s allies. Be respectful of others’ positions and don’t burn bridges. Make connections with the legislator’s staff members too.

1. **Follow-up is important.**

Send a note thanking the legislator for meeting with you and summarize what was said during the meeting.

1. **Preparation is key.**

Know nursing’s key legislative initiatives. Also know what issues affect the legislature more globally, and how those larger issues will affect your own initiatives. Know who your supporters are and the reasons for that support. Understand how the legislative process works.

*Source: “Health Care Leader”; Darby Training Programs; Omaha, NE*