

Tips for Scheduling a Visit with a Member of Congress or Elected Official

As many of you already know from direct experience, a site visit from your Member of Congress is a great way to show the unmatched care inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and units provide to very frail, sick patients. Below are some tips to consider when setting up a site visit with your Member. **We encourage you to work with your communications and public relations staff when developing your site visit event.**

Visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/> to find your Member of Congress and to obtain his or her phone number. You can also call the Congressional Operator (House of Representatives: 202-225-3121; Senate: 202-224-3121) and ask to be transferred to the Member's office.

Send a Meeting Request or Invitation

Create a letter or invitation to request a Congressional visit. Fax your letter/invitation to both the Member's state/district scheduler and DC office scheduler as soon as you have determined the date on which you would like the visit to occur. Remember, **Members of Congress and elected officials receive a large volume of requests for meetings and visits so it's important to get your request in as soon as possible.** Also, be sure to call ahead and get the schedulers' names to include on the fax cover sheet.

Follow up on Meeting Request/Invitation

Call the scheduler to follow up on your request about one week after you fax your letter. Make sure you submit your request in writing and be sure to fax it off in advance of the call.

Provide a range of dates or select dates when Congress is in recess to increase your chance of securing a visit. Additionally, if you are unable to secure a visit from the Member of Congress be sure to ask for a staffer to come in the Member's stead. It is important to establish and cultivate relationships with staff members as they have direct contact with the Members.

Confirm Your Meeting

If you are able to secure a visit, be sure to follow-up with the Member's office. One week before the event, call the scheduler or designated staff person and confirm her/his participation. Get the name and cell phone number of any staffers who will be traveling with the Member on the day of the visit.



Develop Meeting Logistics

Prepare a detailed itinerary/timeline for the Member's visit. Pre-screen patients and staff that will be introduced to the Member. Schedule a photographer (check with Member's office to make certain they agree to having the site visit photographed). Work with the Member's office to develop a press release to distribute on the day of the event.

Prepare a Briefing Packet for Member's Office

Send a briefing packet to the Member's office one week prior to the visit with all the details including contacts, time, location, phone numbers, agenda, and participants (total number, who will be participating, etc).

Send a Thank You Note

Follow up with thank you notes and photos (if available) to the Member of Congress and all the staff members you worked with to set up the visit. Continue to cultivate a positive relationship with the Member's office for future visits and events.