

Tips for Scheduling Meetings

Scheduling a meeting with your Member of Congress is not much more difficult than scheduling a hair cut or doctor appointment. Simply call the Member's state or district office (see *Tips for Finding Your Legislator's Contact Information* available on NASBHC's advocacy tools web page) and request a meeting.

Important Things to Remember:

- When you call the office, you will speak to an aide, NOT the Member of Congress himself or herself. Ask for the aide's name (get the correct spelling!) so you can follow up with an email, if necessary.
- Give your name and, if you are a constituent, your address. Describe your connection to the school-based health center (SBHC) or state association.
- Explain why you want to meet with the Member or his/her staff. If the receptionist is not familiar with SBHCs, you might have to explain what SBHCs are very briefly, how they relate to the health care reform debate, and how many SBHCs there are in the Member's state/district. Speak clearly and don't rush – the receptionist is probably taking notes.
- Don't be surprised if the Member him/herself is not available to meet with you. Many Members' schedules are full weeks in advance. Meeting with an aide is just as productive (sometimes more!). If the receptionist offers to direct your call to an aide, request the person who handles health issues for the Member – the Health Legislative Assistant ("LA"). Be sure to get the spelling of the LA's name.
- Be prepared to suggest several possible times when you will be available to visit the office and meet with the Member or his/her staff. It might take several tries to find a mutually agreeable time.
- Follow up the phone call with an email to the person with whom you will be meeting to confirm the time and date. Include or attach information about SBHCs and your particular SBHC in the confirmation email. (See fact sheets available on NASBHC's advocacy tools web page.)
- Use this format for addressing emails:
 - Senate Staff - firstname_lastname@senatorsname.senate.gov
 - e.g., tom_jones@obama.senate.gov
 - House Staff – firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov
 - e.g., tom.jones@mail.house.gov

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