

Tips for Writing Thank-You Letters to Your Legislators (**including sample letter**)

Whenever you have the opportunity to meet with your Members of Congress or their staff, you should follow that contact with a thank-you note. The best thank-you notes remind the Member about who you are and how your issue is important to his/her constituents and reiterate your “ask”. Remember, this is another opportunity to advocate for your issue.

Tips for Effective Thank-You Letters

- Be polite.
- Be clear and concise. Members of Congress and their staffs are very busy. Keep your letter as short as possible, while including all relevant information.
- If possible, write your letter by hand.
- Thank the Member or LA for spending time with you.
- Identify yourself as a constituent (if you are) or as a representative of an organization (such as a SBHC or state association).
- Briefly remind the Member or LA of your issue.
- Reiterate the ask you made during the meeting, e.g., support health care reform that recognizes SBHCs.
- Offer yourself as a resource. Make sure your Member knows s/he can call on you for more information on SBHCs. If you promised during the meeting to find any specific information, make sure you include that in your thank-you letter.
- Don't forget to include your contact information.
- If you are writing to the Member, cc the Legislative Assistant (LA) who handles the issue (e.g., the health LA). If you are writing to the LA, cc the Member.

Sample Virtual Tour Thank-You Letter

Dear Senator OR Representative X:

Thank you for talking with me on the phone [this morning/ yesterday/etc.] and taking our school-based health center's (SBHC) virtual tour. I appreciate your taking the time to learn about SBHCs.

As your constituent, and on behalf of the XXX SBHCs in the state of XX, I want to reiterate my request that you support health care reform that recognizes the vital contribution of SBHCs.

As we discussed, SBHCs provide access to care in communities struggling to offer such services, result in economic savings, and contribute to a healthier and more productive student population. For example, because of their onsite treatment and focus on preventive care, they can reduce the number of inappropriate emergency room visits and hospitalizations and lower Medicaid expenses. SBHCs have also been shown to increase students' time in class and to lessen health inequities.

[INSERT REFERENCE TO PERSONAL STORY OR CENTER-SPECIFIC INFORMATION.]

When you return to Washington and the health care reform discussion, please keep in mind the crucial role SBHCs play in our children's health care safety net. I strongly urge you to work to keep SBHCs in the legislation.

Please consider me a resource on this subject and feel free to contact me with any questions you might have about the SBHCs in your district [OR STATE]. I can be reached at [INSERT YOUR CONTACT INFO].

Sincerely,

Please copy Susan (skilbourne@nasbhc.org) on any correspondence you have with Members of Congress. That information will allow NASBHC to track contacts with legislators and to be more efficient and strategic in our work to ensure that SBHCs are included in the final legislation.

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