



Tips for a Successful Legislator Meeting

As members of Congress head back to their home states for the August congressional recess, now is the perfect time to setting up an in-person meeting with your own representative and senators. In addition to having an office in Washington, DC, members of Congress also have one (or more) offices back in their home states. These offices are often much more accessible to constituents, and you can easily set up a meeting with your members of Congress by calling the district office and making an appointment.

How do I make an appointment?

- ❖ First, visit AADE's Legislative Action Center at www.diabeteseducator.org/actnow and look up your elected officials under the "Directory" tab. Once you do so, this will pull up the office addresses and phone numbers for your members of Congress. Identify the office location that works best for you and give the office a call to set up your appointment. Invite your friends or colleagues to join too.

How should I prepare?

- ❖ You are the expert! This is an opportunity to share your knowledge about diabetes, clinical and self-management, and the role of the diabetes educator. Be confident in your ability to promote the specialty!
- ❖ AADE encourages you to ask your members of Congress to support the Expanding Access to Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT) Act (H.R. 1840/S. 814). Learn more about this legislation on AADE's website at <https://www.diabeteseducator.org/advocacy/the-expanding-access-to-dsmt-act>. You can also visit AADE's Legislative Action Center at www.diabeteseducator.org/actnow for more information on the bill and to download an issue brief.
- ❖ An important aspect of discussing the legislation is thinking about how this impacts Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes and you as a diabetes educator. One of the most effective advocacy tools is sharing personal stories and discussing how this policy impacts or would impact people in their daily lives. Think about those personal experiences in advance of your meeting.
- ❖ Prepare for the visit by reviewing the legislation, but do not get overwhelmed by legislative details. It's okay to say "I don't know" if you are unsure about the answer to a question. AADE staff can easily assist you in following up with the congressional office to provide additional information.
- ❖ Do a little research on your member of Congress. Do you share an alma mater or have any areas of shared interest? Does your member of Congress have a connection to diabetes in some way? This is a time to set political differences aside (if you have them) and focus on ways to connect. Even if you didn't vote for your representative or senator, their support of the legislation is still important.

What do I need to bring?

- ❖ Business cards
- ❖ AADE issue brief
- ❖ Any additional supporting information you think might be helpful

What should I expect in the meeting?

- ❖ Enter the office at your designated meeting time and introduce yourself to the person in the reception area. Tell them with whom you are there to meet. Give them your business card if you have one on hand.
- ❖ After introductions, a great way to start a meeting is to discuss your personal connection to the district. Where do you work? How do you serve the community?
- ❖ Share information about who diabetes educators are, what you do, and how you help the community. For example, “I’m not sure how familiar you are with what a diabetes educator does, so let me tell you a little bit about my role at Chicago Hospital.”
- ❖ Share the issue brief with the person you are meeting with as the meeting starts. Members of Congress and staffers typically like to follow along or take notes on the legislation and having the information on hand helps.
- ❖ Ask the member of Congress or their staff to sign on as a cosponsor of the legislation.
- ❖ Be cognizant of the time. Make sure you are on time for your meetings and, if you are running behind, call the office to let them know. Ask the member of Congress or staff member how much time they have to meet. If you would like to continue the dialogue, consider this visit a first step in developing a relationship with your member’s office. You can always follow-up via e-mail, telephone, or by scheduling another visit.

How should I follow-up?

- ❖ The person you are meeting with will likely share their business card or contact information with you. After the meeting, send a follow-up e-mail, thanking them for their time and sharing any follow-up information that they requested. It’s also great to offer your expertise should they have any future questions about diabetes.
- ❖ Refer to the current cosponsor lists for the legislation to see if your member of Congress has signed on as a supporter following your meetings. These lists can be accessed here: <https://www.diabeteseducator.org/advocacy/the-expanding-access-to-dsmt-act/> . Say thank you if your member of Congress has signed on as cosponsor. Follow-up if they have not and continue to ask for their support.