



## **Hosting a Visit of Elected Officials to Your Practice Setting**

While elected officials may have a general idea about pharmacists and what occurs in traditional community pharmacy practice, they are likely to be far less familiar with your practice and activities as a clinical pharmacist -- unless they've seen or received those services personally. As a result it is important to expose elected officials directly to those services and activities that you provide. Hosting a visit of your elected officials to your practice is perhaps the single most important thing you can do to help them understand what clinical pharmacy practice is all about – and to generate their support for recognition and payment for those services.

The following steps will help ensure a successful visit:

- **Scheduling the visit**

- Prepare a written letter of invitation to the targeted official[s] with a copy to his/her scheduler and legislative assistant dealing with health issues. This information can be found on the Legislative Action Center at [www.accp.com](http://www.accp.com). Often the visit can be more effectively coordinated with the official's local office during times when the official is "back home."
- Be specific about the purpose of the visit and why it would be beneficial for the official to visit your practice.
- Often the legislative assistant will participate in the visit or be the only member of the delegation available for the visit. Don't be discouraged by this outcome. Staff can have a tremendous influence and impact on these issues. Use the opportunity to educate them as well.

- **Planning and conducting the visit**

- Determine and then focus intently on those specific services and activities that you want to demonstrate. Consider especially direct patient care activities (immunizations, therapy management activities, therapeutic drug monitoring, screenings, etc.) that differentiate your practice.
- Secure approval from employers, practice management, or other appropriate parties.
- Within the practice, alert professional colleagues, other employees and, if appropriate, patients, that a visit will occur. Determine which individuals might be available to speak to the officials regarding the services and their value to them.
- Remember that time is precious and limited. Have a specific schedule of activities for the visit and stick to it. Provide time and location (e.g., conference room, office) after the "tour and observation" to answer questions and discuss your specific policy concerns and issues (e.g., payment for services, recognition as a provider under Medicare).

- Contact ACCP's Government Affairs office [202.756.2227] as early as possible in your planning to obtain helpful printed materials on relevant policy and advocacy issues.
  - Consider alerting the media to the visit once it is firmly scheduled. The ACCP Legislative Action Center ([www.accp.com](http://www.accp.com)) can facilitate your communication with local media.
  - Have a photographer available to take pictures, even if the media is present.
- **Following up on the visit**
    - Send a follow-up letter shortly after the visit thanking the member and/or staff for meeting with you. Review the issues discussed and any actions agreed upon.
    - Include any additional materials that you have promised to provide in follow-up.
    - Provide a summary of the visit to the ACCP Government Affairs office, indicating any potential follow up opportunities that you would like the office to consider.
    - Most importantly, maintain and build the relationship that has been begun through the visit. Stay in touch with the official's office and staff, alerting them to important changes, successes, and problems that you encounter in caring for patients. Help them remember your practice by staying in touch.
    - Look for opportunities to be visible in the official's policy discussions, local town hall meetings, etc. Consider contributing your time and financial support to the official's election campaigns.

For further information or assistance in planning a practice visit, feel free to contact:

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