EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY: THE BASICS

- Preparation
- Knowledge
- Meeting Execution Basics
- Educate and Ask
- Listen and report
- Follow-up
- Do’s and Don’ts
PREPARATION

• Know the who, what, when, and where for each office.

• Do your homework. Read and understand the materials and know what the content of the “Legislative Priorities” sheet and the “Dear Colleague” samples provided.

• Division of duties for groups.

• Remember to stay positive and friendly.
• The “talking points” of prostate cancer. History/importance of federal action.
• National needs – local impacts. Personal story matters most.
• Predict basic questions and have the answers ready.
• Know the script for the meeting.
• Member history and recent events?
“Thank you for taking time to meet.”
1 minute self introduction – past contacts with the office and connections. Where you are from in the district/state.
1 minute overview of why you are here (Part of a nation-wide group of advocates)
1-2 minute personal story.
Present materials folder and quickly mention the contents.
7-8 minute explanation of issues.
Always stop – at any point – for questions. If no questions are asked, you should say, “Do you have any questions?”
Never finish the meeting without making the “ask”.
“Thank you.”
• Education and requests are consistent themes of all Hill meetings. “Drinking from the fire hose.”

• Few true subject matter experts, particularly on House side. Staff rely on outside sources of education.

• Staff are principal advisors.

• MAKE THE ASK! It is always expected, regardless of the answer.
LISTEN AND REPORT

• Don’t do all the talking.
• Ask your own questions.
• Don’t shoot from the hip when confronted with a question you cannot answer.
• Take notes if necessary.
• Report back to ensure follow-up is handled appropriately.
FOLLOW-UP

- Offer to provide additional information.
- Remember to use “Thank you”.
- Get the staffer’s business card.
- Send a “thank you” email within a few days of your return home.
- The best advocacy is not a once-a-year proposition.
- Start a relationship.
Do’s

• Do be on time. 5 minutes early is on time.
• Do be polite, professional, and friendly.
• Do be concise and to the point.
• Do let them interrupt with questions.
• Do adhere to time limits they set.
• Do ask if they have questions.
• Do make sure you understand exactly what additional info is asked for.
• Do communicate by email in following up.
Don’ts

• Don’t forget to say “Thank you”
• Don’t try to be completely comprehensive – hit the key points.
• Don’t be negative.
• Don’t overextend your welcome.
• Don’t talk politics.
Questions?