



Rare Disease Legislative Advocates

POWERED BY THE EVERYLIFE FOUNDATION

# Scheduling a Meeting with Your Legislator

## TIP SHEET

**The most effective interaction you can have with your legislator is a face-to-face meeting. This is an opportunity for you to share your rare disease story with your legislator and build a relationship with them and their staff.**

Below are steps on how to schedule a meeting with your legislator whether in the district or in Washington, DC.

- 1 Find your legislator's contact information** on their official Congressional website (internet search for "Congress" and the name of your legislator) or call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121.
- 2 Ask for the name of the scheduler** at the legislator's office and how to send a meeting request to the scheduler (fax, email, etc.). Each office has their own meeting request process so it is best to ask each individual office on how they prefer to receive them.
- 3 Send a fax or email** to your legislator's scheduler requesting a meeting. Include in your request:
  - ★ you are a constituent,
  - ★ what legislation or policy issue you would like to speak with the legislator,
  - ★ the date and time you would like to meet,
  - ★ offer to meet a staff person if the legislator is not available, and
  - ★ provide your contact information so the scheduler can reach you.
- 4 Follow up with a phone call** to the scheduler if you have not heard back after one week of making your request. Remember that the scheduler is very important to being able to meet with your Member. Thank the scheduler for their time and assistance!
- 5 Confirm the day and time of the meeting** with the office's scheduler a few days before your meeting. A Member's schedule changes often due to a variety of reasons. Check to make sure the meeting is still scheduled as planned.
- 6 Attend your meeting** with the legislator and/or their staffer at the confirmed date and time. Practice telling your rare disease story before the meeting so you feel more comfortable. Bring your one pager on your "Ask" and any other materials (about your organization, a picture of your love one with a rare disease if not coming to the meeting, etc.).
- 7 Follow up and thank your legislator** and/or their staffer for the meeting. Send an email or a thank you card and reiterate succinctly how they can help you and your cause.

**Rare Disease Legislative Advocates (RDLA)** is a program of the EveryLife Foundation for Rare Diseases to support the advocacy of all rare disease patients and organizations. RDLA is committed to growing the patient advocacy community and working collaboratively, thereby amplifying the patient voice to be heard by local, state and federal policy makers. For additional assistance, please contact Shannon von Felden, RDLA Program Director, at [svonfelden@everylifefoundation.org](mailto:svonfelden@everylifefoundation.org).