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## Practicing Your Group's Pitch

### Introductions

- Everyone in your group should introduce themselves. Unlike in-person meetings, participants appear in varying orders on the screen so you should determine the order of introducing yourselves and stick to that for every meeting to avoid confusion.
- When introducing yourself make sure to list your full name, where your practice is located or where you live or where your organization is based, and any personal or professional connections to the Congressional office. For this last item, keep how you describe the connections succinct – if the staff or member of Congress wants to expand upon this connection that is perfectly fine and should be encouraged.
- Last person to introduce themselves should transition to “why we’re here.”

### Why We’re Here

- Succinct statement of purpose that summarizes your ‘mission.’ For example: We’re here today to represent the American Academy of Dermatology Association and our patients to ask that you help us maintain access to care and maintain the patient-physician relationship.
  - This type of statement shifts from personal connections to policy and hits on general ideas like Medicare physician payment affecting access to care and step therapy reform to medical decisions being between the physician and the patients.

### Making the Ask

- Determine one of two avenues ahead of time:
  - You deliver both asks now and then allow each person to connect their personal story to one of the two asks depending on the content of their story.
  - You deliver one of the asks and then the participants who have a story connect to it. Once this is complete you transition to the second ask and the other participants deliver their connecting stories.
- Deliver the ask directly.

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- For example, "We're here to ask that you Cosponsor the Safe Step Act to ensure that step therapy protocols used by health plans will preserve the physician's right to make treatment decisions in the best interest of the patient."
- While staff respects your expert opinion on skin health in general, you are not expected to be an expert on the policy. Your experience with these issues is more important than your knowledge of the bills themselves.

### Connecting the "Asks" to YOUR Personal Story

- In the last year and a half, Congressional staff have embraced the shift from in-office to virtual meetings with their constituents. However, virtual meeting fatigue has set in. By adding some spice to your messaging, you can make your meeting stand out above the crowd. During this session you will practice making your asks by developing your own personal story.
- Your story should be a 90 second to two-minute statement about you, your practice and patients or, your experience as a patient. Your story should be connectable to the 'asks' but more importantly connected as a real-person living in their district or state.
  - *Real Life Stories*—telling an unforgettable tale makes your message much more memorable.
  - *Numbers*—help your listeners size up your message with mental pictures of millions, dozens, fractions, and percentages.
  - *Vivid Words*—color your language with action words and phrases your audience will store in their mind's scrapbook.
  - *Analogies*—bring clear pictures to the mind's eye with these comparisons.
  - *Extremes*—tell your listeners that when it comes to patient care you are the first, the best, or the only (and of experiences you've had with the last or the worst).
  - *Case histories*—mention true to life situations that have affected you and your patients.
  - *Topics du Jour*—Sprinkle your conversation with references to current events and the latest in movies, TV, music, and sports.
  - *Use Humor*— *but*, don't tell a joke if you are a lousy joke teller. Situational humor may work better for you.

### Closing the Meeting

- Depending on which meeting structure your group chooses, you should always ask if you can provide more information after the asks. If the staffer/Congressperson asks a question that your group cannot answer, say that you do not know, but will follow-up. AADA staff will work with you to find the info.
- Thank them for their time and their support.