

Meeting With Your Member of Congress: A Guide for Dermatologists

Meetings with your elected officials don't just happen in Washington, D.C. You can meet with your elected officials or their staff in their local district office or the office where you practice. This guide provides essential tips to ensure a smooth, productive visit that can build an impactful relationship.

Before the Meeting

- **Identify Key Issues**

Decide on the policy or regulatory issues you plan to discuss. Access the [AADA Advocacy Resource Center](#) for the latest on dermatology priorities.

- **Research Your Elected Official**

Familiarize yourself with your elected official's priority issues and stances on AADA issues. Plan no more than 3 specific issues/bills to focus on and prepare talking points and a relevant personal story for each. Be prepared to explain why the issues you are raising are urgent – i.e. an upcoming vote or current events. Have specific asks such as cosponsoring a bill, or voting for/against a bill.

- **Schedule Your Meeting**

Reach out to AADA staff at grassroots@aad.org or find contact information for your elected official's office on their website via www.congress.gov. You can call the official's district office (not the D.C. office) and ask to speak with the scheduler, or ask for their email address. Your meeting request should include: the general time range you are interested in meeting; your contact information; the fact that you are a constituent; and specific issue(s) or legislation you would like to discuss.

Practice Visit Preparation:

- **Draft an Agenda**

Work with AADA staff to prepare an agenda to share with the legislator's staff in advance, based upon the planned amount of time the legislator can spend at your practice. ..

- **Coordinate with Your Practice Staff**

Brief your team that the purpose of the visit is to educate your legislator about dermatology practice and/or patients issues – it is not a political event in support of the legislator. Share brief information regarding the legislator's background. Plan the tour route, assign staff roles as needed, and identify key areas and equipment to highlight.

- **Confirm Logistics**

One week prior, confirm details with the legislator's office, provide contact information, and clarify parking and meeting locations. Notify AADA staff about the confirmed visit (if not scheduled by AADA staff).

During the Meeting

Practice Visits

- **Welcome and Introductions**
 - **Suggested Time:** 5 minutes
 - **Activities:** Greet the Member of Congress and staff, introduce your team, and provide a brief overview of your practice's mission.
- **Practice Tour**
 - **Suggested Time:** 30 minutes
 - **Activities:** Tour the facility, focusing on treatment rooms and specialized equipment. Explain services offered and illustrate specific challenges that align with your ask(s) (e.g., prior authorization paperwork). Visual examples strengthen your advocacy message.
- **Closing Discussion and Photos**
 - **Suggested Time:** 15 minutes
 - **Activities:** Request the Member's support for AADA's legislative priorities, offer yourself as a resource, and express gratitude for their time. Ask to take photos with the legislator and their team before departure.

Congressional Office Visits

- **Introductions**

Start the meeting by introducing yourself, thank them for taking time to meet with you, and mention any personal connection you may have with the office.
- **Legislative Asks**

Provide personal and local examples of the impact of the legislation you are advocating for. Keep your remarks focused and stick to your planned topic. You will likely have 20 minutes or less with staff, and 10 minutes or less with an elected official.
- **Closing**

Thank them for any recent support of the AADA's priority issues, offer yourself as a resource, and express gratitude for their time. Ask to take photos with the Member and their team before your departure.

After the Meeting

- **Follow-Up**

- Thank the Member of Congress and/or their staff with a follow-up email or letter.
- If you didn't know the answer to a question or if they requested additional materials, follow up and/or connect with AADA Advocacy staff to follow up.
- Share any photos and/or media coverage with AADA Advocacy staff.

- **Maintain Communication**

- Continue to engage the legislator and their staff on relevant issues.
- Attend town halls and keep your legislator and their staff informed on matters impacting dermatology.

Please be mindful about the following:

- **Don't Discuss Political Giving:** Do not discuss campaign contributions from yourself or SkinPAC. It is not acceptable to entangle legislative and policy discussions with information about campaign contributions. The best approach is to avoid any discussion of past or future contributions altogether.
- **Don't Discuss Your Voting History:** If you did not vote for your Representative or Senator, please do not mention it. It is still their job to represent you and your patients in Congress, and they are often eager to effectively champion their home districts. Do not cloud your exchange by dredging up campaign concerns or by apologizing for not giving them your support in the election.
- **Plan for Photos:** If hosting the meeting in your practice, be mindful of patient privacy. Make sure there is no visible patient data on any materials that are photographed.