

Steps to a Successful Six- Minute Meeting with Your Congressional Representatives

American Society of Nephrology

Fall 2013



Scheduling Meetings

- Locate the phone number for your representative and senators' local congressional offices using the hyperlink to the directory on the [ASN Resource Page](#).
- Call and introduce yourself.
- Explain that you are a physician / pharmacist / nurse / scientist and request a meeting with your representative/senator to discuss kidney disease and medical research with their office.
- Provide the office your contact information and thank them for their help.



Meeting Prep

- Review the meeting talking points on the [ASN Resource Page](#).
- Go to Meeting Fact Sheets link on the [ASN Resource Page](#) and print copies (one for you and two for each office you meet with) of:
 - ASN: Leading the Fight Against Kidney Disease
 - Kidney Disease by the Numbers **for your state**
 - Investment in NIH Research **for your state**
 - Testimonials on the Impact of Budget Cuts
- Bring business cards to give everyone you meet.
- Use your phone or bring a camera to take pictures with everyone you meet if they allow.



Conducting Meetings

- Arrive 5 minutes before each meeting, but no earlier.
- Start by thanking everyone for the opportunity to meet.
- Refer to the fact sheets while going over your talking points.
- Thank whoever you're meeting with again and ask if they have any questions, comments, or would like additional information.
- Ask if you can take a picture with them.



Meeting Follow-up

- Email pictures you took to policy@asn-online.org. Please include names and titles of people in the pictures.
- Complete the post-meeting survey using the hyperlink to the survey on the [ASN Resource Page](#).



Don't be surprised if....

1. Your meeting is not even six minutes
2. Your meeting goes longer than six minutes
3. You meet with an intern or young staff member
4. Your meeting occurs in a hallway or the office lobby
5. You don't receive as enthusiastic a response as hoped
6. You get questions unrelated to your message (see following pages)



Beware of 'Red Herrings' During Meetings

Red herring is an English-language idiom, a logical fallacy that misleads or detracts from the issue. It is also a literary device that leads readers or characters towards a false conclusion, often used in mystery or detective fiction.



Red Herring	Response
<p>I would love to support you and your organization. However, the federal government faces a major deficit. What is your recommendation for how to fund these important initiatives to help millions of people with kidney disease?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You understand the federal budget much better than I do. • What I do know is that more than 20,000,000 Americans have kidney disease, making it the 8th leading cause of death in the United States. • That's why it's so important for you to support NIH and kidney research specifically. A better understanding of how to treat and prevent kidney disease is the best way to eliminate or reduce the cost of care for these patients. Investing in medical research is also an economic driver.
<p>What should Congress do to fix the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm thrilled that you're interested in finding a serious solution to the SGR problem. This issue is certainly a conundrum. • Given nephrology's early experience with bundled payments and pay for performance, kidney experts are well-positioned to contribute to this discussion. I will ask a member of the staff of my organization to follow up with you to discuss SGR in more detail. • But, for today's meeting, I'm more focused on supporting kidney research at NIH.

Red Herring	Response
<p>Do you or your organization support Obamacare?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Affordable Care Act or Obamacare actually has had very little effect on patients with kidney disease. The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (MIPPA) had a more dramatic effect on kidney health. MIPPA implemented bundled payments and a pay-for-performance program for the Medicare End-Stage Renal Disease Program. • I will ask a member of the staff of my organization to follow up with you concerning MIPPA. • Right now, I'm more focused on supporting NIH and kidney research especially.
<p>Do you or your organization support gun control, immigration reform, same-sex marriage, abortion, etc.?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfortunately, I am not an expert in those issues. I'm sorry. • I am an expert in kidney disease, and I'm happy to say that the kidney-related issue I'm here to talk to you about today is far less contentious than gun control, immigration reform, same-sex marriage, abortion, etc. • That is why I am hopeful that you can support NIH and kidney research especially.