

# HINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LOBBYING VISIT

There are many ways to lobby a legislator (letters, phone calls, e-mails), but **the most effective way to lobby your legislator is through an office visit.** Discussing an issue with a legislator in person leaves a lasting impression. It shows your interest in the legislator's work and your commitment to the issue at hand.

## Scheduling the Meeting

- Refer to "Scheduling Lobby Appointments" for step-by-step instructions.

## Preparing for the Meeting

- Research the legislator. The easiest place to do this is the Legislative Action Center which can be accessed from [www.nysna.org](http://www.nysna.org). The legislator's committee assignments and voting record on nursing issues provide valuable insight into a legislator's interests and viewpoints. A legislator's political affiliation and committee assignments also impact their ability to sponsor and influence legislation.
- Research the issue. NYSNA memoranda of support or opposition and talking points are key resources. Prior to your visit, check the status of legislation by visiting the New York State Assembly or Senate websites.
- Choose one to three bills, no more, to discuss per meeting. Discussing multiple topics will weaken and complicate your message.
- Attend the legislative briefing and consult with NYSNA Governmental Affairs Department staff when participating in a NYSNA-sponsored activity.
- Plan what you will say. If several people are attending the meeting, choose one person to be the spokesperson for the group. Role play the meeting.
- Know what the opposition is saying. Anticipate the arguments against your point of view and be ready to refute them.
- Put your thoughts on paper. Bring materials with you to the meeting.

## Conducting a Successful Visit

- Arrive for your appointment on time.
- Introduce yourself and indicate that you are a constituent and, as applicable, an RN, member of the New York State Nurses Association, and/or nursing student.
- Specify the bill(s) that you came to discuss and your views on the legislation.
- Refer to NYSNA memoranda or talking points and provide copies to the legislator.
- Ask for specific action from the legislator.
- As appropriate, leave a letter that describes your position so the legislator will have a reminder of your visit. Reinforcing the message is as important as delivering the message.
- Thank the legislator for meeting with you and remind the legislator that you are available as a resource on healthcare issues.

## Following-Up

- Write a letter to your legislator thanking them for their time. Remind the legislator of the bill or issue discussed during the meeting.
- Notify NYSNA about your visit and any follow-up needed with the legislator. This feedback is important for our daily work with the legislature. This may be as simple as submitting your legislative visit report form.
- **Visit [www.nysna.org](http://www.nysna.org) for the latest information on legislation affecting nurses and their patients.**