

# Tips for Talking to Your Legislator

Alabama Pharmacy Association

## **DO:**

- Be positive, constructive, friendly, and brief. Relax.
- Maintain eye contact. This shows that you are confident about what you are saying, and it keeps the legislator engaged in the conversation.
- Thank your legislator for a previous vote, sponsorship or co-sponsorship.
- Make a specific, measurable, and concise request. Rather than “Please support pharmacy friendly issues,” ask them to support a specific bill.
- Clearly identify the subject of interest including the House and Senate Bills, if you know them.
- Communicate specific pieces of information relevant to the topic.
- Follow Up! Send a letter, postcard, email, or make a phone call.

## **DO NOT:**

- Be rude or threatening.
- Pretend to have greater political influence than you do.
- Promise something you cannot deliver.
- Be self-righteous or all-knowing.
- Be vague about the issue (know and keep in mind the member’s position and address their position specifically)
- Bring up past campaign contributions or present a check during the meeting.

## **Presenting Your Position:**

- Present your view with conviction, but do not put him or her on the defensive.
- It helps to cover your issue from the legislator’s perspective, tying it in with his or her past votes or interests.
- Listen attentively.
- The legislator’s opening discussion with you will often give you clues about how to connect your issue with his/her concerns.
- Don’t bluff – If you do not have the answer to a legislator’s question, say so. Tell the legislator you will provide the information, and then be certain that you do.
- Give responses to arguments that you know your opposition will raise, but do not degrade your opponents.
- Explain why it is important to your profession, and the action that you want the legislator to take.