

Tips for Attending a Town Hall Meeting

- 1. Be Prepared:** Prepare your questions in advance and make a note of two or three points you want to cover. Public speaking can be intimidating, so it is helpful to come prepared. Do some homework on the legislator beforehand. Read their bio, familiarize yourself with their previous positions on the issue you want to raise, and spend some time on their web site so you can identify their policy priorities and their positions on other health care issues.
- 2. Bring Materials to give to the Legislator:** You will have a limited time to present your argument and may not be able to cover everything. Bring a background document and any other materials you think will help the legislator and their staff fully understand your concern. ASCO can provide materials upon request.
- 3. Find out what the meeting format is and what is on the agenda:** Be sure to check the legislator's web site for meeting details before you attend. When you arrive, look for a sign-in sheet. You may have to sign in and indicate that you would like to ask a question before the meeting starts. If you don't see a sign-in sheet, check with a staff person about the protocol for asking questions.
- 4. Be clear, concise, and professional:** Identify yourself, thank the legislator for holding the meeting, and explain as concisely as possible the issue you want to discuss. If you have time, you may want include a sentence or two about why this issue is so important, real examples can be very influential.
- 5. Ask for an answer (politely):** When you are done explaining your concern, ask the legislator if they will take action to show their support for you. If they are hesitant to answer, do not hassle them, they may have a legitimate reason why they cannot provide a response.
- 6. Be sure to follow up with the legislator after the meeting:** Within a week of the meeting fax/write/email (whatever their preferred communication is) the legislator and/or staff person. Faxing and emailing are the most expedient options. In your correspondence, identify who you are and the date and location of the town hall you attended. Restate your concern/question and ask for a response (if they did not provide one at the meeting). If the legislator indicated they would support your position at the meeting, thank them for their support. Provide any more information they have requested, and offer to be a resource for any issues relating to cancer care.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Tara Leystra at tara.leystra@asco.org or 571-483-1646.