

Legislative District Office Visit

THE RATIONALE

Developing relationships with legislators takes time and persistence. This introductory meeting is a first step toward what you hope will be a long-term relationship. If you already have a good relationship with your elected officials, feel free to request a home visit.

You don't want to show up out of the blue with a long list of demands - like we sometimes must do during the state budget or legislative session. The idea is to build a strong, long-term relationship based on effective, regular communication with give-and-take, and periodic updates.

You want to get to know what your lawmakers are passionate about, whether it's health care, labor, equity, or something else. You want to share your passions and goals. You want to talk about what you do all day and why it matters to New Yorkers. You want to establish trust and rapport.

When lawmakers think "home care" you want them to think of YOU, not a line item in a budget. Remember that legislators are just people, and they work for YOU! Leave them feeling like home care is about serving their constituents.

HOW TO DO IT

Make the Call

1st: Identify which lawmaker you want to meet with. If you aren't sure who represents you or which district your business is in, use these links:

- Find Your State [Assembly Member](#)
- Find Your State [Senator](#)

2nd: Identify which district office you want to visit. Do this by clicking on the link to your member's webpage.

- [Senators](#) and [Assembly Members](#) each have their own page.
- Geographically large districts may have more than one regional district office. Pick the one that is most convenient for you.
- Example: You are represented by Assembly Member Karen McMahan. Visit her Assembly page, click on CONTACT, and you will see both her Albany office and her office in Williamsville. You should call the number associated with her Williamsville office, although be prepared that you may be asked to contact the Albany office. It depends on each individual member's staffing. The same process applies to Senate offices.

3rd: Decide who's going on the visit! Do you want to go alone, or go with other area providers? Make sure you have a list ready of who is planning to attend, both their name and the agency they represent.

4th: Make the call to ask for an appointment.

Example script: Hi! This is Laura Smith calling from Laura Cares at Home, located in Troy. I'd like to make an appointment to stop by for a district office visit. May I speak with someone in scheduling?

OR- This is Laura Smith calling from Laura Cares at Home, located in Troy. I, along with Bob Johnson from Bob's Home Care and Nora Jones from JonesCares would like to stop by together for an office visit. May I speak with someone in scheduling?

WHY do you want the meeting? (Sometimes you will be asked what the meeting is for, sometimes not.)

- To introduce yourself (as a valuable resource in the community).
- To strategize/work collaboratively with the lawmaker to help keep their constituents in their homes and communities (where they vote, pay taxes, and spend money).

Be prepared to meet with staff. Our legislature is very staff-driven, and meeting with a staff person is as important as meeting with the legislator they work for. Make sure to note the name of the person with whom you are meeting, their contact information (including email address), and the date, time, and location of the meeting.

5th: Verify the meeting BY EMAIL right after the call.

6th: Verify the meeting again 2 business days before the meeting - an email or phone call is fine.

Make the Visit:

1st: Make sure everyone going on the visit knows where and when they need to be. Do arrive 5 minutes early and only go into the office once your whole party is there.

2nd: Have a GENERAL idea of who is going to say what. This will vary depending on whether you already have a relationship with the lawmaker and if they have any familiarity with home care. Is anyone in your group a new provider or new to the area? Make sure to highlight that.

Focus on WHY you wanted the meeting:

- To introduce yourself as a valuable resource in the community.
- Mention you are members of the New York State Association of Health Care Providers.
- To strategize/work collaboratively with the lawmaker to help keep their constituents in their homes and communities - where they vote, pay taxes, spend money.

Lawmakers take a lot of questions from constituents who don't know where to start when they or a loved one needs care. You want to be a resource to whom your lawmaker can turn.

Focus on **YOUR** why: Why are YOU passionate about your work? What drives YOU? WHAT you do is important, and you will talk about that, but start with what motivates you to keep going despite it being a very tough business. Check out [this video](#) if you need some inspiration to help you express your "why".

After the WHY, talk about the WHAT. What do you do in the community? Who do you provide care for? What kind of services do you provide? Don't get bogged down in technical language and acronyms. For instance, instead of saying "we provide care to elders with their ADLs" you might say "we assist elders who need help to bathe and dress". District office staff tend to be generalists and not experts in home care. Maybe talk about a specific case as an example (being mindful of not sharing personally identifiable information).

You want to give as much information as you get. Asking how you and your elected officials can work collaboratively to keep people in their homes and communities will give you insight into what the lawmaker is thinking or knows.

3rd: Have something to leave with the legislator or their staff. Make sure to bring a couple of copies. Items to include:

- Overview of Home Care in New York State (HCP-developed “Home Care 101” document) provided in this toolkit.
- If your agency has a promotional document or packet that describes who you are and what you do, bring that along. Don’t bring the whole sales pitch - keep it short.
- If you don’t have a document in-house, you can use the “Swiss-cheese” document provided in this toolkit. Just be sure to fill in your agency’s information before printing.
- Include your business card! Include your cell phone number if it isn’t already there.

Make The Ask- A Home Care Visit

- Ask your lawmaker if they would like the opportunity to see home care in action! You don’t have to set it up on the spot but do indicate that such a visit could be set up, could be short in duration (15-30 minutes for instance), and that we have legally-reviewed HIPAA compliance forms, etc. to make sure that patient confidentiality is upheld. Part of your follow-up will include actions to start that process.

Wrap it Up

- When it’s time to end your meeting, be gracious. Say thank you. State what your next step will be. If your legislator is interested in making a home visit, say that you will follow up with their scheduler to get some prospective dates. If they aren’t interested, let them know that you will be dropping by from time to time to keep them in the home care loop. When you leave, be sure to thank the office staff. Be sure to hand over your leave-behind materials and business cards.
- If there is interest in a home visit, follow up the next business day with a phone call to the district office to get some prospective dates. The next edition of the *HCP Insider* will include instructions and materials for a home visit, including HIPAA compliance forms and some tips for success.
- Regardless of interest in a home visit, SAY THANK YOU by sending a thank you note in the mail. Everyone emails- and personal touches go a long way.

TELL HCP!

- Let the HCP Public Policy team know how it went! Is there any follow-up we need to do? Anything we should know or take note of? Any questions you need help with? [Drop us an email.](#)