



experts in the field. Think of it this way, how are public officials expected to make decisions about complex medical decisions that affect the practice of surgery if there are no surgeons “lobbying” their elected officials?

### ***Ohio Chapter, ACS Lobbying***

The Ohio Chapter works very hard to make lobbying easy for you. We provide you with all the tools necessary to convey your message to your elected leader.

- **One Voice.** Through initiatives like the Ohio Chapter ACS Legislative Day, we try to speak with our elected leaders using one voice – surgeons making similar points at the same time to legislators. This helps to maximize our message’s impact.
- **Position of the Ohio Chapter.** It is important that you inform legislators of the Chapter position on an issue. We will provide you talking points to convey this united message to elected leaders. Credibility of both the Chapter and individual doctor’s voice being heard is paramount.
- **Scheduling meetings.** The Ohio Chapter and our lobbying team are eager to assist you in planning your meeting with legislators. Knowing that you have a meeting scheduled can help us assist you with necessary collateral materials to help you make your case.
- **Following up with the Ohio Chapter on meeting results.** This critical aspect of the meeting allows the Chapter to know how to follow up with the elected leader. If you promised to get back to them with materials or to provide the Chapter position on an issue, we need to know so that we can follow through. The more information that you can provide back to the Chapter lobbying team, the more effective we can be at shaping the legislative landscape for you!

### ***How Does One Lobby?***

Any effort to influence policy, legislation, or regulation must be focused and incorporate the following elements. The Ohio Chapter can assist with:

- **Identify your goal.** What is it you want? If you haven’t precisely identified this, you have no business talking to a policymaker about your issue or conducting a discussion about an undefined outcome.
- **Plan.** Planning is paramount and the Chapter Executive Office and our legislative agents can assist. Issues like knowing the legislative calendar – and how it affects your goal – are critical. Remember, lobbying is a year-round activity. Do not wait for a legislative session to cultivate your relationship or to begin your education on important issues.
- **Precise communication in politics is critical.** Just like your medical charts or journal articles, precise language is important. This means using specific language; and the principle of listening. A policymaker may say to you, “I will do what I can,” or “I share your concerns.” These statements mean exactly what they say. These are not commitments, and you need to be aware of that.
- **Ask for what you want,** and be sure the right person is asking and being asked.
- **Know the context** of the policymakers decision making process. Know how much a legislator can, or will do, for a cause based upon their political party, committee assignments, past efforts and votes and personal interests.
- **Distribute your “asks.”** Never overburden any one legislator, policymaker, or staff

person. This requires planning and prioritization. Again, the Chapter Executive Office and our legislative agents would be happy to assist with these efforts.

- **Don't create your own problems.** If you brief a policymaker on a program where you don't have a problem, you may have one when you come out of the meeting. Remember, legislator's job is to fix things by proposing legislation. You bringing up issues often times sparks thoughts that may cause actions you never meant. This is why using talking points to keep you on track is beneficial.
- **Understand the policy process (executive or legislative).**
- **Know your policymakers.** Know what committees your legislator/policymaker serves on. As much as possible, try to tie in how your proposal fits within their goals as an elected leader.
- **Make your request early.** Few things irritate legislators or staff more than last minute requests or changes.
- **Enlist the support of your stakeholder base.** Develop and provide communications (letters and calls) of support from the stakeholders (hospital department heads, administrators, or other executives).

### ***What to Expect: A Typical Lobbying Meeting***

Preparation, consideration, and clarity are required for a successful lobbying experience. A typical sequence of events follows. A similar, but not exact, approach applies at various levels of government.

#### ***Planning and Preparation: Making the Appointment***

Before requesting a meeting, you must be clear that your meeting is more than a gathering to exchange information – as a member of the Ohio Chapter, ACS and the American College of Surgeons, any such meeting is an attempt to establish a relationship with a policymaker who has an interest in and potential impact on issues you care about. It should be sought, planned for, and conducted as such.

- The Chapter Executive Office and the Legislative Agent can assist you with scheduling a meeting. Make sure that you don't do all of the work...let us help!
- Request a meeting with the policymaker in writing with the office you wish to meet (i.e. the statehouse office versus the district office).
- Elected officials typically ask for meeting requests in writing. Do not be surprised if this is the case. You should keep in mind that, due to security procedures, postal mail can be delayed for weeks if mailing is to your federal representatives. When requesting a meeting in writing, it is strongly advised that you either fax or e-mail the request.
- You will work with the member's scheduler to confirm the appointment, but be sure to ask for the name of the staff member who will attend the meeting.
- Generally speaking, congressional offices require two to three weeks to schedule, especially with the member. State Senators and Representatives are typically scheduled much more quickly. Meetings with staff can be scheduled much more flexibility.
- When scheduling a meeting, make sure that you are aware of the legislative calendar. If you are requesting to meet with an elected official during a scheduled recess, it may be difficult because they are working in their home districts. Typically, meeting fall on

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays as this is when members are in session.

- Ask for, and plan on a 15-30 minute meeting, but be aware that the meeting could be as short as five minutes in a hallway. This is especially true in Washington where space is much more limited than is typically found in statehouse offices.
- Come prepared with written briefing materials, no more than a few pages. Take a colleague or assistant with you to the meeting – no more. Again, meeting space is extremely limited and effective communication requires fewer, not more, people in a meeting.
- When scheduling multiple meetings, be sure to allow plenty of time to get to your next appointment – especially in Washington. Group meetings with multiple Senate offices together and likewise, group House visits together. This will potentially save you a lot of walking!

### *The Meeting*

If the member can attend the meeting, then you will be ushered into his/her office, and in nearly every case, a staff member will also attend. Your principal advocate should sit closest to the member, for best communication. Do not be afraid to mention any family connections or past interactions which may register, and provide the meeting a level of ease. Just like with your patients, the more at ease they are with the situation, the better chance of everything going smoothly. The member will also be curious to know about your connection to his/her state or community. However, get to the point quickly; outline the issue, the players involved, the pros and cons of the issue as you see them, a proposed solution, and the specific request you have for the member.

A quick word of advice and caution: In all legislative interactions, you must remember that this is a peer-to-peer interaction. You are not a supplicant. Your information will help legislators make more informed decisions, which will help their constituents, and thus, their career. You should guard against viewing legislators as adversaries in your discussions. When this happens, the psychology of the interaction changes and your conversation tone changes as well. The information you are supplying is a service to your legislators and they should appreciate the time you are spending with them.

There are many circumstances where an elected official may be called away from a previously planned meeting. Votes may be called, legislative negotiations may require attendance, or a meeting with legislative leadership may arise. Warning: Do not be offended at this happening. Staff members are responsible for communicating your issues to the elected official and working the issue, so treat them as you would the member.

While we are talking about elected official's staff members, there is another thing to keep in mind. You may be surprised and shocked at how young most of the staff members are on Capitol Hill or in the Statehouse. It is very important to show respect to these staffers, despite their youth. They hold a tremendous amount of power in determining your future relationship with the office and the member and will be responsible for working your issue day in and day out. Building a relationship with staff is just as important as building a relationship with elected officials or policymakers.

If the elected official is called away before your meeting, you may meet with staff in the lobby or even the hallway outside the main office. This is not a sign of disrespect, but a reflection upon the limited space available.



### *After the Meeting: Follow-Up*

Send a thank you note to the policymaker for his or her time. Take the opportunity to foster goodwill toward your elected leader. Make a decision to get your name and issue in front of the legislator and staff member again.

Follow up as agreed during the meeting. Again, remember that this is the beginning of what you hope will be an extended relationship with the elected leader, policymaker, and/or staff member, so follow-up is as important as the preparation.

### ***Ohio Chapter, American College of Surgeons Lobbying Team***

#### **Capitol Consulting Group Inc**

Capitol Consulting Group brings unique insights and abilities to governmental affairs representation in Ohio. Capitol Consulting Group is dedicated to serving Ohio's surgeons' interests through professional representation and strict adherence to ethical standards. Capitol Consulting Group and its consultants have earned a respected reputation through a commitment of professional integrity and more than 50 years of combined Statehouse knowledge and experience.

**Dan Jones** has developed an extensive portfolio of accomplishments and experience in Ohio public affairs. Over the past twenty-one years, Mr. Jones has built a respected reputation of integrity and professionalism in state governmental affairs. Beginning his career in Statehouse politics at the age of eighteen, Mr. Jones has immersed himself in the personalities, insights and workings of state government.

After 12 years of experience as a legislative aide in the Ohio House and Senate, and as a lobbyist for the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants and Community Mutual Insurance Company, Ohio's largest Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan, Mr. Jones was recruited to serve as legislative liaison for Governor George Voinovich. In addition to his responsibilities of representing the Governor on the important issues before the House and Senate, Mr. Jones was empowered with the responsibility of building a legislative affairs program for the Governor and the twenty-six administration departments. Mr. Jones was instrumental in staffing agency liaisons many of whom are still in state government to date.

After leaving the Governor's office in 1992, Mr. Jones formed Capitol Consulting Group, Inc. where he has served the interests of a variety of private, corporate and association clients in the following: health care, manufacturing, agriculture, waste, construction, telecommunications, and service industries. Jones is a graduate of The Ohio State University where he earned the following degrees: Bachelor of Science in International Business, Bachelor of Arts in Russian Language and a Masters in Business Administration.

**Belinda Jones, Esq.** With more than a decade of experience in legislative and regulatory affairs, Ms. Jones provides a unique blend of education and experience to CCG. Ms. Jones began her legislative experience in the Ohio House of Representatives where she worked in the Clerk's Office of former Speaker Vernal G. Riffe. As an aide in the Ohio House, Ms. Jones developed a working knowledge of state government particularly in the areas of economic development and education.

After obtaining her law degree at Capital University, Ms. Jones joined The Scotts Company, the

