



Kentucky Dental Association

HOW TO MEET WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

Legislators want to hear from YOU - their constituents! Meeting with a legislator is the best way to educate them about issues that are important to dentistry and, ideally, influence their decisions.

Two rules to remember!!!

1. Do not feel like you are imposing.
2. Do not feel intimidated.

Legislators meet with constituents on a regular basis. Remember that legislators depend on their constituents (you) for support just as you depend on them. Below are some helpful steps to follow to ensure a successful meeting.

Goals:

- ✓ Educate the legislator about the positive impact of dentistry in his/her district
- ✓ Provide accurate and concise information
- ✓ Counteract the messages of any opponents with facts provided by KDA
- ✓ Seek a commitment from the legislator to support a KDA issue when applicable

Step 1: Arrange a face-to-face meeting at your office or in Frankfort at their office

- A face-to-face meeting is the most effective type of communication. If you take the time to meet with a legislator personally, they will remember you. A phone call, email or regular mail is no comparison.
- The effort that you make to meet with a legislator face-to-face indicates that you really care about dentistry and the overall oral health of Kentuckians. If you can't take time out of your busy day to meet with a legislator, they will not grasp the importance of your issues.
- How to find your legislator:
 - Go to the Legislative Research Commission's Website's "Find Your Legislator" Page and type in your address. <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/findyourlegislator/findyourlegislator.html>
 - It will show their email address and Office Number.
- Contact the legislator directly by phone or via email.
 - You can email an invitation to your legislator (See sample template attached) OR
 - Call the legislator's office directly at (502) 564-8100 and speak with their assistant who can help you schedule a meeting. When you call ask to be connected to your legislator.
- Explain to the legislator or assistant that you would like to:
 - Invite him/her to your office in the district or if during the legislative session, that you would like to meet with them at their Frankfort Office.
 - Discuss issues important to dentistry (KDA will provide you with talking points and handouts for the legislator)



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- Provide a tour of your office that cares for patients in his/her district and employs the constituents of his/her district.
- If meeting in Frankfort, give the legislator the # of residents you serve, type of practice, number of people you employ, etc.
- Be available when the legislator is available; confirm a date and time.
- **Alert KDA** that the meeting has been scheduled as a KDA staff member might want attend.

Step 2: Prepare for the meeting

- First, notify the KDA Executive Director so you have the appropriate materials.
- If you are meeting on the annual KDA Legislative Day in Frankfort, the KDA will provide you materials for the meeting.
- If you are meeting with the legislator as a group, agree on the message and how it is delivered before hand (1-2 spokespeople). This will show a united front.
- Do your homework – research the legislator’s district, biography, committee assignments and general interests to generate meaningful conversation. Find your legislator on the LRC website at <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/> (Click on “Who’s My Legislator”)
- Prepare a “leave behind” informational packet that includes pertinent fact sheets on dentistry (KDA can provide you with this information) along with your contact information. If the legislator has a follow up question on any dental related issues, we want him/her to pick up the phone and call the expert –YOU
- Conduct a walk-through of your office (if applicable) – decide who and what the legislator will see on the facility tour. TIP: Introduce them to your staff.

Step 3: During the tour and meeting

- **Be on time (early), positive and friendly. TREAT THEM LIKE A PATIENT!!!!**
- Conduct the tour of your practice. (If applicable) During the tour, point out any awards/recognitions you and your staff have earned, how many employees and patients are served, and engage in conversation with the legislator – do not lecture. Encourage questions along the way!!!
- If you meet at the legislator’s Frankfort Office, give them a brief overview of your practice. Invite them to take a tour of your office during the interim when the legislator is out of session.
- Once the tour is concluded, conduct the meeting portion of the visit. Know your agenda and stick to your message (Run everything by KDA first) – do not assume the legislator is familiar with your issues.
- Keep the presentation simple and straightforward:
 - Introduce yourself and others, thank the legislator for attending, and recognize his/her previous support for dental-related issues.
 - Open the discussion by framing the issue. Don’t assume they are experts in dentistry.
 - Present your position on the issue (KDA will provide handouts) and support your position by explaining the facts and incorporating personal experiences.
 - Apply the issue to the legislator’s district –how this issue affects constituents in the district. (Keep this positive and avoid complaining. The Goal is to highlight the importance and value of the care you give to the community.)
 - Make a specific request – ask the legislator to support your issue (KDA’s issue).



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- If he/she seems supportive, seek a firm commitment (If you are asking for a vote)
- If he/she remains undecided or opposed, ask them to keep an open mind and try to address their concerns.
- If he/she diverts the discussion to avoid an answer, politely return to your issue and reaffirm the importance of the issue to his/her constituents.
- IF YOU DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER let the legislator that you or the KDA will follow up with the information.
- Make yourself and others available for questions following the meeting.
- Deliver the prepared informational packet to the legislator provided to you by KDA.
- (Staying on message is important)
- Conclude the meeting – thank the legislator for attending and exchange contact information.

Step 4: After the meeting

- Contact KDA to inform them of the meeting and provide pertinent details that will be useful to our legislative advocacy efforts. Communication back to KDA (Steve Robertson) is extremely important.
- Each person who attended the meeting should send a thank-you note to the legislator to reinforce your message (within 1 day).
- Follow up with the legislator if he/she had questions that were not answered during the meeting (within 1- 2 days).



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Call Script – Scheduling a Meeting with Your Legislator

(Note: Adapt the bracketed areas before calling. Be courteous, professional, and brief.)

SCRIPT

Call the Legislator’s Office (502) 564-8100 and ask to be connected to your legislator’s office.

“Hello, my name is [Your Name], and I am a dentist with [Office Name] in [City/County]. I’m also a member of the Kentucky Dental Association.”

“I am calling to request a meeting with [Senator/Representative Last Name]. I would like to invite [him/her] to visit my dental office in the district or, if it’s easier, meet in Frankfort at a time convenient for [him/her].”

“Our practice has been serving the [City/County] community for [# of years], and we proudly employ [# of employees]. I would like the opportunity to talk with [Senator/Representative Last Name] about key issues affecting dentistry, our patients, and oral health in Kentucky.”

“Could you please let me know the best way to coordinate a time on [Senator/Representative Last Name]’s schedule?”

(If staff asks for your information, provide the following:)

- “My phone number is [Insert Phone #].”
- “My email is [Insert Email].”

“Thank you for your help in arranging this. Please let [Senator/Representative Last Name] know that I look forward to the opportunity to meet and share how dentistry is making a difference in our district.”

Tips for Members

- ☑ Be polite to staff—relationships with staff are just as important.
- ☑ Keep the call short and focused.
- ☑ Write down the name of the staff person you spoke with.
- ☑ Follow up with a confirmation email once a time is set.
- ☑ Contact the KDA to let them know of the meeting.



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Legislative Meeting Checklist

Legislators are deluged with information on a daily basis, so the more effectively and more often you communicate with your legislator the more impact you will have. We understand that building a long-term relationship with a legislator does not happen overnight, but consistently communicating effectively is the first step in the process. This grassroots toolkit provides several ways for the KDA Key Contact to build relationships with legislators.

Three points to remember as you begin communicating with your local legislator:

- All politics is local (the legislator cares about how it will affect his/her district).
- Quality and accuracy of communication is essential **(BE CONCISE, FOCUSED, AND CONSISTENT WITH KDA INFORMATION PROVIDED)**.
- Building a long-term trusted relationship with a legislator is the most valuable thing you can do.

TO DO

1. Get to know your legislator – research their interests, biography, family, and past involvement on long-term care issues. If you don't know your legislator, find a friend who does and ask them to make an introduction so there is a personal, localized connection. *(As soon as possible)*
2. Deliver KDPAC contribution. *(KDAPC will coordinate with you)*
3. Host legislator for tour/meeting at your office. *(May-December)*
4. Attend at least 2 candidate fundraisers, picnics and campaign events. List events below that you plan to attend. *(July-December)*

Event #1: _____
(Description, Date)

Event #2: _____
(Description, Date)

5. Get involved in your local community group (Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, and Rotary). Use these opportunities to tell the positive stories about dentistry and strengthen your base of support through these business leadership groups. *(Ongoing)*

Please make every effort to complete all tasks by November 15th of each year