

Meeting Tips (please review before calling):

Pre-Meeting:

Remember that this is your opportunity to educate Congress on echocardiography-related legislative goals and issues. Senators listen to constituents or voters before any other group (“All Politics is Local”). Your goals are to:

1. Initiate and/or develop long-term relationships with policymakers;
2. Educate Congressional legislators and their staffs on ASE legislative priorities;
3. Above all, get action in support of ASE goals.

Be prepared by knowing your message/talking points and bringing your materials. Be patient and flexible as congressional schedules are packed and frequently change. If necessary, accept meetings with staff if the Member is unavailable, but also reschedule a meeting with the member when possible.

During the Meeting:

First ask how much time you have and anticipate the meeting may be cut off earlier than expected.

Be concise, stick to the facts and avoid unrelated issues or airing personal ‘grievances’ about the Member, their staff, their party or Congress – all of which can be brought up at another time.

Personalize echocardiography for them by explaining your role and importance to your patients, facility, and the health care community. You want them to trust you so that they think of you when they need health information or perspective on cardiac and other health care issues.

Be sure to make your request (the most common advocacy mistake is failing to do so), leave supporting materials, note what staff were in the meeting and thank everyone for their time.

If they say out right that they cannot help with this request or in this manner, ask them what they would be willing to do.

Post-Meeting:

The second most common mistake made by advocates is to fail to follow up after the meeting. Remember that having a meeting is just the beginning; it is not the goal.

Try to engage the legislator outside of this one meeting by attending town hall meetings, state fairs, and other events the Member plans to attend. You can also ask for the Member and/or staffer to tour your facility, if you have one, or you can attend a fund raiser in his/her district/state.

Post-Meeting Action Items:

- 1) Send a “thank you” note. A draft “thank you” e-mail is included at the bottom of this message. For messages to staff, please BOTH send an e-mail AND make a phone call in follow up, as some staff respond more quickly to one or the other. The ASE Legislative

Action Center (www.asecho.capwiz.com) provides phone numbers and e-mails for legislators both in DC and in their home districts. Due to “9-11” and the contemporary anthrax mailings, don’t send letters unless you fax them.

- 2) Please send ASE staff a short update that the meeting occurred, who attended, what specific commitments were made and your general impressions of how the meeting went. Send this update to both Cathy Kerr (CKerr@ASEcho.org) and Adam Chrisney (Adam.Chrisney@ppsv.com). *This is very important so that we can coordinate your effort with those by other ASE members and with other medical societies.*

Draft Follow up Message (feel free to personalize):

Hi (Member/staffer’s name),

I am following up on a meeting I had with you recently. In that meeting, I asked for the assistance of your office in helping echocardiography with the severe payment cuts we face with the recently proposed FY 2010 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule rule.

I am sure you remember that ASE is a professional organization of physicians, cardiac sonographers, nurses and scientists involved in echocardiography, the use of ultrasound to image the heart and cardiovascular system. We remain concerned that the proposed rule will impose unsustainable cuts for echocardiography services.

In my meeting with you, I greatly appreciated your expressed interest in maintaining access to echocardiography services for cardiac patients. As CMS continues to develop a final rule for these cardiac services, I urge you to use the attached document as a draft for a letter sent by your office to CMS asking that agency to work with our industry to fix these payments as suggested in the letter.

I hope your office will be able to help us address our concerns. You may also be contacted by our Washington, D.C. counsel in follow up to this message. Thanks again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,