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TIPS FOR VIRTUAL ADVOCACY

When you meet with a Member of the California Legislature, expect to be granted about 15 minutes with your Legislator or his or her staff. Don't be offended if you are interrupted. Be flexible and prepared to make every second count.

1. Prepare for your virtual visit – review your materials ahead of time and coordinate or practice with your teammates. Business casual attire is fine. Try to have your background quiet and calm to avoid distractions. If you have pictures or props to share be sure they are nearby.
2. Do not keep the Legislator or staff person waiting. Login a few minutes early to make sure your video and audio are working and you are ready when they arrive in the meeting room.
3. Don't be offended if you are kept waiting. It is sometimes impossible for Legislators or their staff to be prompt. If it is five minutes past the start time, your group leader should contact the staff via email to see if they will still be able to join the meeting.
4. Begin with a quick round of introductions – names, relation to bleeding disorders and your hometown. Constituents of the member should go first and take the lead in the meeting.
5. Do not waste time. Remember why you are there. Following introductions, at least one person should share their story, and then you can go through the issues and “asks” that we are bringing to the Legislator.
6. Use persuasion, not confrontation. Present your concerns clearly and in an orderly fashion. Do not overwhelm the Legislator or staff person with impersonal statistics and details. State the problem in human terms, with real examples of how the situation adversely affects constituents back home.
7. Inform the legislator as to how you will follow-up the meeting. Offer to provide a fact sheet or other supplementary information and further assistance. Do not leave the office without the name of the staff person who will be your contact on the issue.
8. Never make up answers to a question if you are unsure. It is always okay to say you don't know and that you will get back to them with an answer – then be sure to write down the question and ask HCC to follow up.
9. If for some reason the staff cancels or no-shows, use the record feature to record your story and send it to them via email as a follow up.
10. Send a thank you note to the legislator or staff person. If you thank the staff person you met with by name, the letter is sure to end up on the legislator's desk. In your letter, take the opportunity to review the issue. The importance of follow-through cannot be overstated.