



12 Steps for a Successful Legislative Visit

1. Be on time for your appointment, and be flexible if the legislator needs to reschedule. Days are hectic at the Capitol, and it's normal for appointments to get shifted. Try to keep the meeting within a 10-15 minute time frame. Keep it short and sweet!
2. If you are with a delegation of TAADAS members, pick a spokesperson to lead the overview of the TAADAS Legislative Briefing. Go over the points you want to highlight before asking the legislator their opinion to ensure you get a chance to cover all of the issues.
3. Give them the facts– provide statistics and correlating evidence for each point you make.
4. Tell personal stories of individuals affected by addiction. Help legislators see the individual impact of recovery and treatment services.
5. Direct the discussion to the legislator's district. Provide insight about how their constituency has been affected by addiction and about recovery and treatment services in their district. Point out how TAADAS' position can improve services in their district.
6. Ask the legislator for his/her opinion. Ask about legislation that he/she has sponsored, co-sponsored, or supported that has an impact on substance abuse and addiction policy.
7. If you meet with a staff member, treat them as you would a legislator. They are usually the person carrying your issues/interests to the legislators, and they play a crucial role in educating legislators about how to vote on upcoming issues.
8. If you don't know an answer, offer to get the information to the legislator later and follow up as soon as possible. To maintain consistency in messaging, do not try to craft an answer on the spot.
9. When advocating a position on a particular piece of legislation, ask the legislator to vote Yes or No on the bill and record their response. If they request more information, let TAADAS staff know.
10. If the legislator asks you to take a walk with him/her to their next appointment, do so and do not be offended. This is a great opportunity to carry on the conversation, and you might get deeper information on the legislator's opinions.
11. Take agency brochures and other promotional items for legislators and staff. Don't forget to leave the TAADAS Legislative Briefing and Legislator Folders behind.
12. Send a thank you note after your visit, and stay in touch with the legislator throughout the year. Invite him/her to your agency and to any community activities taking place. Legislators work in their districts when they're not in Nashville, so make sure to meet with them back home!