

Dos and Dont's for Meetings with Legislators

Do:

- Give out 2 of your business cards, 1 for staff and 1 for legislator
- Be respectful
- Listen to what a Legislator or Staff have to say
- Refer to bill numbers, not simply the topic
- Be brief and to the point
- Use your own words
- Tell a personal anecdote to illustrate your point(s)
- Be courteous and reasonable (OK to express negative emotions – but not at Legislator)
- Personalize your message to the Legislator and their staff
- Ask questions, and show your interest
- Be gracious for time given you
- Say thank you for taking the time to meet with you
- Offer yourself up as a resource, say you are available to answer questions or consult on issues related to mental health and/or mental illness
- Follow up if you say you are going to follow up

Do Not:

- Say "I voted for you"
- Remind the legislator that you are a taxpayer
- Remind him how powerful the physician lobby, or CPA is
- Ever become argumentative with either Legislators or staff
- Say that you are certain the majority of his or her constituency feels the way you do, unless you are certain about that fact
- Say, or even hint, that politics is sleazy or dishonorable
- Don't disparage opponents. No ad hominem attacks.
 - "Jumping" on the ideas expressed by others can make for a lively exchange; jumping on the individuals themselves is uncivil behavior
- Take it personally if an office visit doesn't go your way for any reason, and
- ***NEVER EVER mention campaign donations in ANY capitol office for ANY reason or in ANY other setting in relation to a bill or other issue the Legislator MAY VOTE ON!!***