

## A VISIT IS WORTH A MILLION WORDS:

### HOW TO SCHEDULE & PREPARE FOR A CONGRESSIONAL SITE VISIT

Inviting your U.S. Senators, Representatives, and their staff to visit your clinic, medical center, or research institution to meet you, your team, and patients (if possible) is an excellent way to demonstrate the value of HIV services and the federal funding that supports HIV prevention, care, treatment, and research, as well highlight the success of your program. Building and sustaining relationships with your elected officials is a strategic way to contribute to discussions about federal funding as well as HIV and other infectious diseases-related policy issues.

### HIVMA and RWMPC Staff Are Here to Help!

To get started, please contact either George Fistonich, HIVMA Senior Policy & Advocacy Manager, at [gfistonich@hivma.org](mailto:gfistonich@hivma.org), or Jenny Collier, Convener of the Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition, at [jcollier@colliercollective.org](mailto:jcollier@colliercollective.org).

## Checklist for Organizing a Site Visit

### Scheduling

- **Schedule the visit with the assistance of HIVMA or RWMPC staff who will coordinate with your institution and the policy maker's office** to schedule the site visit.
- **Confirm the visit with the policy maker's scheduler 1-2 weeks in advance** of the visit, including the exact time and length of the visit, as well as who plans to attend (e.g., policy maker and/or his or her staff).
- **Get information for the "visit day"** contact person from the policy maker's office.

### Materials

- **Develop relevant materials** to share with the policy maker and staff ahead of the visit. HIVMA and RWMPC staff also can help with materials development and has resources you can use. Materials should include:
  - An agenda or schedule of events for the visit
  - List of visit participants, including brief bios
  - A map, directions, parking instructions for the visit
  - Contact information for key staff
  - Clinic and/or institution materials, including a brochure or brief fact sheet.

## Preparation

- **Notify clinic and/or institution staff about the visit**, including the date, time, and duration.
- **Describe specific goals** and expectations for the visit.
- **Request suggestions for patients and staff** who would be good candidates to share their stories.
- **Explain the visit to patients and staff beforehand** and share the agenda and discussion topics. Reassure them that a respectful discussion is expected.
- **Identify a volunteer to take pictures** for social media both during and after the visit.
- **Prep participating staff** at least one day before the visit to ensure that all participants understand their roles, the purpose of the visit, and are aware of the tour route and timing. Make sure to select locations for pre- and post-tour sit-down discussions.

## Visit Day

- **Greet the policy maker and their staff** as they arrive at your facility.
- **Host a sit-down discussion** with the policy maker and selected program staff to describe the program. Make sure this discussion does not run too long. Allow plenty of time for the facility tour.
- **Tour the facility**, making sure to highlight special or particularly effective services provided.
- **Give the policy maker and their staff an opportunity to meet with patients**, if applicable, to hear personal stories and learn how your clinic, research, or other funding helps patients.
- **Wrap up the visit** by checking on the policy maker's experience, and thank them for their time.
- **Take note of issues** raised during the visit and any questions that require follow up.
- **Take some final photos!**

## Follow Up

- **Post photos from the visit on social media**, making sure to tag and thank the policy maker.
- **Email thank you notes**, including a thank you letter for the scheduler to share with the policy maker, and individual thank you emails to all of the staff who visited.
- **Send any requested information, materials, or answers to questions** that were not available during the visit.
- **Share with HIVMA or RWMPC staff the policy issues raised during the visit** so that they can help you develop appropriate follow up.

*Adapted from the 2016 Ryan White Program Clinical Site Visit Check List created by Collier Collective, LLC*

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