



## How to Call a Member of Congress

Phone calls to legislators' offices can be an effective and quick way to log your opinion on an issue, as well as urge a legislator to take a specific action. Here are some tips on how to make the most of a phone call to Capitol Hill.

- Know the issue you wish to discuss, your goal or the action you want the legislator to take. Before calling, have talking points written out in front of you and review them carefully so you know exactly what you want to say. Include a few compelling and personal facts to convince them to take action.
- You can find phone numbers for Senators and Representatives on their websites; you can also call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to your Senator's or Representative's office.
- When calling your senator or representative's Washington, D.C., office, you'll always speak with a member of their staff. Don't expect to speak personally with your legislator themselves.
- Identify yourself to the receptionist as a constituent and state your name and hometown. Ask to speak with the staffer (usually the Health Legislative Assistant) responsible for the issue you're interested in.
- If the receptionist asks you to leave a message with them, let them know why you're calling and as that the relevant staffer return your call.
- If you are transferred to the Health Legislative Assistant or if you are placed into the staffer's voicemail, reintroduce yourself and identify the topic you are calling to discuss.
- Keep the message simple and concise. A good model to follow is: State the issue, support with facts, and state the action you wish them to take, such as asking the legislator's support for a bill.
- Always be polite in your tone and language, and do not assume that the person taking your call is familiar with the issue you are calling to discuss.
- Offer to send additional or follow-up information to the staffer and request their preferred mode of communication (e.g., email address).
- Thank the staffer for his or her time and indicate that you appreciate their willingness to listen and record your comments.

Phone calls are just one way make your voice heard, and along with written communications and in-person meetings, are very effective ways to make yourself available as a trusted resource and to build and strengthen relationships with legislators.

Thank you for taking action on behalf of the PA profession! Contact Kristin Butterfield, AAPA's director of grassroots and political advocacy, with questions about contacting your legislators.