



POLICY & ADVOCACY

Best Practices for Meeting with Lawmakers



Whether in Washington, DC, district offices, or in your state capitol, meeting with congressional leaders, is an effective way to engage with them on health policy issues and providing expertise on topics specifically impacting nursing care and Latino health. You are encouraged to meet with your lawmakers throughout the year, including meeting with federal lawmakers at NAHNs *Health Policy Summit* and state lawmakers at state lobby days coordinated through your NAHN State chapter or State Nurses Association. The following tips are offered to guide productive and insightful dialogue.



Begin by Introducing yourself

Advocacy is all about building relationships! It is therefore important for policy makers to know you and your ties to the community. Let them know how you serve the community and how long you have lived or worked there. Exploring ways to connect on a local level enables the development of meaningful relationships and raises the probability they will reach out to you for your expertise when it comes to issues impacting the delivery of care for Latinos



Provide background information about NAHN.

Understanding the organization you represent is critical to providing context and credibility for your meeting. As the nation's leading professional organization for Latino nurses, NAHN has been devoted to promoting safe, quality health care delivery to Latino communities and individuals since 1975, serving as the center of excellence for Latino nurses by advancing educational, professional and leadership skills and opportunities. Through its renowned professional journal, *Hispanic Health Care International (HHCI)*, *Latino Leadership Institute*, and *Health Policy Summit*, the National Association of Hispanic Nurses contributes to knowledge development worldwide, disseminating clinical practice, education, research, and policy on issues concerning Hispanic/Latino populations in the United States and abroad. NAHN is committed to advancing the health in Hispanic communities and to lead, promote and advocate the educational, professional, and leadership opportunities for Hispanic nurses.



Discuss policy priorities.

If planning a meeting separate from the *Health Policy Summit*, reach out to NAHN Policy & Advocacy Chair ahead of time so a guide can be created with up to date talking points for your conversation. As you discuss the policy priorities, share personal stories related to the issues to demonstrate how the implementation of certain health policies can impact provision of quality care, reduce loss, and improve health outcomes. Your input is a valuable tool that lawmakers can use to make decisions about their stance on proposed legislation and/or help garner support for legislation.



Allow time for the policymaker or staffer to ask questions.

While it is important to discuss key talking points, it is imperative to leave time for lawmakers and/or the staffers you are meeting with to ask questions. They may ask anything from clarification questions to subject matter specific questions to historical or process-related questions. If they ask a question to which you do not know the answer, that's OK! Simply refer them to NAHN Management staff or Executive Board who can provide the requested information and or connect them with members of the Policy & Advocacy Committee.



Don't ignore legislative staff.

- Legislators are often busy and rely on their staff to assist with nearly all aspects of their official duties, including evaluating and deciding positions on key issues. Forming relationships with your elected official's staff is just as important as knowing the legislator themselves. Key people to know in each office include the *legislator's chief of staff* and **staff who cover health policy issues**.

Thank You **Send a thank you after your visit.**

Following your meeting, send a follow up note to the individuals you met with to express gratitude for their time, provide any additional information that came up during the meeting, and pass along your contact information for future correspondence. Be sure to relay any feedback from the meeting at the monthly President's meeting and/or the Chair of Policy & Advocacy Committee.

LOOKING FOR HELP SCHEDULING MEETINGS WITH YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OR STATE LAWMAKERS? CONTACT NAHN STAFF OR CHAIR OF POLICY & ADVOCACY COMMITTEE FOR ASSISTANCE.