



## **Capitol Visit Preparation and Tips**

### **Preparing for the Visit**

Before your meeting, do your research on who you'll meeting with. What are their policy interests? What might spark their interest in public health? This might come from committee assignments, professional or educational experience, or legislation they've introduced. All state legislators have an official page with a brief biography, staff list, committee assignments, and sponsored legislation. Most legislators also have a personalized homepage that may provide additional information.

Links to those sites for all legislators are available here:

- List of State Senators: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2017/legislators/senate>
- List of State Representatives: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2017/legislators/assembly>

If you are unsure of how to pronounce the legislator's name or their hometown, look them up on the "MissPronouncer" website at [www.mispronouncer.com](http://www.mispronouncer.com), an online pronunciation guide for all things Wisconsin run by a state radio reporter.

### **Tips for Capitol Meetings**

#### **Arriving**

- The Capitol can be tough to navigate. Know the room number you're looking for, and give yourself enough time to find it.
- When you arrive at the office, knock and enter (staff are sitting at their desks, and don't need to open the door for you). Introduce yourself, what organization you're with, and tell the staff you have a meeting.

#### **Introductions and establishing credibility**

- Find a connection to the legislator or staff.
- Emphasize connection to the legislator's district, and the impact of your work on their constituents.
- When possible, use local examples or stories, and tailor those examples to the legislator's interests (e.g. if the legislator sits on the agriculture committee, discuss the impact of farm-to-school programs in their district).
- By necessity, legislators and their staffs are generalists. Limit your use of jargon and acronyms, and explain concepts or projects that may not be widely known.

#### **Why you're there**

- There may be other policy issues that are personally important to you that you'd like to discuss with the legislator or staff, but remember why you're there for this particular meeting – build relationships and generate conversations around public health – and stick to that goal.

*This resource was developed by Sam Austin, Evidence-Based Health Policy Project, UW Population Health Institute*

