

# *How To Be An Effective Advocate*

## What to do and what not to do!

Lobbying is an opportunity to educate our elected officials about issues of concern to the Chiropractic Community. Here are some important tips on how to successfully communicate your views during a lobbying visit:

**Be clear about what you want.** Maintain your focus on the issue; do not stray onto other tangents and do not let the legislator stray either! Present your information and ASK for the legislator to take action: to vote a certain way, to talk with colleagues about the issue, etc.

**Do not argue with the legislator.** If they disagree or express a different opinion than we might like, simply respond to his or her concern the best you can and move on to the next issue.

**Do not argue amongst yourselves.** Present a united voice on the issues and please follow the substance of the talking points!

**Follow up with additional information if necessary.** If the member asks for information or follow-up, please let staff know after your meetings or take responsibility for sending it yourself. If the legislator asks a question for which you do not know the answer, **please do not fabricate facts.** Tell them you do not know and that you will make sure to follow-up with him or her to provide the requested information.

**Do not be upset if you cannot speak directly with the legislator.** Elected officials have very busy schedules, and they rely heavily on staff members to conduct meetings with constituents and to determine their positions on issues. If you are not able to have a face-to-face meeting with a legislator, use the opportunity to develop a working relationship with a staff member.

**Thank them for their time and write a thank you note.** We are in the business of long-term relationships, so maintain regular contact after your meeting whenever possible, even if it is simply to send an article that you think the Legislator might of interest. Moreover, thank you letters are always appreciated!