



## MAKING YOUR LEGISLATIVE CONTACT COUNT

- 1. Just Do It!** The most important tool for effective advocacy is to *Just Do It!* Being present and raising your voice is powerful. Legislators hear from very few constituents on most issues. They are interested to know what the people who elect them care about. You do not need to be an expert on the legislative process or even on the underlying issue in order to be effective. By being here and speaking up you are making a difference!
- 2. Express your passion.** There is a reason you are motivated to speak out on these issues, so explain why you care. Make sure the legislator understands what you do and how this issue affects the community, and why he/she should care about it.
- 3. Prepare a brief message and a few points that support your position.** Think about the issues you want to raise with the legislator and why. Consider what facts you want to use to underscore your position. Address how this issue affects you, your patients, your family, your community and the State of Georgia.
- 4. Walk a mile in the legislator's shoes.** Know something about the legislator to inform your conversation. What part of the state does s/he represent? If he or she represents you, be sure to say so! This will build up their interest level very fast. What is their profession? Do they belong to a Committee that would be addressing one of your issues of concern? How will your issue affect them in the next election? Are many of the people he or she represents affected by this issue and how? All of these factors (and more) allow you to consider how the person you are talking to will likely react, and what might motivate them to support your position.
- 5. A little paper can help make an impression.** You can give the legislator written material you have on the issue. Be sure to give them your business card or contact information. Both will reinforce who you are and how they can reach you later on.
- 6. Follow the Golden Rule. Courtesy, kindness and a sense of humor go a long way.** Never burn bridges. There is always another issue and another day tomorrow and these folks have a long memory. Your charm and your smile are important! **Think of this as the beginning of a beautiful friendship.**
- 7. Follow up and don't give up.** After your contact, follow up with a note or e-mail thanking the legislator for taking the time to speak with you, providing any additional information that was requested, and urge them to contact you if you can be a resource to them on this issue in the future!

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