

## LEGISLATIVE DOs and DON'Ts

- DO:** Get to know your legislator in advance of asking for his/her help.
- DO:** Invite your legislator to personally visit health centers in his/her district.
- DO:** Be on time for appointments.
- DO:** Have one chief spokesperson who will manage all discussion during meetings with legislators.
- DO:** Keep the “bottom line” in mind. Be concise, clear, and to the point in your remarks to legislators. Time is limited.
- DO:** Be (and sound) convinced of the essential value and importance of health centers. You will never convince anyone else if you are not convinced yourself.
- DO:** Emphasize local examples of good work by health centers, and the local impact of any legislation.
- DO:** Write letters to your legislators. Constituent mail is strongly considered. Letters should be two pages or shorter, with the issue and bill number in the first paragraph.
- DO:** Leave material with your legislator, and provide information about how to get in touch with you later.
- DO:** Let your legislator know if you do not know the answer to their question. Tell them you will follow up with the information they requested.
- DO:** Let CCHN know if your legislator had any questions you were unable to answer or concerns you were unable to address adequately.
- DO:** Write a thank you note to your legislator for meeting with you, and be sure to thank him/her if s/he supports your position on a bill, or an issue.

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- DON'T:** Mislead or give your legislator false information. If you do so unknowingly, go back and admit your mistake.
- DON'T:** Send form letters; they are usually disregarded.
- DON'T:** Use health care jargon or acronyms.
- DON'T:** Get drawn into any confrontation with a legislator that appears to be "dead-ended."
- DON'T:** Belittle those who disagree with you. On the next issue, they may be on your side.
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