

## Scheduling a Meeting with Your Member of Congress

Scheduling an appointment to meet and discuss issues of importance is a wonderful opportunity to begin building a relationship with Congress and key staff, and to advocate for VA nurses everywhere.

Politicians are always happy to meet with constituents as getting re-elected is often dependent on having voters know them and their views on the issues.

It is important to contact the offices as early as possible to set up your meeting – whether you're meeting in the District or Washington D.C offices. Members and staff have limited time in their busy schedules for one on one meetings.

Below are some tips of the trade to help you schedule your meetings with House and Senate leaders.

Find the contact information for your Representative by using the House of Representatives website at: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/> - just enter your zip code in the box.

For your Senators, click here:

[http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

1. Find contact information for the scheduler – if one is not listed, call the office to request his/her name and email.
2. Send an email to the scheduler letting them know that you are a constituent and would like to make an appointment on Thursday, June 11 and let them know that you are available anytime between 1:30 and 4:30 pm.\*

\* It is not uncommon to have your meeting scheduled with a key member of the Congressman's staff – in this case it may be the person that handles healthcare or Veterans Affairs issues for the member. This is always a great way to gain a contact and a champion in the congressional office so should be viewed as a positive occurrence.

3. Within the email, make sure that you tell them you will be in DC attending the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs Annual Meeting as a member and want to discuss nursing issues important to the organization.
4. A day or two after you send the email, call the office and ask to speak to the scheduler to confirm that the request was received. If you have not heard back from the office within a week, call them again and see if you can get your meeting on the Congressman's schedule – be prepared to leave a detailed message as you may be placed into voicemail.
5. Lastly, be persistent and confirm the date/time and location of your appointment 1-2 weeks before arriving in D.C.

Enjoy taking part in what is truly a critical part of our democracy. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Teresa Morris, NOVA Manager, Advocacy and Government Relations, at [tmorris@vanurse.org](mailto:tmorris@vanurse.org)

I look forward to hearing back from all of you on your experiences!