

TIPS ON MEETING WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR OR LEGISLATIVE AIDE

It's preferable to meet with legislators and their aides in their districts before the legislative session convenes. They will remember that, as a constituent, you took the time to meet with them. That can make a difference when they debate and vote on issues in Tallahassee.

Here are some suggestions for effective meetings:

- Call the legislator's district office to request an appointment. Say you are a constituent dentist. If you do not know the legislator's phone number, call the FDA Governmental Affairs Office at (800) 326-0051 or visit <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>.
- If a legislator can't meet with you, ask to schedule a meeting with his or her aide. Legislative aides can be as important as legislators. They often are legislators' principal gatekeepers and policy advisors. Aides usually travel to Tallahassee for session. Some legislators are former legislative aides.
- Before the meeting, make sure you know the FDA's position on legislative issues. The FDA Governmental Affairs Office's role is to provide you with background about the issues and their status. Gathering the facts will help you be concise when discussing the issues. For an updated issues sheet, visit the members section of the FDA's website at www.floridadental.org.
- If a legislator asks a question you don't know the answer to, tell him or her you'll look into it and follow up with an answer as soon as possible. Call the FDA Governmental Affairs Office to discuss the question and your response. Your promptness in following up with legislators will make a difference.
- If your legislator disagrees with organized dentistry's views, respect his or her position. It's O.K. to "agree to disagree."
- Tell the FDA Governmental Affairs Office when you have met with a legislator. This seals the FDA's communication link between the legislator's district and the Capitol.

If you have any questions, call the FDA Governmental Affairs Office at (800) 326-0051.