



# Tips for a Successful Meeting with your Members of Congress

## PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

- Make sure you open the draft schedule that you will receive via email from Soapbox Consulting (@soapboxconsulting.com) on Thursday, February 20. Note that this schedule will change as we get closer to the Advocacy Day and you will be able to see those changes in real-time using the link to the mobile tool that will be emailed to you. If you do see any problems with your schedule, please let Soapbox know.
- Review the background information on <https://debbiesdream.org/2025-advocacy-day/>.
- Attend the required Advocacy Day training at 9am on Monday, February 24 at the Washington Plaza Hotel located at 10 Thomas Circle, NW. During the training, you will learn all about our message to Congress and meet your Advocacy Day groups.
- For each meeting, check to see what information about the member of Congress is on your schedule: Did they **sign one of the PRCRP letters** previously? Are they a member of the **Congressional Caucus on the Deadliest Cancers**? What **committees** are they on? **ALL** members of Congress have the ability to support all of our asks in some way, but some sit on committees that enable them to have more input on our issues.
  - Members of the **Appropriations Committees** make decisions about which cancers will be in the DoD's PRCRP program and the funding levels for that program and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The **DoD Subcommittee** has jurisdiction over the PRCRP program and the **LHHS Subcommittee** has jurisdiction over the NCI. **Note that if an Appropriator says that they cannot sign the PRCRP letters, please ask them what they can do to support us on this issue.**
  - Members of the **Armed Services Committee** will have a role in getting the cost and feasibility study that we need to establish an *H. pylori* screening program.
  - Members of the **Senate HELP Committee** and the **House Energy & Commerce Committee** have a role in other healthcare legislation.
  - Members of **Leadership** make decisions about what Congress will vote on.

## Meeting Pointers

- One person in the group should be designated to open the meeting. Start by sharing where you are from and that you are representing Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer.
- Designate one member of the meeting group to take notes of the meeting and complete the Hill visit report form on the Soapbox Mobile Tool.
- Be prepared to meet with Hill staff in lieu of the member of Congress. Staff should be shown the same level of respect as members of Congress. Staff are the "eyes and ears" of a member of Congress and provide recommendations to the lawmaker. Expect meetings to last 15-30 minutes.
- If applicable, begin the meeting by thanking the member of Congress or staffer for the member's past support for stomach cancer research – e.g., did they sign one of the past PRCRP letters or are they a member of the Deadliest Cancers Coalition?
- Refer to the key messages on the Cheat Sheet and Fact Sheets. **Most importantly, share about your experience with stomach cancer.**
- Be concise and stick to the facts of the issues at hand.
- **Stay on message.** Tell your lawmakers or Hill staff precisely what actions we need them to take (from the Cheat Sheet and **hand the 2025 Asks** to the person you are meeting with).
- At the conclusion of the meeting, **invite them to our reception (and hand them the invite)**, offer to be a resource, say thank you, tell them you will follow-up and do so!