

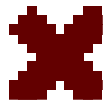
The Do's and Don'ts of Effective Communication

DO



- **Identify clearly** the subject or subjects in which you are interested, not just House and Senate bill numbers.
- State why you are concerned about an issue or issues. **Sharing your own personal experience**, particularly as a member of the medical community, is excellent supporting evidence. Explain how you think an issue will affect patients, the medical profession, your community or family.
- **Restrict yourself to one, or at most, two topics.**
- **Put your thoughts in your own words.** If a member of the Legislature received numerous letters with nearly identical wording, he or she may discount them as part of an organized pressure campaign.
- Try to **establish an ongoing relationship** with your delegates and senators, which will give you more influence as a constituent.
- **Get involved early** in the legislative process by communicating while legislation is being considered by committees, as well as when it is on the House and Senate floor.
- Find out the committees and subcommittees on which your delegates and senators serve. Members of the state Legislature have much more influence over legislation within their committees' and subcommittees' jurisdiction.
- **Use MedChi's online Legislative Action Center** at <http://capwiz.com/medchi/state/main/?state=MD> to get in touch with your legislators and sign up for action alerts!

DON'T



- **Don't ever threaten.** Don't hint "I'll never vote for you unless you do what I want". Present the best arguments in favor of your position and ask for their consideration in a respectful manner.
- **Don't pretend to wield vast political influence.** Contact your member as a constituent, not a self-appointed spokesperson for the medical community.
- **Don't use trite phrases or clichés.** They can make your letter sound mass-produced when it isn't. Just be yourself.
- **Don ever link campaign contributions to legislative support.**