

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 Maryland 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 Maryland Legislature have much more influence over legislation within their committees' and subcommittees' jurisdiction.
- Use MedChi's online Legislative Action Center at <https://www.medchi.org/TakeAction> to get in touch with your legislators and sign up for action alerts!

DON'T X

- 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't ever link campaign contributions to legislative support.