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 with in their committees’ and subcommittees’ jurisdiction.
- **Use MedChi’s online Legislative Action Center** at [http://capwiz.com/medchi/state/main/?state=MD](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.**