

Be sure to have a business card and some educational materials to leave with the legislator when you meet in-person.

Schedule a **very early 15-minute meeting over coffee**. Shoot for 7:30 or 8 so it's less likely to be cancelled or rushed. Go to their territory. Make it convenient and comfortable for them by meeting at a place they frequent. Most people, including legislators, have a regular coffee shop or similar hangout.

Arrange a **photo opportunity**; legislators love the media. Indicate that the entire process will take 15 minutes.

Invite your legislator(s) to a **meeting with a group of stakeholders to clarify their views** on a key issue (MSA funding, Tobacco 21, etc.). This puts the legislator in the position of needing to present their views as being in line with stakeholders, and it forces them to make those statements publicly. This makes it more likely that legislators will vote for what they've told you they support, or it gives you and your colleagues an opportunity to work on them.

**Prepare a question that requires a specific answer directly from your legislator** (not a staffer), such as an opinion or intent-to-vote sort of question. Call, leave a message with staff, and ask for a return call. Provide a cell phone number so you can be reached at any time. If you don't get a call back within 48 hours, **call back until you get to talk directly with the legislator**.

Find out when the **legislator's committee hearings** are. Go to one and hang around until you can catch your legislator, even if it's just for a two-minute chat in the hallway.

Schedule a **press conference about any news hook** you can come up with, and use it to create a photo opportunity for the legislator. Call and explain the press conference and media expected to attend, and invite the legislator to participate in a prominent role.

**Create a contest for children** (for example, design a poster or write an essay about smoking cessation) and invite your legislator to serve as a judge.

**Invite your legislator to speak before a large group**, for example, as part of a panel on advances in tobacco cessation at a conference.

**Hang around outside the legislator's office** on a day when the legislature is in session. Sideline them when they stop in the office.

Pay attention to when the legislators' lunch break is. About 15 minutes before the scheduled time, **stake out a position in the cafeteria** where you can see everyone who comes and goes. Plan to wait until you see your legislator come in, even if it means waiting an hour or so.

Call your legislator's office and **offer to serve as a subject matter expert**.

**Testify** in committee hearings.

**Call your legislator at home**. If they have landlines, their numbers are listed, and they're public figures. They expect it. Just don't call before 8 a.m. or after 10 p.m.

Send **handwritten notes** – e-mail and typed letters don't work. Writing to their home addresses can be effective too.

Schedule yourself for a **TV interview or a meeting with a newspaper's editorial board**. When it's set up, invite your legislator to join you to advocate for tobacco-cessation programs.

**Hit up other legislators who represent districts where you provide services**, not just the one who represents your home district. Legislators can get to other legislators, so create peer pressure. Junior and less prominent legislators may be easier to access.

**Plan a series of events to promote a key issue** (e.g., Tobacco 21) at high schools around the county/state. Invite your legislator(s) to take a lead role in all of them. Chances are they'll agree to come to at least one or two.

Provide your legislator, in person, with **sample op eds and letters to the editor**. Ask him/her to submit them to regional media. Provide all the contact information required. This pushes the legislator to make a public commitment to appropriate MSA distribution.

Solicit and collect a **large number of handwritten letters, cards, etc.** Include materials from children if you can. Mail them in a large package or hand-deliver them, either on your own or in a group.

Write a **letter to the editor or op ed**, calling on your legislator by name to support appropriate MSA distribution. **Clip a copy and send it to your legislator with a handwritten note.**

Get your legislator's public schedule and **show up at an event or two**. Reinforce your message, briefly and politely.

**Show up at crucial decision-making points, such as budget votes.** Let your legislator know that you're there and that you want them to support appropriate MSA distribution.

When your legislator supports your cause, **call and/or send a note of thanks**. Follow up regularly to keep your legislator posted on the impact of his/her support.