

Virtual Meeting Tips & Tricks: Don't Panic

There is always something that can go wrong during a virtual meeting. Don't panic! Check out the notes below to see ways to react to certain situations. Notes provided by Brendan Riley, Director of Policy at the North Carolina Community Health Center Association.

- **Group's tech leader loses connection:**
 - Call in! If connected via phone, you can still hear and be heard.
 - Designate a Zoom cohost/tech backup so they can take over tech responsibilities.
- **Someone joins call late:**
 - Have them alert you in advance so you're prepared if they know they will be late.
 - Share your cell phone number for calls/texts.
 - Have two monitors and keep an eye on your email.
 - Minimize the disruption by:
 - Admitting into meeting via Waiting Room at opportune time.
 - Ensuring they are muted upon entry.
- **Assigned speaker unable to connect:**
 - Refer them to your tech tips on your run of show.
 - Give it 10-15 seconds MAX before moving on to next speaker.
 - Troubleshoot on the side while the next speaker continues the meeting.
- **Someone begins speaking when not their turn:**
 - Roll with the punches – this happens more often in in-person settings.
 - Your primary goal is not to have 100% adherence to run-of-show—it is to have a successful meeting with the MOC. Sometimes we have to deal with deviations.
- **Someone begins making small talk & eating into your time to talk about CHCs:**
 - A good rule of thumb is that if you can have some small talk during a virtual meeting, that is great – relationship building is so much harder in the virtual age, and sometimes small talk makes someone feel at ease and closer to you.
 - (unless used as a stall tactic of course)
 - Set expectations early on – you'll be playing moderator, explain what that entails (including timekeeping) so those interruptions don't feel so rude.
 - Do a natural interruption using a segue or question to pivot to next speaker or a relevant topic.
- **Someone expresses disappointment with meeting with staffer instead of Member of Congress:**
 - An ounce of prevention
 - Before the meeting, try to educate your spokespeople about whom you're meeting with and the value of meeting with a staffer.
 - Pivot – yes. We hate that we missed the MOC – please send them our regards – but we are so grateful to have your time. We know how busy you are and how much value you bring to this work for North Carolinians back home. Staffers are the glue that hold Congress' work together.