A Guide to Virtual Meetings with Your Legislators

Requesting a Meeting

• Before you request a virtual meeting with your legislator’s office, make sure you have access to a virtual meeting platform (i.e. Microsoft Teams, Zoom) and are comfortable navigating it.
• Once a meeting date/time is confirmed, offer to “host” the meeting, but recognize the legislator’s office might have a preferred platform that you will need to use.

Prior to the Meeting

• If you are new to virtual meetings, practice with the platform. Test your Internet connection and/or phone signal by video chatting with a family member or friend.
• Review the member profile for the legislator whose office you are speaking with and note the congressional committees on which the member serves.
• Make sure your background is not distracting. If you are taking the meeting in front of a window, if possible, cover the window so you do not appear as a silhouette on screen.
• If you live with others, notify them to give you privacy within the timeframe of your meeting.
• Write down what you want to say so you can stay on message.
• Make your points clear by explaining how your issue impacts the legislator’s congressional district and constituents, as well as the region, state, and nation.
• When possible, discuss the issue from a personal perspective – share your own experience or that of a family member or friend who has benefited from your community health center.
• If multiple advocates plan to join the call, assign a leader who will open and close the meeting and keep things running on time.
• Before the meeting begins, silence your cell phone and place it out of view.

During the Meeting

• Introduce yourself and how you are connected to the community health center.
• Engage the member of Congress/staff by sharing your experiences and asking questions.
• Leave time for questions from the member of Congress and/or staff.
• If you are meeting with staff, remember they are responsible for briefing the member of Congress and recommending actions. They can be valuable allies in your advocacy.
• Work to establish long-term relationships with staff. Try to arrange for follow-ups.
• Remember to thank again member/ staff for meeting with you.

After the Meeting

• Follow up with a thank you note and include your business card/contact information.
• Media – social, print, and digital – are excellent ways of engaging further with an office. Congressional offices track where and when the legislator appears in media so a well-placed op-ed or social media post that identifies the member and/or staff can lead to change.
• Follow up with the governmental relations staff at both NACHC and your primary care association, sharing how the meeting went, feedback, and any additional actions with which they can assist you.
EXAMPLE RUN OF SHOW

Run-of-Show for Zoom Meeting with Congressman David Rouzer (R-NC), U.S. District 7

Wednesday, May 13 @ 11:00-11:30 AM

Call in:

Zoom Link:

If not using a computer or other device: Call-in:

Logistics

• We believe Congressman Rouzer may join by video conference, so if you are able and willing, please be prepared to share your video so that the Congressman can see you.
• You can use either your computer microphone or your phone to dial into the audio even if you log into the meeting via your computer to share your video.
  o If you are going to use your telephone for audio, I recommend dialing the audio after you’ve launched the Zoom meeting from your computer/tablet. You’ll have the option to “Use computer audio” or “Dial in by phone” once there. If you do it this way, it reduces the likelihood of any disruptive feedback or echoes.

Confirmed and Invited Health Center Attendees:

1. RSVPed:
   • CHC 1
     i. Chief Executive Officer
     ii. Chief Development Officer
   • CHC 2
     i. Chief Medical Officer
   • CHC 3
     i. Chief Executive Officer
     ii. Chief Operating Officer
2. No RSVPs as of Friday, May 8:
   • CHC 4
   • CHC 5

Run-of-Show and Speaking Assignments

11:00-11:02 AM: Welcome and Introduction Housekeeping (2 minutes): Brendan Riley, Director of Policy, NCCHCA

• Explain the format/run-of-show, review moderator role, and recap the goal of today’s call: to discuss with Congressman what CHCs are experiencing on the frontlines of COVID-19 pandemic.
• Thank Congressman for his consistent support for community health centers, and for support provided to CHCs by legislative relief packages provided thus far by Congress.
Brendan asks if Congressman Rouzer would like to share any remarks before hearing from our health centers.

11:02-10:05 AM: Congressman Rouzer may choose to provide remarks or ask questions. Brendan thanks Congressman, then turns over to remarks from health centers.

Remarks from Member Health Centers

When reporting out, each health center should seek to do the following either directly or implicitly:

- Highlight impressive and innovative health center practices during pandemic (Why? Demonstrate value of CHCs)
- Thank Congressman for support of health centers and relief packages thus far (ex. HRSA COVID-19 supplemental awards, Paycheck Protection Program loans, letting FQHCs bill Medicare for distant site telehealth services)
- Demonstrate some challenges and connect them to policy changes needed from Congress

Speaking times are approximate and will be flexed to account for questions from and discussion with the Congressman, but please try to stick to this time so that each health center has time to speak. I have provided each health center with some talking points below, including a standard set of topics/questions to cover when discussing your experience during the pandemic, and then a unique point of emphasis for a policy ask. This is just a suggestion—please emphasize a policy ask that makes the most sense to YOUR health center.

11:05-11:09 AM: CHC 1 experience during COVID-19 (4 minutes):

- Provide updates on your CHC’s efforts and experiences during the pandemic. Your update should cover some or all the following topics:
  1. How has your health center changed its practice to provide care while promoting patient safety and following distancing guidelines?
  2. How has your health center innovated to make health care more accessible (e.g., video telehealth, audio-only telehealth, prescription delivery services)?
  3. Describe any impressive work you’ve done to increase access to testing for your patients and/or for hot spots in the community.
  4. How has the pandemic affected your practice financially?
  5. How have any policy changes from Congress helped you financially?
- Unique Policy Emphasis: Additional emergency funding is needed to maintain capacity throughout the pandemic


Provide updates on your CHC’s efforts and experiences during the pandemic. Your update should cover some or all the following topics:

- How has your health center changed its practice to provide care while promoting patient safety and following distancing guidelines?
- How has your health center innovated to make health care more accessible (e.g., video telehealth, audio-only telehealth, prescription delivery services)?
- Describe any impressive work you’ve done to increase access to testing for your patients and/or for hot spots in the community.
- How has the pandemic affected your practice financially?
How have any policy changes from Congress helped you financially?

- **Unique Policy Emphasis**: Why CHCs need a five-year funding extension for Community Health Center Fund as part of the next congressional package

**11:13-11:17 AM: CHC 3 experience during COVID-19 (4 minutes):**

- Provide updates on your CHC’s efforts and experiences during the pandemic. Your update should cover some or all the following topics:
  - How has your health center changed its practice to provide care while promoting patient safety and following distancing guidelines?
  - How has your health center innovated to make health care more accessible (e.g., video telehealth, audio-only telehealth, prescription delivery services)?
  - Describe any impressive work you’ve done to increase access to testing for your patients and/or for hot spots in the community.
  - How has the pandemic affected your practice financially?
  - How have any policy changes from Congress helped you financially?

1. **Unique Policy Emphasis**: Grateful that Medicare now reimbursing for audio-only telehealth services. Importance of telephone services for access, especially in rural communities where connectivity & access to broadband are limited.

**IF RSVP: 11:17-11:21 AM: CHC 4 experience during COVID-19 (4 minutes):** *TBD*

- Provide updates on your CHC’s efforts and experiences during the pandemic. Your update should cover some or all the following topics:
  - How has your health center changed its practice to provide care while promoting patient safety and following distancing guidelines?
  - How has your health center innovated to make health care more accessible (e.g., video telehealth, audio-only telehealth, prescription delivery services)?
  - Describe any impressive work you’ve done to increase access to testing for your patients and/or for hot spots in the community.
  - How has the pandemic affected your practice financially?
  - How have any policy changes from Congress helped you financially?

1. **Unique Policy Emphasis**: Need for future HRSA support to include FQHC Look-Alikes

**IF RSVP: 11:21-11:25 AM: CHC 5 experience during COVID-19 (4 minutes):** *TBD*

- Provide updates on your CHC’s efforts and experiences during the pandemic. Your update should cover some or all the following topics:
  1. How has your health center changed its practice to provide care while promoting patient safety and following distancing guidelines?
  2. How has your health center innovated to make health care more accessible (e.g., video telehealth, audio-only telehealth, prescription delivery services)?
  3. Describe any impressive work you’ve done to increase access to testing for your patients and/or for hot spots in the community.
  4. How has the pandemic affected your practice financially?
  5. How have any policy changes from Congress helped you financially?

1. **Unique Policy Emphasis**: Importance of extending workforce programs like National Health Service Corps and Teaching Health Centers beyond November
11:25-11:28 AM: Discussion & Spillover Cushion Time (3 minutes)

- If health center report-outs are done by 11:25 AM, Brendan will ask the Congressman for any questions or additional remarks.

11:28 AM: Thanks & Conclusion (2 minutes)

- Brendan will thank Congressman and staff, offer opportunity for last remarks, and close the call.