LEGISLATIVE DOs and DON'Ts

DO: Get to know your legislator in advance of asking for his/her help.

DO: Invite your legislator to personally visit health centers in his/her district.

DO: Be on time for appointments.

DO: Have one chief spokesperson who will manage all discussion during meetings with legislators.

DO: Keep the “bottom line” in mind. Be concise, clear, and to the point in your remarks to legislators. Time is limited.

DO: Be (and sound) convinced of the essential value and importance of health centers. You will never convince anyone else if you are not convinced yourself.

DO: Emphasize local examples of good work by health centers, and the local impact of any legislation.

DO: Write letters to your legislators. Constituent mail is strongly considered. Letters should be two pages or shorter, with the issue and bill number in the first paragraph.

DO: Leave material with your legislator, and provide information about how to get in touch with you later.

DO: Let your legislator know if you do not know the answer to their question. Tell them you will follow up with the information they requested.

DO: Let CCHN know if your legislator had any questions you were unable to answer or concerns you were unable to address adequately.

DO: Write a thank you note to your legislator for meeting with you, and be sure to thank him/her if s/he supports your position on a bill, or an issue.

DON'T: Mislead or give your legislator false information. If you do so unknowingly, go back and admit your mistake.

DON'T: Send form letters; they are usually disregarded.

DON'T: Use health care jargon or acronyms.

DON'T: Get drawn into any confrontation with a legislator that appears to be "dead-ended."

DON'T: Belittle those who disagree with you. On the next issue, they may be on your side.