

## Before Your Visit

### Know the Issues

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The CAEAR Coalition has prepared fact sheets and talking points on its current priorities. Please read the materials carefully before your Congressional Hill visits.

### Gather Local Statistics and Identify Personal Stories to Share

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The most successful visits include personal stories and information that directly connect the federal HIV/AIDS programs with jurisdiction-specific successes. Before your visit, prepare a fact sheet on local HIV statistics, Ryan White and EHE Program successes, and specific HIV/AIDS needs in your jurisdiction. These can be notes you verbally share or a formal fact sheet to leave behind.

### Identify Roles for the Meeting

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For visits with more than one person, be sure to plan who will take the lead and/or speak on each issue. You should identify a "facilitator" who frames the issues, introduces each presenter, and ensures all key issues are covered. This person should also be responsible for handing off the leave-behind folder and conducting any needed follow-up.

### Know Your Audience

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Be sure to know who you are meeting with and their party affiliation, committee or subcommittee membership of the member, and past record on the issues. These facts will help guide your discussion and convey that you have done your homework.

## During the Visit

### Introduce Yourself

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Introduce yourself and explain your connection to the Congressional office. Note that you are also representing the CAEAR Coalition, a national membership organization rooted in the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. The Coalition's mission is to advocate for robust federal funding and community-based responses to end the HIV epidemic.

### Thank the Member or Staff

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Always start the meeting by thanking a member for their support or asking the staff to thank their boss for you. Letting an office know that you recognize the important role they play is always appreciated.

### Assume No Knowledge

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Members and staff may know little about HRSAHAB's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program and/or the End the HIV Epidemic (EHE) Initiative. Be sure to explain acronyms, programs, funding sources, and the agencies that administer the funds.

### Bring Written Materials

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Make sure to offer the folders that will include general information about the CAEAR Coalition's key advocacy priorities. As noted, jurisdiction-specific data and information are appreciated and helpful to the Congressional office, so bring such facts sheets to include in the folders. Many staff may appreciate documents being emailed after the meeting, so make sure to offer.

## During the Visit

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### Be Prepared

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Be sure you have all your facts and arguments lined up prior to the meeting. If you cannot answer a question, tell them you will get back to them with the information – and be sure to do so or ask the CAEAR Coalition staff to follow up. Anticipate questions or arguments against your position on an issue.

### Keep it Local

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If possible, explain your position in terms that relate to the Member's district or jurisdiction. Provide information on the status of the HIV epidemic in their jurisdiction. This helps them identify with the problem and understand why they need to be of assistance. If there are relevant stories or anecdotes that communicate your ask, please prepare these beforehand and speak concisely during Hill visits.

### Ask Questions

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Meetings should be seen as a two-way street, with information flowing both ways. Take the opportunity to find out where the Member or staff person stands on the issues you are presenting, if you do not already know.

### Stay on Course

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Resist any side conversations or tangential issues. Making social conversation is important, but time is limited – do not waste your time discussing the weather or issues outside the purview of your line of work.

### Use Your Expertise

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In general, you will be much more knowledgeable of the issues than the person you are meeting with. Draw on this knowledge when explaining positions or making requests. In addition, you can offer yourself up as an expert for them to call upon.

## After Your Visit

### Follow Up

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Be sure to send a thank-you email or letter to people you have met, reiterating your points, providing them with any information you promised, and thanking them for their time.

### CAEAR Coalition

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The Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition is a national membership organization rooted in the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. The Coalition works to end the HIV epidemic by ensuring equitable access to welcoming, high-quality health care and support services. Its mission is to advocate for robust federal funding and community-based responses to end the HIV epidemic.