**Citizen Advocacy Meeting Cheat Sheet**

*The following information was developed by Upstream Public Health for OPHA Lobby Day, 2/8/13*

**Important things to remember:**

* Legislator meetings are 15 minutes.
* Arrive on time.
* If you are going with a group, make a plan for who will say what, and who will MC.
* Try not to squeeze more than two topics in to a single visit.

***Introduce self / selves***

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (first and last) and I live in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (city/neighborhood). Thank you for taking time to meet with me/us today.

***Tell what you are here for, and if it’s relevant, what your day job is:***

I am here as part of a group from the Oregon Public Health Association to talk to legislators about keeping Oregon healthy.  Specifically, I am a member of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ section, and I work as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

***Pick an issue as your primary talking point***

Today, I would love to talk to you about one (or a few, especially if a group)  topics that our group has identified as priorities:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (summarize issue in few words.  Eg. “Helping individuals quit smoking and protecting non-smokers from cigarettes.')

***Then tell what your personal connection/experience is. Be specific and personal.***

I am really concerned with this issue because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***If you know about specific legislation on your topic, ask them if they know about it*.**

Are you familiar with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

***Tell them what you want from them, but phrase it as a question.***

Can you take an active role in supporting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

***Press them if they are wishy-washy:***

Eg. “I understand it's not in your committee, but will you do me the favor of talking about this issue to the committee chair, and asking them to advance the bill?”

Or “I know that money is tight, but it seems to me that there’s no higher priority than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Can we count on your support to try to find the funds?”

***Ask them what you can do to help them:***

I came here to talk to you because you are my personal representative, but what else can I do in this building to help advance this issue / pass this legislation?

***Thank them for their time today and their service representing you.***

***On your way out, check with the staffer to make sure that you are on their email list.***

***Send a thank-you note from home, reminding them of your requests.***

**Citizen Advocacy Tips**

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1. Make sure you know who your representatives are! Look it up at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/>.
2. If you are talking to YOUR representatives, make sure you say so, and be specific about where you live. Most legislators know their turf well, so name your apartment complex, or the nearby school or landmark.
3. If you have any time at all for it, look at your legislator’s web pages, and learn something about their personal history. Maybe they are a nurse, a former principal at your kid’s school, or a little league official. It helps to know that about them.
4. While you are there, look at their current committee assignments. Those are the areas where they are probably most knowledgeable and influential.
5. Treat them like real people.
6. Tell them you appreciate their service. Working in the legislature pays poorly and disrupts your ability to hold a normal job; these people are true public servants.
7. Your meeting with them is short, but they **really** appreciate meeting with actual constituents, so make the most of it! Let them know who you are and what some of your affiliations are. Do you have kids in school? Volunteer positions in the community? Affiliations with a church or service club?
8. Be as specific as you can about asking for what you want. “I want you to talk to your colleagues on the education committee about passing HB XXXX” is much better than “I want you to support better education.”
9. Always tell the truth. Don’t stretch anything to make a good story, embellish the facts, or make up an answer to a question.
10. Always follow up.