



South Dakota State Medical Association Physician Lobbyist Program Guidelines

Committee Meetings

Committee meetings are scheduled from 7:45 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The bills that will be heard in each committee for each day are posted on the respective bulletin boards outside the House and Senate usually one or two days ahead of time. You should check with SDSMA's professional lobbyists to find out which committee meetings they want you to attend. The committee rooms are on the 4th floor of the Capitol building behind the respective houses or around the corner on the Senate side by the Doctor of the Day room. The exception is the Appropriations committee, which meets on the 3rd floor.

Testifying on a Bill

If you are going to testify in committee, you must wear your lobbyist badge. You also need to sign in as either a proponent or opponent on the particular bill(s) that you will be addressing. Be sure to identify yourself and let the committee know you are a "registered volunteer lobbyist" for the South Dakota State Medical Association as you begin your comments.

Floor Lobbying

Non-legislators are able to be in the House and/or Senate Chambers until three hours before the start of session each day. You will have the opportunity to visit with legislators at their desk during this time.

Once the Legislature is in Session, you need to ask the Sergeant at Arms or a Legislative Page to deliver a message to the particular legislator you want to talk with. It is then up to the legislator to come to you.

On the 3rd floor of the Capitol, outside of each Chamber, there is a lobby for lobbyists and other observers. There is a separate lobby for only Legislators, pages, and interns.

The legislators caucus from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. on most days and are essentially unavailable at that time. This is a good time to have lunch, rest, or whatever else you may need to do.

Coordinating with SDSMA Lobbyists

Be sure to share contacts and responses you have had with legislators with the SDSMA lobbyists so you make sure the entire team is on the same page and delivering the same messages.

Building Relationships

Lobbying is a lot about relationship building, so just letting the legislators see who you are and putting a face with a name is important even if you don't have any particular issue to discuss that day.

This is very different from what physicians do on a day-to-day basis. You have to wait for someone to have the time to see you instead of you controlling the schedule. Legislators are busy and if you want to see them, you spend a significant amount of time waiting for them to decide to take the time to see you.

Reference Materials

It is suggested that you take your SDSMA Directory with you when you go to Pierre. That way if you need to contact people to get them to make phone calls, you will have contact information available.

It is also suggested that you take your Legislative Directory with you. The Legislative Directory usually accompanies SDSMA's first legislative newsletter that is sent to physicians. If you have your Legislative Directory, you will then be able to leave the appropriate numbers for people to call to make contact with their individual legislators.