

# ADVOCACY

## How to speak to politicians & decision-makers

### INTERMEDIATE

→ POLITICIANS AND DECISION-MAKERS ARE BUSY, MEETING MANY STAKEHOLDERS AND RECEIVING NUMEROUS REQUESTS. THUS, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IS KEY FOR ADVANCING THE NEEDS OF THE PID COMMUNITY IN YOUR COUNTRY OR REGION.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Help you **prepare a meeting** with a politician or decision-maker.
- Ensure that you have a **compelling speech** that resonates with your interlocutor.
- **Improve your credibility and raise your profile.**

### ADVANTAGES:

- Preparation helps **structure your message effectively.**
- It enables all **participants to clarify their roles** on the topic.
- It boosts your **confidence** and enhances **credibility.**
- A well-prepared first meeting leaves a strong impression, increases the likelihood of persuasion, and **improves chances for a follow-up.**

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## STEP BY STEP:

# 1

## PREPARATION BEFORE THE MEETING

- **Research your interlocutor:**
  - Research as much as possible on your **interlocutor's profile, interests and priorities** (try to find a connection with him/her).
  - **Review their past actions or statements** on healthcare, rare diseases, or patient rights to tailor your message to their concerns.
- **Prepare your arguments:**
  - Draft **messages** that are **simple and logical** (stay away from contradictions).
  - **Avoid technical jargon.** Most of your audience won't be familiar with rare diseases, PIDs, medicines (like immunoglobulins), or daily patient life.
- **Support your arguments:**
  - Use simple **facts, statistics, and real-life examples** to back up your arguments. Keep the information compelling yet straightforward.
  - Prepare **patient stories or testimonials** that illustrate the human impact of the issue you are addressing.
- **Anticipate questions and counterarguments:**
  - Think about potential objections or questions your interlocutor might raise. Prepare concise and effective responses.
  - **Be ready to address common concerns** such as budget constraints, policy limitations, or competing healthcare priorities.
- **Clarify your request**
  - Be prepared to answer the fundamental question: **"What can I do for you?"**
  - **Clearly define the action or support you are seeking**, whether it's legislative support, increased funding, or awareness-raising.
- Prepare a **leave-behind document** (which can also be sent with your thank-you note).

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## STEP BY STEP:

# 2

### DURING THE MEETING:

- **Engage in a dialogue:** where both speakers have the time to speak but also to listen.
- **Explain your arguments in a simple manner.** If you have spoken for a long time, try to summarise your arguments at the end, so the main idea stays.
- Pay **attention to details** in order to read your interlocutor's state of mind and interest.
- Try to **agree on concrete outcomes** from the meeting and mention that you will be following up (e.g. follow-up discussion, a pledge to support your cause, or an introduction to another key stakeholder).
- Consider whether it is a good idea to take a **picture of the meeting** (think about the pros- and cons- and always ask for your interlocutor's agreement)

# 3

### AFTER THE MEETING:

- Sending a **thank you note** is always a good idea! On that note, summarise the main outcomes and detail the agreements reached (if any). Remember that what is left in writing will not be forgotten.

## TIPS

- **Stay positive:** Maintain a positive, professional attitude, even if the meeting doesn't go as expected.
- **Be concise:** Policymakers are often pressed for time, so keep your messages short and to the point.
- **Follow Up:** Send a follow-up email a few weeks after the meeting to stay connected, provide updates, or share new information relevant to your discussion.
- **Use media:** When appropriate, use media and social platforms to highlight the meeting's significance for the PID community.
- **Build long-term relationships:** Focus on creating long-term relationships with decision-makers, not just one-off meetings.