## Meeting Logistics

**Meeting duration:** Meetings will typically last 30 minutes, so it’s important to focus on a few topics of conversation. Don’t be surprised if a meeting is cut short; the Congressional schedule is unpredictable.

**Virtual Meetings:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, the House and Senate are operating under rules that place significant restrictions and logistical burdens on in-person meetings. Meetings are primarily occurring over video-conference.

## Speaking with Congressional Staff

**Take time to introduce yourself:** Federal audiences care about who is saying something as much as what they are saying. Before jumping into the issues, spend a few minutes on introductions & AAHKS background.

**You don’t have to be an expert on Congress:** you just need to be an expert on what you do. The value you are providing is information about AAHKS issues, your perspective, your patients’ experience.

**Expect a conversational format:** Questions, requests for clarification, even a few laughs are normal. You’re there to engage meaningfully with your Congressional representation; not respond to a subpoena.

**Expect Varying Degrees of Expertise:** Some staff will have an in-depth knowledge of AAHKS issues, but most will benefit from a reminder of key terms. (e.g. they might not immediately recall what “BPCI” is).

## Do’s & Don’ts

**Don’t worry** if you don’t know the answer to a question. Just let the staff know that AAHKS will get back to them with their requested information (and let and AAHKS staff or Lobbyists know).

**Don’t get too political:** It’s best to play it safe and keep to policy topics and relevant anecdotes from your experience.

**Do follow up:** Advocacy is an exercise in repetition. It takes time to build familiarity, and a relationship. A good start is sending folks a quick note of thanks, mentioning some of the issues you discussed.