



# ASTRO ADVOCACY DAY

ASTRO Site Tour Guide

## Inviting a Member of Congress to Visit Your Clinic

### Why Request a Site Visit?

A site visit allows your member of Congress to gain perspective on the impact that decisions made in Washington, DC, have on your practice and the patients you treat. Additionally, a site visit allows you to build a meaningful relationship with your member of Congress, which is a cornerstone of effective advocacy.

### Requesting a Site Visit

Most members of Congress have busy schedules even when they're home in the district, so it's best to begin the request process a few months prior to your desired date. To schedule a site visit:

- 1) If necessary, receive sign-off from clinic administration and government relations and notify ASTRO staff.
- 2) Have multiple dates in mind that work for your schedule and fall in a district work week/Congressional recess (dates can be found at the end of this document).
- 3) Identify your district office's contact information (<http://cqrcengage.com/astro/home>).
- 4) When you call or email the district office, share that you'd like to give a site tour of your clinic and ask the protocol to make a visit request.

#### *Sample Script:*

Hi, my name is [your name] and I am a radiation oncologist at [clinic name]. I'd like to invite Representative/Senator [name] to tour my clinic. [Name of clinic] is located in [town] and many of the patients we serve are constituents of [name of representative]. What is the preferred method for me to send a formal invitation to the office?

- 5) Ask for the name and contact information of the scheduler so you are able to follow-up a week or two after the request is sent.
- 6) Send the request according to the designated protocol.

**Remember:** Be persistent and don't be discouraged if the member is not able to attend and sends staff in their place. Educating staff is very useful and often can be a precursor to a visit from the member of Congress.

### Organizing a Clinic Tour

Once you have a tour scheduled, it is best to think about the agenda you'd like to follow. Examples of some of the items you should plan include:

- The tour route you'd like to follow.
  - o Ex., Take them through the process of care as a patient would experience or show different treatment modalities.
- Which individuals you would like to participate in the event.
  - o Ex., Members of the treatment team, facility directors, patients.
- Invite those you'd like to include and plan a meeting to go over any important details about the visit.

### Sample Agenda:

- Once the member of Congress/staff has arrived at the clinic, ensure that you thank them for taking the time to visit.
- Prior to the tour, sit down for a brief overview of radiation oncology and a preview of what they will see on the tour.
- Lead the member of Congress/staff on a tour of the clinic. During the tour, points to address include:
  - Introductions of the individuals along the way and their role in the treatment process.
  - Share general information about the clinic's role in the community—ex., how many patients they serve, what services are provided and impact.
  - Touch on how health care policies have helped or hurt the clinic and patient care (ASTRO staff can provide these if needed).
  - Make an ask—ASTRO staff can provide a list of priorities and you can choose which is most pertinent to your clinic and patients.
  - Allow time for questions that you may have for your member of Congress or those that they may have for you. Ask to be added to any local health care policy advisory committees the member of Congress may have.
- Thank the member of Congress/staff member again for visiting and offer them your contact information to serve as a constituent resource on health policy.

### Post-Visit

- Prepare information for your member of Congress to take with them:
  - Educational materials on radiation oncology.
  - Any clinic resources you may like to share.
  - ASTRO materials (will be provided by ASTRO staff).
- Work with your clinic public relations team to produce a press release highlighting the visit.
- Send thank-you notes to the member of Congress and their staff.
  - Bonus: include any press releases, news articles and photos from the event.
- Maintain the relationship you've created!
  - Attend district events such as town halls and fundraisers.
  - Interact with them on proposed legislation.
    - Phone calls, emails, social media.
  - Attend Advocacy Day.

### Media

- Send any photos (with permission of your guests and facility) and a statement to [press@astro.org](mailto:press@astro.org).
- If you would like to receive press training before the tour, please contact Liz Gardner at [liz.gardner@astro.org](mailto:liz.gardner@astro.org).

*Sample Invitation Letter*

If the office requires a formal written invitation, this template can serve as a base model to be tailored to fit your needs.

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Date

Honorable

Washington Office Address

Local Address

RE: Visit to [Name of Center]

Dear [Representative/Senator]

I am a radiation oncologist at [center name] and I'd like to invite you to take a [length of time] tour of the radiation oncology center at [clinic name].

Our center treats [main cancers treated] and sees [estimated #] individuals from the area per day. Come visit the center to learn more about radiation therapy, treatment teams and the benefits the specialty brings to the patients of your district.

I look forward to working with your staff to schedule a visit to my center. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Name Title

Phone Number

Email