

In district meetings: calling to schedule the visit

One of the first steps in setting up the site visit is calling the elected official's office. Here are few tips when making that call.

1. Understand that you may be speaking to an aide, not the legislator. Write down the name—you'll need it for follow-up conversations—the legislator's aides are the key people with whom you'll be dealing with most of the time
2. Introduce yourself and give your address, making clear that the School Health Center represent is in their district. If you have any special credentials, state them.
3. Be clear on what you want from this phone call. Be prepared that they may not be familiar with SBHCs and you may need to explain their benefits.
4. Pause briefly for a reply but be prepared to continue without feedback (the legislator or aide is likely taking notes and may want to hear you out before commenting).
5. Set a time that you will call them back and follow up. Let them know that you can give them a call back in a few days. It will most likely take a few calls to set a date and plans.
6. If you are planning to invite the media, let them know that. This gives them more incentive to schedule the visit.
7. Be friendly! You are building a relationship with this office.

Sample script: scheduling a site visit

Hi, May I please speak with the staff person who oversees health and/or children's issues or the scheduler?

Once connected to staff person:

Hi I am from ____ School-Based Health Center at ____ school. I also represent the (name of state assembly and/or local provider). We work with SBHCs that serve approximately ### of students in (the members district or general area). Are you familiar with SBHCs?

If No, SBHCs are full service health centers that provide care to students in their schools. They address a range of healthcare needs which can include immunizations, wellness visits, mental health, and dental.

We would like to invite (Sen/Rep/County Comm/School board member) to visit the school based health center. Seeing the center first hand is the best way to understand the impact the center has on the students health and ability to learn. Plus, I know the students would be excited to meet (Sen/Rep/County Comm/School board member).

If they are unsure/ need more info/or need to check the schedule:

I can provide you with more information on SBHCs. What is the best address to send it?

I will be in touch with you (give a time frame: #weeks/days) to discuss this further.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to working together.