

## PREPARING FOR A CONGRESSIONAL MEETING

### BEFORE THE MEETING

- Try to arrive to your member's office at least 5 minutes before your scheduled meeting time. When you arrive, enter the office and let the front desk know who you are, who *you're* scheduled to meet with, and what time your meeting is.

### FIRST 5 MINUTES: Introductions and explain lupus facts

- When the staff or member of Congress arrives, introduce yourself and tell them where you are from. They may already know a little bit about who you are and why *you're* there based on the meeting request you submitted.
- If you are meeting with a staff member, be sure to get their business card so you have a record of who you met with, their title, and their contact information for follow up.
- Before getting into your personal story, tell them a little bit about lupus at a broad level. Some general facts that may be helpful:
  - There are an estimated 1.5 million Americans living with lupus.
  - 90% of people with lupus are women.
  - African Americans, Hispanics and Latinos, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are two to three times more likely to develop lupus - a health disparity that remains unexplained.
  - Most people with lupus experience symptoms for six years and see four doctors before receiving a correct diagnosis.

### SECOND 5 MINUTES: Share your story

- Think about how you can tell your story in an impactful way- the goal is to put the person you are speaking with in your shoes and help them understand the challenges lupus has created for you. Think about things like how your life has changed because of lupus, how many days of school or work it causes you to miss, how your relationships have changed since you were diagnosed, etc.

### THIRD 5 MINUTES: Explain congressional asks and get their feedback

- You can use the priorities and talking points sheets in the leave-behind folder to guide the discussion and provide background on the asks and their importance. Be sure to make the ask directly and get a response on each ask from the member or staffer.

After your meeting, don't forget to thank the member's office in person and ask to take a photo you can share on social media using #LupusAdvocacy. Later, fill out a [Congressional Meeting Report](#) and send a thank you e-mail to those that you met with.