

## What to Expect When Meeting with Your Local Politician

Politicians are expected to meet regularly with their constituents, and these interactions can be more effective at influencing them than ones with national organizations or experts. You have the power to impact their decisions.

### What to Expect

#### **Scheduling**

Politicians dedicate specific weeks, known as constituency weeks, to being in their local ridings and meeting with constituents. During these periods, they are more accessible for meetings, and we will work to arrange a meeting for you at the most opportune time.

#### **Timing**

Most meetings are scheduled in 30-minute blocks, and managing your time is crucial since politicians often have back-to-back commitments. Typically, you will be given about 10 minutes to explain your issue. Afterward, the politician will respond, and you can engage in a more informal discussion about the matter.

#### **Content**

Politicians don't expect you to be an expert, and we don't expect you to be one either. Most politicians have a general understanding of health issues but may not be well-versed in lung health specifically. We will provide you with materials to ensure the information is appropriate for their understanding. Focus on how the issue affects you and your community, as making the issue personal and real for them is far more impactful than relying on facts alone. Remember, they are regular people who meet with hundreds of constituents each year, so it's okay to speak with them as you would a neighbour.

#### **Avoiding Political Debates**

Politicians may want to frame the issue in political terms, but it's important to avoid engaging in partisan discussions. Respiratory health is a non-partisan issue, and the Lung Health Foundation remains neutral. Rather than assigning blame to any political party, focus on solutions and what the politician can do to help address the problem. This keeps the conversation productive.

#### **Following Up**

Most meetings will have a clear objective but often require follow-up. Politicians may request more information or offer to connect you with someone who can assist further. Take note of any follow-up tasks and inform us so we can help you pursue the next steps together.

**TIP:** Follow-up is usually managed by their Constituency Assistant. If you notice their card at the welcome desk or meet them during your visit, introduce yourself and ask for their contact information. They often play a key role in deciding what gets passed along to your local politician.

### **Professionalism and Presentation**

While these meetings are typically informal, it's important to present yourself well. Dressing in business casual attire and speaking professionally demonstrates respect and helps build rapport. Keeping the conversation polite and focused on solutions will leave a positive impression.

