

## **How to Request a Meeting on the Hill for NBCC Lobby Day 2022:**

Things on Capitol Hill are beginning to open back up following restrictions on public access due to COVID and security concerns. Each office seems to have a different policy, with some office staff working remotely on certain days of the week and other offices fully back “in person.” Visitors are currently allowed in the building, but a member of the Congressional staff must meet visitors at the entrance to the building and escort them to the office. Some offices will be happy to do this; others may prefer to meet outside the Congressional office building or at another nearby location. Some offices are still holding only virtual meetings. Things vary between the House and the Senate, between Republicans and Democrats, and office by office (making it confusing as to what the current “rules” are regarding visits to the Capitol and Congressional office buildings.

**It is NBCC’s priority for lobby day meetings to be held in person with either the Member of Congress or their staff, which should be requested first. Only if there is no possibility of an in-person meeting should a virtual (zoom) meeting be requested.**

When calling your Member of Congress to set up an appointment (either with the Member themselves or with the health staffer):

- (1) First, ask for an in-person meeting. Tell them you are traveling from their home state (and in the House, let them know whether you are in their District since that will be helpful.) If the office is not allowing visitors into their office, ask whether the meeting can happen somewhere else in the building (like the cafeteria).
- (2) Second, if an in-person meeting inside the Congressional office building is not an option (and again, it will vary from office to office), ask whether the meeting can happen somewhere outside the office building (i.e., on the steps, as some meetings are currently being held).
- (3) Third, if the Congressional office would prefer to meet in person outside of and slightly away from the Congressional office building, ask whether the meeting could be held at the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) building near the Capitol on the Senate side. House offices may prefer to meet somewhere closer to the House side, like a Starbucks.
- (4) Finally, if the Congressional office is unwilling to schedule an in-person meeting, schedule a zoom meeting (which we can set up for you). While most staff should be able to schedule some type of in-person meeting for May, the situation is constantly changing, so the primary goal is to get onto the Congressional office’s calendar, whether in person or virtual.

Based on recent reports, a full opening of the Capitol- back to pre-pandemic “normal” – is not expected to happen before Labor Day (which is still tentative). The main issue for re-opening the building comes down to a shortage of US Capitol Police since hundreds left the force following the January 6 insurrection. Congressional leadership, senior staff, and the US Capitol Police are working to find a way to re-open the Capitol safely while managing the shortages.