



## Congressional Site Visits – A Step by Step Guide

Inviting your Senator or Representative to come and visit a Distribution Center in their state or Congressional district is an excellent way to educate Members of Congress (MOC) about the healthcare supply chain and the unique challenges our industry faces. These types of visits will have a significant impact on their understanding of the industry and will help HIDA continue to advance the industry's legislative and regulatory goals. The information below is meant to help you schedule and organize an onsite visit from your Senators or Representative during a Congressional recess.

### Initial Steps

- **Identify who you would like to invite.**
  - You can identify your state's Senators at [www.senate.gov/states](http://www.senate.gov/states)
  - You can identify your Representatives at [www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative)
- **Plan your agenda.**
  - HIDA Government Affairs has created a draft agenda, however every Distribution Center is unique, so please modify it to fit your needs. The goal of this visit is to help the MOC better understand the healthcare supply chain. This can be done through a tour of the facility, meetings with executives or meetings with employees. Work with your team and the HIDA Government Affairs team to develop the best way to show off your facility.
- **Identify upcoming Congressional recess periods.**
  - You should be flexible with your potential dates, however knowing when Congress is in recess can help you prepare your calendar. Additionally, it may be helpful to initially offer several dates that may work with your calendar, but always include a caveat that you are willing to work with the office to find a mutually agreeable timeframe.
  - See the Senate calendar here: <https://www.senate.gov/legislative/calendars.htm>
  - See the House calendar here: <https://www.house.gov/legislative-activity>

### Plan Your Visit

- **Initiate your invitation.**
  - Congressional schedules fill up very quickly. Aim to send your invitation *at least* several weeks in advance. HIDA Government Affairs has drafted a letter you can email to the Congressional office. If you do not hear back from the office you can call and ask for the scheduler to see if your email has been received, however email is the preferred method

of correspondence in most offices. HIDA Government Affairs can also help coordinate outreach to the appropriate staff.

- **Provide the office with all relevant information.**
  - Congressional staff aim to prepare their bosses as thoroughly as possible for the events they attend. When in doubt offer more information than you think is necessary. This includes agendas, dress codes, attendees and bios, facts about the distribution center, whether press will be involved or not, etc. Imagine your CEO will be attending an event – what information would they want to have on hand?

## **During the Visit**

- **Share Key Local Information**
  - The MOC will likely want to know how the Distribution Center affects the state or district. Have quick facts available to share - such as number of employees, annual revenue, emergency preparedness and response services, key customers, etc...
- **Touch on Key Policy Issues**
  - Work with HIDA Government Affairs to understand key issues affecting the industry. Share how these policy issues have a direct impact on your facility, employees, and the state or district.
- **Record the Visit**
  - If cleared with the MOC's office ahead of time, plan to have a photographer take pictures of the visit or for a planned photo opportunity at the end of the visit.

## **After the Visit**

- **Send a Thank You Note**
  - Send a thank you note to the MOC as well as any staff who helped coordinate or attended the visit. Feel free to include any pictures you are ok with the office posting or sharing.
- **Follow Up with Relevant Staff**
  - Reach out to staff with answers to any questions that were not addressed on site. Share any additional information that wasn't touched on during the visit. Offer to be a resource when that office needs help understanding or working with the healthcare supply chain.
- **Let HIDA Government Affairs Know How the Visit Went!**
  - HIDA Government Affairs appreciates the hard work our members do outside of Washington, D.C. Please let us know how the visit went and we are happy to do additional follow up with the MOC's D.C. office.

## **DRAFT INVITATION EMAIL**

[Date]

The Honorable [First and Last Name]  
U.S. House of Representatives *or* United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515 (House)/20510 (Senate)

Dear Representative/Senator [Last Name]

On behalf of [Company Name], I would like to invite you to visit our [Distribution Center] during one of your upcoming district work periods. [Insert a brief description of your company]

Medical-surgical wholesalers such as [Company Name] play an important role in the healthcare supply chain. Medical-surgical products distributors primarily distribute items used in everyday medical services and procedures, ranging from gauze and gloves to diagnostic laboratory tests and capital equipment. Customers of healthcare distribution include physician offices, hospitals, nursing homes, extended care facilities, veteran affairs offices, and department of defense healthcare facilities.

I would like to invite you to tour one of our distribution centers located in [Distribution Center Location]. Our distribution center [Include some location specific information including customers, number of employees, etc.] Visiting our distribution center would help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the healthcare supply chain and a deeper understanding of the issues currently impacting our industry and your constituents in [Insert State or Congressional District].

If you and your staff are available to visit our distribution center during one of your trips home, we would be happy to accommodate your schedule.

- WHAT:** A facility tour of [Company] distribution center followed by a meeting with staff to discuss industry priorities.
- WHERE:** Distribution Center Address
- WHEN:** A mutually agreeable date falling over a congressional recess, or weekend trip to the state.
- ISSUES:** HIDA Government Affairs can help you with the most recent industry issues and concerns.
- CONTACT:** This should be the person coordinating with the congressional office including both phone number and email.

Please feel free to reach out to me by phone or email to further discuss potential opportunities.

Kind Regards,

## **Sample Agenda**

- 10:00 AM** Greet the Member of Congress and any staff at the front of the building or in the reception area.
- 10:15 AM** Tour of Distribution Center.
- 10:45 AM** Meet in a conference room to offer the Member of Congress an opportunity to make remarks and for key executives and/or employees to share their experiences and concerns as well as industry priorities.
- 11:15 AM** Wrap up and get final questions and comments from the Member of Congress.

## **Site Visit Checklist**

- Reach out to HIDA Government Affairs staff and let them know of your willingness to host a Congressional site visit and get their help and support.
- Identify who to invite. Include relevant staff.
- Identify possible dates by looking at the Congressional recess calendars.
- Draft your agenda and identify key attendees from your company.
- Draft and finalize your invite. Reach out to HIDA Government Affairs if you have any questions.
- Email your invite to the Congressional office. Ideally this will go straight to the District Scheduler (this person is sometimes based in the Washington, D.C. office). If you need help finding this contact information, reach out to HIDA Government Affairs.
- Follow up with the Scheduler by phone if you do not hear back in 3-5 business days.
- Coordinate with HIDA Government Affairs on key industry messaging.
- Prep internal staff who will be leading the tour, attending meetings or facilitating the visit with the Member of Congress.
- Send a thank you note to the Member and any staff who attended or coordinated the visit.
- Follow up with the office by providing any additional information or resources that came up during the visit.
- Follow up with HIDA Government Affairs and let them know how the visit went, and how they can help coordinate follow up in Washington, D.C.