

TIPS FOR CONGRESSIONAL EMAIL ENGAGEMENT

by Azaliah Israel & Taylor Scott, February 2020

Example: Emailing after a Meeting

Subject Line: Resources to Inform **CURES 2.0 Legislation**

Hi Cheryl,

Thanks for meeting with us last week. I am following up with the resources I mentioned.

- Here is a link with [clear definitions of integrated care](#) provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- Short article attached on the application and setup (p. 4), technology needs and benefits (p. 6 and table 2) associated with tele behavioral health programs.
- Link for a [San Francisco based Tele behavioral Health program](#)
- A CDC website that explains the function of [maternal review committees](#).

Thank you again for allowing me to get involved with Rep. Smith's goals around CURES 2.0. I'd be thrilled to continue working with you on these issues, providing a research-based or system-level perspective for you, or for more visible efforts to share these ideas. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can assist further.

Tailor the subject line by emphasizing policy priorities and/or legislator name.

Concise reminder of prior meeting. Remember: every word counts.

Add bullets describing key points for resources that are attached, and embed hyperlinks. Point to tables or specific pages, or even share excerpts below your signature or in an attachment. Most staff won't have time to read 30 page articles completely.

People love hearing their names, and in this case, the name of their boss (legislator), state, or town.

Reinforce RPC strategy: ongoing collaboration

Other Guidelines:

- Subject lines are high-impact because they determine whether someone opens the message. Opening sentences are similar. Indicate relevance and say key points in as few words as possible. Staff often click past emails that look long upon opening.
- Stay visible and stay in contact. Aim for reaching out at least twice per month (every other week). These can be very brief messages, as though you were staying in touch with a pen pal.
 - Example: "I saw this article on XYZ and thought of you"
- Don't be discouraged if they don't respond. Continue to build rapport by showing forth your sincerity in supporting them.
- If they do respond and request something from you, try to respond within 24 hours, even if that's just to say you'll look into it. Aim for response times of 3 days or less, as that's often the time frame legislators have to markup bills in committees. The window for impact is often incredibly short, and the information they are requesting may not be relevant after that window closes.



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Example: Follow-up Response (sending updates to your congressional pen-pal)

Subject Line: Supporting Rep. Smith's Interest in Tele-Health

Hi Cheryl,

I attended a presentation last week, and I thought of you. The presenter runs a telehealth program, [SAFE-T Program](#), at Penn State. This increases the ability of rural providers to perform a complete and accurate pediatric sexual assault exam. A few lessons I gleaned:

- Best practice involves live exam mentoring, data security, peer review, collaborative community strategies, and collecting forensically defensible evidence.
- Challenges include too few trained examiners, high turnover and burnout, and disparities in quality of care.
- Their approach significantly improved quality and complete examinations, as well as more accurate diagnoses.
- Telehealth strategies tripled patient care at two partner hospitals.

I am attaching a few slides from [Dr. Sheridan Miyamoto](#)'s presentation and I'd be happy to introduce her if you'd like to set up a brief call.

Re-emphasize office priorities and use representative name in subject line to imply urgency

Hyperlink more info about the program and the source of info to illustrate relevance, keep email concise, and demonstrate credibility.

Make the email "skimmable". Sharing relevant resources indicates your interest in being a responsive, lasting resource to them.

Offer to e-introduce them to others and mediate discussion. Since you are aware of their priorities, you are in a good position to make the connection and clearly articulate how the new contact can support them.

Example: A very brief note related to a newsletter or resource you want to share

Subject: Related to Rep. Smith's Healthcare Innovation Efforts

Hi Cheryl, I thought of our talk a while back when I saw this. It's a good example of an integrated care facility that addresses a range of risk factors for chronic illness.

Hope you're doing well!

Best,
signature

-----FORWARDED EMAIL BELOW-----

