Staying Connected to Your Legislators *Virtually*

During the Next Legislative Session

1. **Get to know your elected officials, especially those that represent you.**
   - Request a virtual office visit with your legislator
   - Use an interactive software such as Zoom, GoToMeeting or Microsoft Teams
   - Invite your legislator to attend a component meeting virtually and speak for 15 minutes
   - Take photos of your computer screen during these meetings/visits and post on social media

2. **Plan your virtual meeting.**
   - Request a virtual meeting in the legislator’s district or capitol office
   - Send a reminder notification
   - Test all technology prior to the meeting (video, wi-fi, screen sharing)
   - Establish connection about ten minutes before meeting begins
   - Set aside all distractions (children, pets, television, music)

3. **Send supportive TDHA resource materials before the virtual meeting.**
   - The legislator may not be familiar with dental hygienists and TDHA’s issues
   - You may want to share information about local anesthesia, expanded practice settings and tele-dentistry (GAC can provide fact sheets to guide the discussion)
   - If appropriate, share statistics that show Texas ranking at the bottom on oral health issues

4. **Share your agenda ahead of time.**
   - Purpose of the visit is to introduce yourself
   - Explain you are in legislator’s district
   - Explain you are a member of TDHA
   - Share your professional education
   - Express your concerns about access to care
   - Tell about how Covid-19 has affected your employment

5. **Be politically correct.**
   - All politics are local
• Be sure legislator knows that you live in his/her district and that you vote
• Do not give misinformation
• Do not be afraid to say, “I don’t know but I will get back to you”
• Discuss any opposition to an issue (such as TDA)

6. Be prompt, punctual and prepared.
• Know the committees on which your legislator serves
• Be gracious if legislator is late or cancels at the last minute
• Talk to staff if legislator cannot be on meeting
• Make the connection between legislator’s interests/committees and access to care
• Respect the reserved meeting time

7. Things to consider when ending the meeting.
• Get contact information for everyone you connected with electronically
• Leave your contact information
• Offer to be the dental hygiene resource for the legislator

8. Things to do after the virtual meeting.
• ALWAYS send a thank you note, written or electronic
• “Friend” your legislator through social media sites
• Maintain ongoing communication through texts and emails

9. Help candidates get elected by volunteering. IT TAKES TIME TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP!
• Make a financial contribution if you are able
• Write letters on their behalf
• Display yard signs
• Work phone banks
• Block walk in their districts
• Respond promptly to Calls for Action from TDHA Lobbyist and Legislative Director

REMEMBER YOUR GAC TEAM, LOBBYIST, AND LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU BEFORE AND AFTER YOUR VIRTUAL VISITS.

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