Tips for Effective Advocacy

Pre-meeting planning:
1) Review College and Chapter priority list if available. Study background information (ACP position papers, policy materials, other references).
2) Become familiar with your LOCAL representative and senator: Political party, committee assignments, priorities including what bills they may be sponsoring.

Delivering the message:
1) Go in meetings with a purpose and agenda. Review assignments if you are with a group and practice if needed.
2) Be prepared for the unexpected: Who you will talk to (legislator versus staff), where you will talk (private office versus busy waiting room), and how much time you will have.
3) Keep introductions brief to save time.
4) Describe ACP and your practice (if applicable).
5) Review agenda items with legislators and be specific on what you are asking them to do: Support/sponsor/co-sponsor a bill or issue. Be direct but polite when asking if they will help.
6) Personalize your remarks if you can: Stories and real-life situations can make the issue more credible and easier to remember.
7) End visit by soliciting legislator/staff opinion on the issue. Be respectful if disagreement. A friendly exchange of ideas may be the start of a productive relationship.
8) Leave printed materials behind (Chapter/ACP fact sheet and priority list) and thank legislator/staff for their time. Carry extra business cards if you have them.

After the meeting:
1) Send a follow-up thank-you letter or email to legislator/staff recapping meeting. Include what action was being asked. Offer to serve as local resource on health-related information if comfortable.