



COLLEGE of AMERICAN  
PATHOLOGISTS  
Advocacy

# LABORATORY TOUR TOOLKIT



## HOSTING A LABORATORY TOUR

A laboratory tour is the single best way to advocate for pathology and one of the most effective means to help you develop a relationship with your members of Congress.

These tours are useful to put a face on the profession and demonstrate pathology's crucial role in the delivery of quality health care. Many of the CAP's strongest allies on Capitol Hill first became acquainted with their local pathologists and the issues affecting their practice during a lab tour.

## TOUR PREPARATION

- Use the template provided on [page 3](#) to email an invitation on your facility's letterhead to the legislator's scheduler or Health LA. Cap staff can help you find the best point of contact.
  - Email the invitation to the staffer and copy Annie McKinney at [amckinn@cap.org](mailto:amckinn@cap.org) or [PathNET@cap.org](mailto:PathNET@cap.org) so CAP staff can help you follow up with the offices.
  - If you extended the invitation to the Congressional staffer you met with during Hill Day, please send the invitation to them and cc CAP staff.
- If appropriate, invite your facility's top staff to participate in the tour but avoid having too large of a group.
- Map out a route. Plan ahead to select particular areas that illustrate the points you want to make. See [page 4](#) for a sample itinerary.
- Demonstrate the process involved in various tests. Create a schedule that allows time for breaks, discussion, and delays.
  - If desired, CAP staff will work with the legislator's and your facility's press offices to arrange for local media coverage during the tour.
  - Rehearse the day before and have your colleagues ask possible questions.
  - CAP Advocacy staff can set up a prep call before the tour to discuss legislative issues, send you issue briefs or other policy materials, and provide other assistance. Contact [PathNET@cap.org](mailto:PathNET@cap.org) to set up the call.
  - Make sure the legislator's office has the laboratory's address and any necessary instructions regarding parking, which entrance to use, etc.
  - Provide the legislator's office with a contact name and phone number in case of last-minute schedule changes.
  - Designate one of the laboratory staff if possible to take photos during the tour.
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## CONDUCTING THE TOUR

- Be at the entrance to greet the legislator and staff when they arrive and escort them to the laboratory.
- Give a brief overview of the planned tour and a general description of your laboratory.
- During the tour, discuss the facility with your legislator, using simple terms and descriptions as they will not be subject matter experts.
- Introduce employees by name as they are encountered along the tour. As constituents and/or employees working in the legislator's district or state, the legislator will most likely be interested in meeting them as well.
- If possible, tie in legislative issues and asks during tour, such as how Medicare cuts would impact patient access to diagnostic care or the laboratory workforce shortages.
- Stay on schedule. Be aware of the time the legislator has available.

## AFTER THE TOUR

- Send a thank you letter in email format to your legislator and staff using the template provided below on [page 5](#). Reemphasize points made during the visit and answer any questions left unanswered during the tour. You may want to include relevant CAP legislative issue briefs.
  - Fill out the post-event survey by [clicking here](#).
- Send your photos to Annie McKinney at [amckinn@cap.org](mailto:amckinn@cap.org) or [PathNET@cap.org](mailto:PathNET@cap.org) so that your successful tour may be featured in the CAP's Advocacy Update and/or on the CAP's social media.
- Follow up with the legislator's office and continue to maintain contact. Position yourself to become a resource on pathology for the legislator and staff.
- Social media communications. Get the word out! Post a message to your colleagues or members of Congress on any social media platform mentioning the tour! Find your member of Congress's handle and send them a social media message.
- Sample message:

*Thank you [@ handle of your member of Congress]  
for visiting [name of your lab] and its [number of employees]  
to discuss issues important to pathology!*

- Op-ed to local newspapers.

**Write an op-ed and submit it to your local newspaper about the importance of pathology in your community. CAP staff can also help with drafting and submitting these op-eds**

- Sign up for PathNET, the CAP's grassroots advocacy network. Use [this link](#) to learn more and join. Laboratory tours are eligible to receive 3 PathNET points.

## SAMPLE LAB TOUR INVITE LETTER FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS\*

[Date]

The Honorable [Member's Name]  
[U.S. House of Representatives] OR [United States Senate]  
Washington, DC 20515 (House Zip) OR 20510 (Senate Zip) Attn:  
[Scheduler's Name]

Dear [Representative/Senator Name]:

On behalf of [Name of Lab], its pathologists, and its laboratory professionals, I cordially invite you to tour our laboratory in [city location]. This laboratory tour will provide me and many of my colleagues who live and work in your district the opportunity to acquaint you with the role of [type of pathology] pathology in the delivery of health care.

[Text that is pertinent to your lab and what you do]

[Name of Lab] plays a vital role in our community by delivering quality healthcare to thousands of your constituents. I would want to demonstrate some of the diagnostic tests performed in the lab and discuss what I see as the role of pathologists in today's medicine. This educational and entertaining tour will last approximately one hour.

I would appreciate your staff contacting me either by phone at [insert number] or email [insert email] to discuss the preferred date and time for the tour.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
[Name of Lab]

\* Please email a PDF copy to [PathNET@cap.org](mailto:PathNET@cap.org).

## SAMPLE LAB TOUR AGENDA

All times are approximate. Sample agenda items may be amended where appropriate.

<b>8:00 am</b>	<b>Legislator Arrives at the Laboratory</b>
<b>8:00–8:05 am</b>	<b>Greetings and Introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greet the legislator, introduce them to pathologists and laboratory personnel, and provide them with a brief overview of the facility (i.e., what services are performed here, the role of a pathologist, and how many counties and patients it serves).</li><li>• Paint a picture for the legislator about the importance of your facility and the services you provide to the community.</li><li>• If possible, provide them with a lab coat for the duration of the tour.</li><li>• Deliver any relevant policy materials.</li></ul>
<b>8:05–8:35 am</b>	<b>Slide Preparation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walk the legislator through a slide preparation.</li><li>• Allow the legislator the opportunity to view a slide through a multi-headed microscope.</li><li>• Use clear, concise terms so that the legislator understands. Remember, the elected official usually has little knowledge of pathology issues, so it's essential to help them understand the process.</li><li>• Demonstrate any key technology specific to your laboratory.</li><li>• Photos should be taken throughout the demonstration.</li><li>• If time permits, walk the legislator through the differences between “clear” and “unclear” diagnoses. In other words, feel free to show the member the debate that ensues when trying to diagnose difficult slides.</li></ul>
<b>8:35–8:45 am</b>	<b>Hospital Tour</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlight key aspects of the facility.</li><li>• Introduce the legislator to the hospital administrator.</li><li>• Focus on parts of the hospital that are closely related to pathology.</li><li>• Remember - the majority of the tour should be conducted in the lab to keep the focus on pathology.</li></ul>
<b>8:45–9:00 am</b>	<b>Question and Answer Session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Upon conclusion of the tour, the legislator may prefer to make some brief remarks or solicit some questions from the participants or laboratory employees.</li><li>• If the tour incorporates a question-and-answer session or additional remarks, be sure to include this time into your tour. Be sure to clear any questions for the legislator with CAP and Congressional staff before the tour.</li></ul>
<b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Legislator Departs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exchange business cards with the legislator and key staffers.</li><li>• Offer to provide any additional assistance to the member or staff on future pathology or health care issues.</li></ul>

## SAMPLE LAB TOUR THANK YOU LETTER FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AFTER THE TOUR\*

[Date]

The Honorable [Member's Name]  
[U.S. House of Representatives] OR [United States Senate]  
Washington, DC 20515 (House Zip) OR 20510 (Senate Zip) Attn: [Scheduler's Name] Dear  
[Representative/Senator Name]:

Thank you for touring the pathology laboratory at [Name of Lab] in [City]. I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to visit this facility and learn more about specific legislation that affects pathology. I sincerely hope that the tour was both educational and entertaining!

I thoroughly enjoyed showing you the inner workings of a pathology laboratory and analyzing different specimen slides. In particular, I hope that our discussion regarding the critical role pathologists plays in the delivery of health care was informative and useful as you and your colleagues work with various regulatory agencies to improve health care in America.

[Please feel free to add any specifics that were discussed during the tour.]

Once again, thank you for touring the pathology laboratory at [insert your lab], and please do not hesitate to contact me either by phone, [insert number], or email [insert email] with any questions or comments pertaining to pathology or health care policy in general. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Your Name [Name  
of Lab]

\* Please email a PDF copy to [PathNET@cap.org](mailto:PathNET@cap.org).