

## Tips for writing your own letter to Congress:

- **Handwrite or type your letter.** If handwriting, be sure to use black ink—it reproduces better when faxed.
- **Always include** the date, your name and address at the top of the letter.
- **Use your own words** to express yourself.
- State your topic clearly by beginning with a subject line. For the purposes of our letter-writing campaign, the subject is:
  - **Please urge the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) to continue their funding support for the Gastroparesis Clinical Research Consortium (GpCRC) beyond 2010.**
- **Personalize your letter** by including a personal story and / or information on how your illness has affected you, your family, your work and your ability to carry on each and every day. The more you personalize your letter, the more impact you will have.
- **Next, focus on a few points.** Examples are:
  - Gastroparesis, in its worst form, represents digestive organ failure,
  - Gastroparesis is not rare. The National Institutes of Health report: Five million Americans suffer from gastroparesis,
  - In the past decade three medical treatments for gastroparesis have been greatly restricted (cisapride, tegaserod, domperidone) forcing patients to rely upon older drugs with greater side effects, and increasing days spent in a hospital bed due to uncontrolled bouts of vomiting and / or abdominal pain,
  - The GpCRC is vital to finding new treatments for gastroparesis. It is a future lifeline,
  - GpCRC is in its very early stages. The consortium is just beginning to establish a registry, a tissue bank, and validated tools for conducting research studies, as well as to develop the infrastructure needed to perform clinical trials into new therapies. These elements are basic and established for almost any other disease, but especially for common, disabling diseases,

- An implantable device used to help control the nausea and vomiting related to gastroparesis is not available to all who require it. The GpCRC needs time to conduct clinical trials for this device so as to improve accessibility to the treatment,
- **Ask your elected official to take concrete action** such as: **I need you to vigorously encourage continued funding support for the GpCRC.**
- **Personalize your relationship to your elected official.** That is, if you have ever volunteered, provided a contribution, or voted for your politician—say so.
- **Be Polite.** Recognize your politician is a human being working hard to represent the people in their constituency. Offensive language and rude remarks do not help your efforts,
- **Ask for a response to your letter.** This is vital in order to engage your elected official's office in a dialogue. They may be able to share some important information, or provide guidance on steps you can take to reach the right people who can help make a difference.
- **Always provide a thank you in your closing remarks,**
- **Be sure to sign your letter.**

**Letters should be faxed or hand-delivered to the local constituency office of your elected official(s).**