



2019 Hill Meetings

Webinar - April 17, 2019



Agenda



1. Background on Congress.
2. Status of F2F funding.
3. Educating vs. lobbying
4. What does Congress need to know?
5. How to schedule and prepare for meetings.
6. How to conduct and follow up from meetings.

Preliminaries



- Your name, state
- Experience with legislative advocacy (federal and/or state)
- Any special relationships you have with Members of Congress

Who is “Congress”?



Who is “Congress”?

- Members – Senators and Representatives
- Staffers
 - DC
 - Local
 - **STAFF ARE IMPORTANT** – advise their “bosses” about positions to take on legislation.

Who is “Congress”? – Members



Members of Congress:

- 100 Senators -- 2 from each state
(constituents = all state residents)
- 435 Representatives (House Members) --
(constituents = residents of a single
congressional district)

So, each resident in a state (but not DC or territories) has two Senators and one Representative.

Who is “Congress”? – Staffers



DC staff

- Legislative Directors (LD's)
- Legislative Assistants (LA's)
- Legislative Correspondents (LC's)

Local staff

- Legislative aides
- Caseworkers

Who is “Congress”? – DC Staffers



Legislative Assistants (LA's)

- Are the people with whom you will usually meet
- Handle specific issue areas, e.g., health (may handle many issues)
- Busy; many meetings
- Typically young (especially in the House); may not have children.

Who is “Congress”? – DC Staffers



Legislative Correspondents

- Draft letters
- Assist LAs -- You may meet with them (OK)

Legislative Director (one per office)

- Oversee LAs – closer advisor to Member
- Not likely but lucky if you meet with LD

Who is “Congress”? – Local Staffers



Local-office staff

- Aides may handle issue areas, e.g., health
- Caseworkers handle constituent problems with government agencies
- Good to develop relationships in local offices; you may get asked to serve on advisory committees, get easier access to Member, DC staff



The 116th Congress

- “A Congress” = 2 years, 1st and 2nd sessions; changes with each election. This is nation’s 116th Congress and began on January 3, 2019.
- In this Congress, the House has a majority of Democrats; the Senate has a majority of Republicans.
- The majority in each chamber controls the leadership and all committees; therefore, the majority generally controls which bills are considered by the full House or Senate, and the legislation presented to committees.

Status of F2F funding



- The program was last extended (for FYs 2018 & 2019) as part of the “health extenders” package within the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, which also --
 - Expanded the program to fund F2F grants for 5 territories and to serve “at least one” Indian tribe (3 grants were provided to serve tribal families).
 - Increased funding for the program from \$5 million per year to \$6 million per year.

Status of F2F funding



- The F2F program needs to be reauthorized/funded beyond the current fiscal year (FY 2019).
- The program is in the jurisdiction of Senate Finance Comte and House Energy & Commerce Comte (in Title V of Social Security Act).

Status of F2F funding



- Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) is the chairman of the House Energy & Commerce (E&C) Committee – has been a long-time supporter of the F2F program.
- Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR) is the minority “Ranking Member” on E&C – supported the F2F extension in 2018.
- Health Subcomte chair is Anna Eshoo (D-CA) ; Ranking is Michael Burgess (R-TX).



- Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) is the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee – was the original author of the F2F program in 2005.
- Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) is the minority Ranking Member of the Finance Committee – supporter of F2F program.

Status of F2F funding



- Will need a legislative “vehicle” for the F2F provision.
- In the past, have travelled with a package of other “health extenders” – provisions that need an amendment to current law (statute) to continue.
- These “extenders” move through the Senate Finance Committee and the House Energy & Commerce Committee.

Status of F2F funding



- Fine point --
 - Like other health extenders, the F2F program gets “direct” or “mandatory” funding (avoid use of word “mandatory”), meaning funding **does not need to be appropriated** in an appropriations bill. The money automatically goes to the program once the law’s date is amended.
(authorization = appropriation)

Status of F2F funding



- Rep. Mikie (Michelle) Sherrill (D-NJ) has agreed to sponsor a bill to reauthorize/extend funding for the F2F program.
- Seeking a Republican co-sponsor before introducing bill.
- Constituents can help to recruit other cosponsors – the more the better, both parties.

Why visit Congress?



- Understanding the purpose and value of the F2F program is important when the program needs a funding extension, as it does now.
- Members of Congress and their staffers need to know that tax dollars are being spent wisely -- that the program serves a legitimate government purpose and that there is a good “bang for the buck.”

Educating vs. Lobbying



There is a difference between lobbying and educating:

- Educating = providing general information
- Lobbying = asking that a government official take a specific position on legislation or policy

Educating vs. Lobbying



You may **NOT** lobby using any federally funded resources!!!

You *may* lobby --

- If part of your salary comes from **unrestricted funds** and you are lobbying using that time.
- If you make calls/visit on your **personal time as a constituent** (but maybe not if you are Executive Director).



During educational visits about F2Fs...

- You are educating Congress about the use of taxpayer dollars funding F2Fs.
- You are *not* asking for Members to take any action or a specific position on legislation relating to F2Fs.

Educating vs. Lobbying



By the time of the conference, there may be a bill to extend funding for F2Fs.

- If you ask that your Member cosponsor or support that bill, you are *lobbying*.
- If you just *tell* the Member/staffer that the bill has been introduced, but *don't* ask them to cosponsor or support it, you are not lobbying. (Fine line.)

What Congress needs to know



During a Hill visit, convey --

- Basic information about your state's F2F
- The point that F2Fs are a very valuable and efficient use of federal funds
- **The fact that program needs to be reauthorized for *any* funding to continue.**
- AND...

What Congress needs to know



...that F2Fs help kids with special needs and their families.

Use stories!

(For Reps, from their district if possible.)

Illustrate challenges faced by families, how your F2F helps them obtain more timely and cost-effective care for their children and helps the family survive financially.

What Congress needs to know



- Explain the ways you help families -- one-to-one assistance, workshops, publications, etc.
- Explain that the federal grant helps your organization raise funds from other sources to help more families.

What Congress needs to know



EMPHASIZE & EXPLAIN that the F2F grant leads to:

- Better health outcomes for kids (e.g., through early intervention, specialty care)
- Financial solvency for families
- Improvement in health care systems – quality and efficiency

(Provide handout, “The Value of F2Fs.”)

What Congress needs to know



Explain that:

**F2Fs can help congressional
office help their constituents!**

Ask whom you should contact (probably
caseworker in local office)

Making Hill appointments



On Thursday, May 9 –

- 12:30-1:30 Lunch
- 1:30-2:30 Speed Dating for Partnership & Poster Sessions
- **3:00-3:45 Hill visits - 1 or 2 Senators or 1 Rep.**
- 4:00-5:00 Policy Panel
- 5:30-7:30 Family Voices Awards Reception

Making Hill appointments



(see handout)

- Coordinate with others from your state so you don't duplicate meetings and/or can cover multiple offices.
- Try to get an appointment with the health "LA" (Legislative Assistant).
- Invite LA and Member to 5:30 reception (send invitation).

Making Hill appointments



(see handout)

- Let us know when you have made an appointment and whether you would like someone to accompany you.
- We may be able to provide useful information about the Members you are visiting.



Research Members*

- **Committee assignments** (important if on Senate Finance Comte or House Energy and Commerce Comte, esp. Health Subcomte)
- **Bio**
- **Issues they care about; positions.**

*websites: www.lastname.house.gov or www.lastname.senate.gov, with some exceptions; or go through www.house.gov or www.senate.gov.

Before coming to DC



(see handout)

Pack your business cards and materials about your state's CYSHCN and F2F – state data sheet, brochures, samples of publications, **photos of kids**, etc.

Prepare family stories – especially illustrating cost savings, improved health outcomes, parents' ability to work. Use example from House Member's district if possible.

[We will provide “leave-behinds” about F2Fs in general.]

Bring comfortable shoes!



This:



Not this:



There are long marble hallways, long distances between buildings, cobblestones!



Attire: “Business casual” or casual is fine.

Conducting Hill meetings (1)



(see handout)

- Plan ahead:
 - jot down talking points;
 - designate lead speaker; decide who will say what.
- Provide materials about your state's CYSHCN and F2F.

Conducting Hill meetings (2)



(see handout)

- Warm-up: Ask staffer if they are familiar with F2Fs, if they know any children with special health care needs; talk (briefly) about your child/children with special needs.
- Mainly: Talk about your F2F – how it helps kids and families. Provide **STORIES, STORIES, STORIES!**
- Offer yourself as an expert; see if you can join any advisory committees that the Member may have.

After your meetings



Please fill out debriefing forms –

- Which offices you visited; names of staffers.
- Whether FV staff needs to follow up.

Back at home - ASAP



- Send thank-you email or note.
- Put person you met with on your email list to receive newsletters (get their permission).
- Send your contact information, referral forms to local caseworker.

Back at home - when possible



- Visit or call local health/disability aide.
- Visit Member when at home office or public event; bring children.
- Invite Member and staff to visit your site or attend an event.
- Ask for letter of support when applying for federal grant.

CONTACT INFO FOR POLICY TEAM



Before conference:

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During and after conference:

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Before you go....



Please fill out the short (<1 minute) feedback survey linked below!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HillVisitsFeedback2019>