



How to Do a Hill Visit (It's Easy!)

Pre-conference session
May 8, 2019



Agenda



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

Why visit Congress?



- Members of Congress and should be aware that tax dollars are being spent wisely on the F2F program – that it helps families, improves the health care system, and provides a “good bang for the buck.”
- Congress must act for F2F funding to continue beyond this fiscal year, so it is especially important for Members to understand the value of the program now.



The 116th Congress

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

Who is “Congress”? – Members



- 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”?



Staff

- **Local (state or district)**
- **DC**

STAFF ARE IMPORTANT – They advise their “bosses” about positions to take on legislation.

Who is “Congress”? – Staffers



Local staff

- Legislative aides
- Caseworkers

DC staff

- Chief of Staff
- Legislative Directors (LD)
- **Legislative Assistants (LA's)**
- Legislative Correspondents (LC's)

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.

Educating vs. Lobbying



There is a difference between lobbying and educating:

- Educating = providing 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 informing 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 (whether there is a bill introduced or not).

Educating vs. Lobbying



Example: If there is a bill to extend F2F funding:

- 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.)

F2F program history



The F2F program has always had bipartisan support –

- Original law (enacted 2006) was sponsored by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA).
- Subsequent extensions have been supported on a bipartisan basis.

(See “Funding History” leave-behind.)

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” – funding needs to be extended -- funded beyond the current fiscal year (FY 2019).
- Most other grant programs are “authorized” and then funds are “appropriated” separately.
- But, the F2F program is “directly” funded; once the program is reauthorized, the funding is automatic; no appropriations are needed.

F2F bills?



- Likely to be bipartisan bills in House and Senate this year – most likely a “clean extension,” meaning no additional money and no policy changes.
- House and Senate bills may have different lengths of extension – 2 or 5 years
- If you are asked if there is a bill, answer “not yet, but there may be bills in both House and Senate.”

Status of F2F funding



- Will need a legislative “vehicle” for the F2F bill to travel with (be included in).
- In the past, 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



- If an F2F provision is in House and Senate bills (or a bill of one chamber), then final legislation is negotiated between the two sides.
 - “Conference committee” or
 - Informal negotiations



The F2F program is in the jurisdiction of:

- **Senate Finance Comte**
(jurisdiction over Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, Title V Block Grant, much of ACA)
- **House Energy & Commerce Comte, Subcomte on Health** (jurisdiction over Medicaid, Title V and other HRSA programs, much of ACA)



Senate Finance Committee

- **Sen. Chuck Grassley** (R-IA), Chairman – was the original author of the F2F program in 2005.
- **Sen. Ron Wyden** (D-OR), Ranking Dem. Member - supporter of F2F program.
- *Health Subcomte*: Chair, Pat Toomey (R-PA); Ranking, Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)



House Energy & Commerce Comte

- **Rep. Frank Pallone** (D-NJ), Chair – has been a long-time supporter of the F2F program.
- **Rep. Greg Walden** (R-OR), Ranking Repub. Member – supported the F2F extension and expansion in 2018.
- *Health Subcomte*: Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Chair; Michael Burgess (R-TX), Ranking.

Policy Panel Thursday- 4:00-5:00



Staffers for all the key players:

House Energy & Commerce Committee:

Chair Frank Pallone (D-NJ)– Rick VanBuren
Ranking Member Walden (R-OR) – Caleb Graff

Senate Finance Committee:

Chair Chuck Grassley (R-IA) –
- Ryan Martin (F2Fs)
- Stuart Portman (Medicaid, ACA)
Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR)
- Anne Dwyer

What Congress needs to know



Tell the Member or staffer:

- Basic information about your state's F2F – examples of your activities
- That F2Fs are a very valuable and efficient use of federal funds
- That the federal grant helps you to raise other funds
- **AND...**

What Congress needs to know



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



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)

What Congress needs to know



Current law funds the program through the current fiscal year (FY 2019).

(Refer to F2F fact sheet and funding history)

Before the meeting



Prepare family stories (in writing or mentally)– especially illustrating cost savings, improved health outcomes, parents’ ability to work. Use example from House Member’s district if possible.

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

Before the meeting



- **Have a game plan:**
 - jot down talking points;
 - designate lead speaker; decide who will say what, and – if you are lobbying -- who will make the “ask” (e.g., to cosponsor or support a bill, or to support continued funding of the F2F program.)



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.

During the meeting



- Introduce yourselves: Name, position in organization; town.
- 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.

Other issues



- Prescription drug prices
- “Medicare for All”
- Surprise medical billing
- Protecting people with pre-existing conditions; no annual or lifetime \$ coverage limits
- Protecting Medicaid (waivers to allow work requirements, block grants)

RECEPTION



Please invite the staffer(s) to the reception.
Tell them:

- To share invitation with others in their office
- Spouses and kids are welcomed.
- There will be an ice-cream bar!

Wear comfortable shoes!



This:



Not this:



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



Attire: “Business casual” or casual is fine.

Lobbying v. Educating, revisited



- **EDUCATING** = Informing the Member or staffer that the F2F program needs to be reauthorized to continue beyond FY 2019.
- **LOBBYING** = Asking a Member/staffer to support or cosponsor a bill, **or even** just to support continued funding for F2Fs.
- **If you want to play it safe**, don't mention the need for reauthorization, just provide the leave-behind (all are educational only).

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.

After your meetings



Please fill out debriefing forms –

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

CONTACT INFO FOR POLICY TEAM



During conference:

Brooke Lehmann

Brooke@capitolworksllc.com

202-841-4341

During and after conference:

Janis Guerney

JGuerney@familyvoices.org

202-669-5233

Evaluation form



Please fill out evaluation form for this session and place in cardboard box.