2019 Age+Action Hill Day: Planning for Successful Visits

June 4, 2019
Presenters

• Howard Bedlin  
  Vice President, Public Policy & Advocacy

• Marci Phillips  
  Director, Public Policy & Advocacy
Basics

• All lines are muted; please enter questions or comments into the chat box.

• The slides and recording will be made available in the coming days
Agenda

• Features of Successful Hill Visits
• Hill Day Logistics
• Priority Policy Issues
Thoughts from a Hill Day Champion

NCOA Hill Day connects me in person with my congressional delegation and has long lasting effects: they know I represent a good segment of their constituents and when they return to my community, they make an effort to come to the senior center to speak about issues effecting seniors. There is nothing better than meeting your DC representatives face to face and hearing your stories.

Pat Branson
Mayor of Kodiak & Executive Director,
Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc., Alaska
The 2019 Age+Action Hill Day

• Wednesday, June 19*

• Optional part of the Age+ Action Conference

• A chance to be part of a larger effort to inform Congress about senior policy issues
Recap: What is Hill Day?

• It’s an opening to begin/strengthen relationships with federal elected officials and their DC staff

• It’s an opportunity to educate them about:
  o Your expertise and insights on the needs of older adults in your community;
  o The programs, services, and solutions you provide; and
  o Current policy issues of interest/concern.

• It’s a chance to be part of a larger effort to inform Congress about seniors’ issues, with NCOA support
Thoughts from a Hill Day Champion

Hill Day is when I came to understand the Older Americans Act and the myriad of other government efforts to make seniors’ lives better. The preparation for the appointments, familiarizing myself with the issues and what was currently being considered deepened by perception of my role as both an advocate for seniors and a citizen. You do not have to be political to participate on Hill Day; in fact I would recommend that you refrain from politics. I always took the approach that I was there to let my representative know how seniors in Wabash County were being impacted.

Beverly Ferry
Chief Executive Officer, Living Well in Wabash County COA, Indiana
Top 10 Hill Visit Tips

1. **Be prepared.** You want to establish—and then strengthen—a relationship with your legislator and his/her staff. You should prepare thoroughly, be polite, be as specific as possible, and never threaten.

2. **Accept meetings with staff.** Don’t be concerned if you end up meeting with staff rather than your member of Congress. In many cases, this can prove to be equally or more productive.

3. **Budget your time.** Be concise, but cover all the points you wish to make. In general, it is best to address a limited number of issues (three maximum). Most meetings last less than 30 minutes, so budget your time wisely and leave time for discussion.

4. **Be personal.** Explain why an issue is important to you and to people in your community/state. Speak from your personal experience and illustrate your points with stories of real people and examples, if possible. Explain the consequences that adverse action or failure to act will have on individuals in your state, city, or town.
Top 10 Hill Visit Tips

5. **Be specific.** If possible, cite sources of independent support for your position (opinion polls, studies, etc.).

6. **Request action.** After you make your points, request specific action, and don’t be afraid to ask the legislator’s position. If they are currently undecided, ask them to inform you by mail or email when they make a decision, and to tell you why they took the position. If you are asking the legislator to provide leadership in moving something forward, ask him/her to provide you with a response or report on what happens. If you’re not in a position to lobby, request a meeting or site visit in the state or Congressional district.

7. **Leave contact information.** Leave your name, address, email address, affiliation, and telephone number with the member of Congress or staff. Thank them for taking time to meet with you.
Top 10 Hill Visit Tips

8. **Stay in touch.** Follow-up the visit with an email thanking the member of Congress or staffer for their time and briefly summarizing the major issues discussed. Be sure to follow through on any commitments you made and provide any additional information requested. Keep in touch with the member of Congress and staff through occasional correspondence and visits to the local/state office.

9. **Share what happened.** Share your experiences and learnings with the NCOA Public Policy and Advocacy staff. Let them know if there are follow-ups that they should make. Ask them for help if you need it. Send copies of relevant materials.

10. **Finally, remember** that staying power and relationships are keys to accomplishing anything! Stay in the struggle and strive to maintain good communication with your members of Congress.

Thoughts from a Hill Day Champion

We should all know our Congressional Delegation because they represent our organizational, civic, and personal interests. We are fortunate to have ready access in Maine to our elected representatives. More importantly, we are fortunate to have them reach out to us when they need expertise, sometimes in real detail, about issues pending before them. Get to know the key staff in their offices, and, on the committees on which they serve. They can provide information and guidance about up-coming legislation, and regulations, and you can share your expertise, and be a voice for the people you serve.

Peggy Haynes
Senior Director, Healthy Aging, Center for Health Improvement, MaineHealth
Hill Day Logistics: Meeting schedules

• Hill visits now being scheduled based on survey responses
• Meetings are with members of Congress or key staff
• Participants from the same state will join up
• Hill Day Rally at 5pm on June 18 for coordination & final prep
Hill Day Logistics: Meeting schedules

• Sample schedule:

June 19, 2019
Hill Day

Alabama

Participant name, Organization
Participant name, Organization

Senator Doug Jones
Meeting with Mike Berman
10:00 AM
326 Russell Senate Office Building
202-224-4124

Senator Richard Shelby
Meeting with Brennan Johnson
10:30 AM
304 Russell Senate Office Building
202-224-5744
Hill Day Logistics: Getting around

- Bus from hotel at 8 am; return at 2 pm*
- Other transit options & maps on Conference app
- Allow 15 minutes between meetings on same side of Capitol; 30 minutes to cross Capitol complex & clear security
Hill Day Logistics: Getting around

• NCOA team on site in 1040 Longworth for questions, feedback; possible Senate site in afternoon

• NCOA policy & communications staff to accompany some visits

• Wear comfortable shoes, layers for June DC heat & humidity & building AC
Thoughts from a Hill Day Champion

Relationships are the key to success in all aspects of life, including our work as senior center leaders and aging advocates. Members of the Delaware Aging Network developed bonds with state legislators to ensure that funding for senior services would not be decreased in times of budget constraints and to create the Senior Trust Fund as a source of financial support for new and innovative programs. Connections with elected officials and their staff can take many forms, from letters and emails to phone calls and in-person visits. Remembering that our leaders welcome contact with their constituents and acknowledging that we are both aging and relationship-building experts can bolster confidence to act regularly as advocates for the critical support needed by individuals as they age.

Susan R. Getman
Executive Director, Mid-County Senior Center, Delaware
Relevant Policy Issues

• Make Medicare low-income outreach permanent
  o Continuing expiring Medicare low-income outreach and enrollment efforts to improve access to key benefits

• Reauthorizing the Older Americans Act (OAA)
  o Creating new innovation, demonstration, and evaluation opportunities
  o Enhancing healthy aging, falls prevention, CDSME, SCSEP
  o Promoting aging network’s role in addressing SDOH & isolation

• Investing in Aging Services
  o Protecting and increasing funding for the full array of OAA programs, SHIPs, and other services for seniors’ health and economic security
Funding for Medicare Low-Income Outreach and Enrollment

- Authority for funding Medicare beneficiary low-income outreach and enrollment efforts expires October 1.
- Almost 3 million individuals eligible for the Medicare prescription drug Low-Income Subsidy are not enrolled, and less than half of eligible low-income beneficiaries receive needed assistance paying Medicare Part B monthly premiums.
- Increased, permanent funding is endorsed by 35 national senior groups and would enable community organizations to find and assist vulnerable, low-income older adults in need.
- Without sufficient reliable funding, outreach efforts will not be able to help the growing millions of beneficiaries who cannot afford their health care costs.
OAA Reauthorization: Promote Innovation & Evaluation

• OAA programs and innovative aging services effectively address social and determinants of health and save Medicare and Medicaid dollars by reducing emergency room and hospital admissions and delaying nursing home placement.

• Unfortunately, OAA funding for needed research, demonstration and evaluations to prove these important outcomes is virtually non-existent.

• OAA reauthorization provides the unique opportunity to strengthen the program’s authority and capacity to strengthen the evidence to demonstrate which aging services programs can best reduce spending, improve quality of life for older Americans, and merit greater investment and scaling.
OAA Reauthorization: Enhance Healthy Aging & Economic Security

• **Healthy Aging:** (1) Include explicit authorization language that includes levels that provide for annual growth for falls prevention and for Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME); (2) enhance the definition of “disease prevention and health promotion” to highlight the role the Aging Services Network plays in responding to public health emergencies and emerging health threats; and (3) strengthen federal leadership in promoting falls prevention interventions, including home modifications.

• **Economic Security:** 1) Provide that the baseline for SCSEP authorization levels remains consistent with current statute and levels grow accordingly in the future; and (2) emphasize that SCSEP services include providing access to a range of direct and referred services to promote economic self-sufficiency.
Investing in Aging Services: FY20 Appropriations

1. OAA programs
   - At least 12% increase, include III-D
2. Falls Prevention
   - $10 million for ACL, $4 million for CDC
3. CDSME
   - $16 million
4. Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
   - $463.8 million
5. Medicare State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)
   - At least $70 million
Resources

• National Issue Briefs
  o NCOA one-pagers on key issues with national data

• State Fact Sheets
  o NCOA one-pagers on MIPPA, falls prevention, CDSME with state data on need, program successes, contact information

• YOUR Handouts!
  o Your promotional materials on your organization, your work, and those you serve.
Thoughts from a Hill Day Champion

Have you ever talked with someone about your program and they ended the conversation with, “this is the best kept secret, I wish I had known a long time ago”? A few years ago a Congressional staffer said this to me and it hit me. How would they have known if I had not visited them that day? Don’t let your program be a secret. Sharing how you help constituents is important!

Shannon R. Jones, MPH
Aging Program Director, TN SHIP
Questions?

• Please enter your questions in the chat box

• Also follow up with the Public Policy & Advocacy team:
  o advocacy@ncoa.org