Advocacy Training for Take Action Week!

Webinar hosted by:

The Gerontological Society of America

with a presentation by:

Brian Lindberg
Executive Director
Consumer Coalition for Quality Health Care
Washington, DC

Supported by:

GSA Innovation Fund
Advocacy Training for Take Action Week!

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Advocacy Training for Take Action Week!

Participant Instructions
Advocacy Training for Take Action Week!

Brian Lindberg, MMHS
GSA’s Public Policy Advisor, and Executive Director,
Consumer Coalition for Quality Health Care
Washington, DC
Meeting with Your Elected Representatives

U.S. Senator – two from each state

U.S. Representative – one from your congressional district

= at least 3 meetings
You Have the Right to Meet
With Your Elected Officials

It’s an age-old tradition
Meeting Location
Not a High Pressure Sales Job
Setting Up Your Visits

• Contact Information:
  www.house.gov
  www.senate.gov

• Use your zip code to find the legislator’s website, contact info, and the closest district office

• If you are coming to Washington, DC, use the Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121
Congressional Staff You May Meet

• District staff
• Chief of Staff or AA
• Legislative Director
• Legislative Assistant or Aide
• Legislative Correspondent
• Fellow or Intern
• Committee staff
Quick Tips

• Ask for a 30 minute meeting, but accept 15 minutes

• Make sure to get staffer’s name, title, office address, and room number

• If you are going to Capitol Hill, leave enough time between meetings to get to the different House and Senate office buildings
Before the Meeting

• Prepare ahead of time – have your points ready
• Limit group to < 5 people
• Decide who will say what and designate one person to “chair” the meeting, make introductions, and draw it to a close
• Find out the legislator’s areas of interest and try to make a connection with your own
• familiarize yourself with current events in Congress
• Before the meeting, send a confirmation by email re-stating your name, affiliation, and date and time of meeting
What to Bring

• Prepared notes or points you want to make
• Leave Behinds:
  - Description or list of what you are asking for
  - Business Card
  - Short bio
  - Short summary of your research or work
• Bring a Photo ID
Tips for Your Presentation

• Think locally – relate your work or area of interest with its impact in the legislator’s state or district
• Relate to the legislator’s own work on a committee or task force, or on a piece of legislation
• Talk about how past research has influenced your work and describe how today’s work may evolve to be used in the future
During the Meeting

• Introduce yourself, your affiliations, and work
• Briefly explain your reason for the visit
• Limit your discussion to one or two topics
• Outline basic facts but don’t talk down or be condescending
• If you don’t know the answer to a question, don’t make it up. Offer to find out and send information back to the office later.
During the Meeting

• Acknowledge that your issue of interest is one of many issues facing Congress.

• Acknowledge what the Member of Congress has done on your issue.
Humanize the Issue

• Share your personal story

• Give concrete examples of how the issue affects constituents or the state or district.
Relationship Building

• It is important to develop a relationship with the Member of Congress. Listen to your legislator’s responses. Find out if s/he has heard opposing views. If so, find out what the arguments are and what groups are involved.

• It’s okay to refute the more obvious objections, but don’t get into an argument with the legislator or the staff person.
Talking Points

• Federal Funding for Research
  - Your experience with fed funding

• Education and Training
  - Your educational and training experience

• Older Americans Act
  - Your experience with OAA programs
The Closer

• Decide in advance what you hope to get out of the meeting: sponsorship of a bill, support in committee, a floor speech, a vote, or issue awareness.

• Don’t forget to clearly repeat this request at the end. Ex: “I was hoping that Rep. Jones would support full federal funding for NIH.”

• If the meeting is with a Member of Congress, ask her or him directly if s/he will support your request. If it is with a staff member, be direct and ask for confirmation of the Member’s position in writing.
Remember

• Send a thank-you note after the meeting.
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Questions and Answers

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Access the full webinar, slide presentation, and additional resources:

www.geron.org/advocacy

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Questions about advocacy or Take Action Week? Contact Us!

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