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In-District Advocacy: Meetings, Site Visits & More

Laura Brigandi

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Hosted By:



Laura Brigandi

Sr. Manager, Digital and Advocacy
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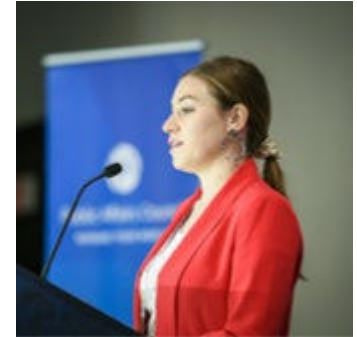
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**June 17, 2025
The LINE DC
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Register today: pac.org/dmas

In-District Advocacy: Meetings, Site Visits and More

Today's Speakers:



Laura Brigandi

Sr. Manager, Digital & Advocacy
Public Affairs Council



Collin Brecher

Associate Director, Political Mobilization
American Chemistry Council



Abbey Schroeder

Grassroots Program Manager
American Trucking Associations

Planning & Preparing for Strategic In-District Engagement

Thinking Strategically

- Year-round or just during August recess?
 - If August, plan for training in May/June
 - Can you train in-person during fly-in?
- Choosing your targets
 - Key MOC & new members
 - Strongest advocates
- Engage your lobbyists & PAC manager

Ways to Engage in the District



In-District Meetings

IN-DISTRICT ADVOCACY



In-District Meeting Considerations

- Who will schedule the meetings – you? Your advocates? A scheduling firm?
- Who will lead the meetings? Will staff/lobbyists attend, or will the advocates be by themselves?
- Will you provide training live (via Zoom), recorded video, or toolkit/guide?
- How can advocates access leave-behind materials?
- How will you track and collect feedback?

August Recess District Meetings

Description

This page includes the following resources for August Recess In-District Congressional Meetings. Including:

- Advocacy in August 2024 Training
- August 2024 In-District Meeting Toolkit
- PanCAN District Meeting Talking Points& Sample Agenda August 2024
- Send Ahead Packet

Advocacy in August 2024

Advocacy in August: In-District Congressional Meetings

July 10, 2024



PanCAN In-District Congressional Meetings August 2024



Why are in-district meetings important?

Meetings in the state or district office of a member of Congress are a great opportunity for advocates to connect with their elected officials when they are at home to make our legislative priorities known and develop relationships with in-district staff.

When should I schedule and plan for August recess meetings?

Congress is in recess from Aug 5 – Sept 6. August is an ideal time to meet with elected officials before they return to Washington, DC in September to work on a federal spending package. Most members of Congress plan their schedules 3 – 4 weeks out so we recommend submitting your scheduling requests after the "August Advocacy" training on July 10.

Step 1: Identify and prioritize congressional districts for meetings

Consider, in order of importance:

1. Appropriations Committee Leadership:

Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK)	House Appropriations Committee Chair	Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA)	Senate Appropriations Committee Chair
Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)	House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member	Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)	Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member
Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA)	House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chair	Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT)	Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chair
Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN)	House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Ranking Member	Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)	Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Ranking Member

2. Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees (see [full committee list](#) for reference)
3. Members of Congress who signed the House or Senate Dear Colleague Letter earlier this year (see [list of signers](#) for reference)

Step 2: Identify constituents in each congressional district you prioritized

All participants in the meeting should ideally be constituents, which means that they are from the same state, if you are meeting with a senator, or from the same congressional district, if you are meeting with a representative.

1. Review the list of districts you prioritized and identify at least one constituent from the district.

2024 AUGUST RECESS IN-DISTRICT MEETING AGENDA & TALKING POINTS



*This is for PanCAN volunteers only and not for distribution.

Status of FY25 Appropriations and PanCAN's legislative priorities:

- House of Representatives:
 - The House passed its version of the FY25 Defense Appropriations bill and recommended a funding level of \$15 million for the Pancreatic Cancer Research Program (PCARP).
 - The House Appropriations Committee passed its version of the FY25 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill, but it did not come to the floor for a vote before Congress recessed. The House bill recommends \$48.581 billion for NIH and \$7.875 for NCI.
- Senate:
 - The Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the FY25 Defense Appropriations bill out of committee.
 - As expected, it does not include specific funding for the Pancreatic Cancer Research Program. Historically because the House allocates a specific funding amount for PCARP, the Senate does not address PCARP in their version of the bill.
 - The Senate Appropriations Committee passed its version of the FY25 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill, which included \$50.351 billion for NIH, (\$1.77 billion over FY24), including \$7.490 billion for NCI (\$266 million increase over FY24).

Why meet in August?

- When Congress returns from recess in September the House and Senate will need to negotiate the differences in each of these bills. In order to avoid a government shutdown on October 1, they will need to pass a final FY25 spending package or pass a short-term continuing resolution to fund the government.
- Congress has a lot of work to do before the finish line and hearing from their constituents while they are debating how much they will invest is critical. And that's why your meetings during the August recess are important and timely -- to remind Congress why they should provide sustainable, robust and predictable investments in life-saving cancer research.



PanCAN's FY25 Legislative Priorities

To improve patient outcomes and make progress in the fight against pancreatic cancer, the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN) urges the 118th Congress to:

- 1 Invest \$25 million in the Pancreatic Cancer Research Program at the DoD to fund high-risk, high-reward research focused on pancreatic cancer
- 2 Support \$51.3 billion for the NIH base budget, including \$7.934 billion for the NCI to continue to invest in and advance biomedical research in cancer, including pancreatic cancer

Make pancreatic cancer research a national priority in Fiscal Year 2025!

Please contact advocacy@pancan.org to reach PanCAN's Government Affairs & Advocacy team.

pancan.org

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District Meeting Feedback Form

Complete this form *AFTER* your meeting.

Please complete the following form each time you participate in a district meeting with the office of a Member of Congress.

lbrigandi@gmail.com [Switch account](#)



Not shared

* Indicates required question

Your Name *

Your answer

Date of Meeting *

Date

mm/dd/yyyy



Your Affiliate/Community

Choose



How receptive was the office to the following Asks? *

	Not receptive at all	Somewhat receptive	Very receptive	Made commitment to support/join	Champion/Already in Caucus	Did not discuss this issue
Increase Funding for NIH/NCI	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support a Dedicated PC Research Program at DoD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Join Deadliest Cancers Caucus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If the office was not receptive to one or more of the asks, did they explain why?

Your answer

Did they ask any questions or raise concerns that require follow up?

Your answer

Does the Member or staff have any connection to pancreatic cancer?

Your answer

Additional Tips for In-District Meetings

- Request meetings 4-6 weeks out
- Provide a detailed agenda for advocates to plan out their meetings
- Ensure that fact sheets/talking points are always up to date and available
- Make it as plug-and-play as possible

**2024 AUGUST RECESS
IN-DISTRICT MEETING AGENDA & TALKING
POINTS**

PANCREATIC
CANCER
ACTION
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Agenda Item	Speaker	Time
1. Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocacy Leader (or other experienced advocate) introduces themselves and prompts the other participants to do the same (name and hometown), thanks the member and/or staff for meeting, and identifies the group as representatives of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network• NOTE: If there is an established relationship with the office, either in the district or in Washington, mention it	Advocacy Leader	2 min
2. Summary of asks and optional thank you <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One participant explains PanCAN's legislative asks explaining the reason for the meeting:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ \$25 million for the Pancreatic Cancer Research Program at the DoD◦ \$51.3 billion (\$4.2 billion increase) for the National Institutes of Health, including \$7.934 billion (\$710 million) for the National Cancer Institute• If the legislator signed the House or Senate Dear Colleague letter in the spring, thank them for their support. <p>Note: The list of Dear Colleague signatures can be found here.</p>	Insert participant's name here	3 min
3. Personal stories and statistics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One or two constituents briefly share their personal stories (no more than two minutes each).<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Weave in a few facts and statistics about pancreatic cancer to emphasize why increasing the federal investment in the disease is urgent.• Allow two to three minutes for discussion with staff (staff might be new and not familiar with PanCAN and our issues or have information they want to share). <p>Note: You can find facts and statistics in the fact sheets in the <i>PanCAN Legislative Asks</i> packet.</p>	Insert participants' names here	5-7 min

Site Visits & Facility Tours

IN-DISTRICT ADVOCACY



Tips for Site Visits and Facility Tours

- Send the invite 4-6 weeks in advance
- Be flexible and expect changes
- Provide one point of contact for the office to work with
- Plan your route and what you want to highlight – tie it into the issues
- Provide opportunities to talk to constituents
- Stick to the schedule – don't go over
- Take photos

Create a Planning Guide



Sample Lab Tour Agenda

All times are approximate. Sample agenda items may be amended where appropriate.

8:00 AM: **Congressman Arrives at the Laboratory**

8:00 AM to 8:05 AM: **Greetings and Introductions**

- Greet the Congressman, introduce him to pathologists and laboratory personnel, and provide him with a brief overview of the facility (i.e. what services are performed here, the role of a pathologist, how many counties and patients it serves). Paint a picture for the Congressman about the importance of your facility, as well as the services you provide to the community.
- If possible, provide him with a lab coat for the duration of the tour.
- Deliver any relevant policy materials.

8:05 AM to 8:35 AM: **Slide Preparation**

- Walk the Congressman through a slide preparation.
- Allow the Congressman the opportunity to view a slide through a multi-headed microscope.
- Use clear, concise terms so that the Congressman understands. Remember, the elected official usually has little knowledge of pathology issues, so it's important to help him understand the process.
- Demonstrate any key technology specific to your laboratory.
- Photos should be taken throughout the demonstration.
- If time permits, walk the Congressman through the differences between "clear" and "unclear" diagnoses. In other words, feel free to show the Representative the debate that ensues when trying to diagnose difficult slides.

8:35 AM to 8:45 AM: **Hospital Tour**

- Highlight key aspects of the facility
- Introduce the Congressman to the hospital administrator.
- Focus on parts of the hospital that are closely related to pathology.

3



SAMPLE LAB TOUR INVITE LETTER FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS (Letter should be placed on your facility's letterhead. Please email a PDF copy to PathNET@cap.org)

Date

The Honorable [Member's Name]
U.S. House of Representatives OR United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515 (House Zip) OR 20510 (Senate Zip)

Fax:

Attn: [Scheduler's Name]

Dear Representative/Senator [Name]:

On behalf of [insert your lab], its pathologists, and its laboratory professionals, I would like to cordially invite you to tour our laboratory in _____. This laboratory tour will provide me, as well as many of my colleagues that live and work in your Congressional district, the opportunity to acquaint you with the role of anatomic and clinical pathology in the delivery of healthcare.

[Here you can place text that is pertinent to your lab]

[Insert your lab] plays an important role in our community by delivering quality healthcare to thousands of your constituents. I would like to demonstrate some of the diagnostic tests performed in the lab and discuss what I see as the role of pathologists in today's medicine. This educational and entertaining tour will last approximately one hour.

I would appreciate your staff contacting me either by phone, [insert number] or email, [insert email] to discuss the preferred date and time for the tour.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Lab

5



SAMPLE LAB TOUR THANK YOU LETTER FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AFTER THE TOUR (Letter should be placed on your facility's letterhead. Please email a PDF copy to PathNET@cap.org)

Date

The Honorable [Member's Name]
U.S. House of Representatives OR United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515 (House Zip) OR 20510 (Senate Zip)

Fax:

Attn: [Scheduler's Name]

Dear Representative/Senator [Name]:

Thank you for touring the pathology laboratory at [insert your lab] in _____. I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to visit this facility and learn more about specific legislation that affects pathology. I sincerely hope that the tour was both educational and entertaining!

I thoroughly enjoyed showing you the inner workings of a pathology laboratory and analyzing different specimen slides. In particular, I hope that our discussion regarding the important role pathologists play in the delivery of health care was informative and useful as you and your colleagues work with various regulatory agencies to improve health care in America.

[Please feel free to add any specifics that were discussed during the tour.]

Once again, thank you for touring the pathology laboratory at [insert your lab] and please do not hesitate to contact me either by phone, [insert number], or email, [insert email], with any questions or comments pertaining to pathology or health care policy in general. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Lab

6

Help Them Dress the Part



Town Hall Meetings

IN-DISTRICT ADVOCACY



Tips for Town Hall Meetings

- Know the process for speaking – is it an open forum? Do you need to sign up in advance?
- Prepare remarks ahead of time
- Keep it brief
- Thank the legislator
- Bring leave-behind materials to give to staff – even if you don't get to speak

Town Hall Meeting Guide



Many U.S. senators and representatives hold town hall meetings – also referred to as constituent coffees, meet and greets, or public meetings – so that they can hear what you, their constituents, want them to do. These events are a great opportunity for the pancreatic cancer community to show their purple and tell members of Congress that we're serious about increasing funding for pancreatic cancer research!

Here are some tips for being an effective participant at a town hall meeting or similar event. If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact the Advocacy team at advocacy@pancan.org.

Step 1: Find a constituent event

To find out if your member of Congress is hosting a public event, go to their website and social media accounts to see if they have any constituent events coming up. You should attend only forums that are general or health-related. If you can't find anything online, try calling your legislator's local or state office(s) and ask if there are any upcoming opportunities to see the representative/senator in your area.

Step 2: Recruit a group of volunteers to attend with you

The more people that attend with you, the more likely it is your member of Congress will notice your group. Ask everyone to wear purple!

Step 3: Print out your materials

Before the event, print out the talking points or fact sheets to use as a guide for your comments. You may also be able to leave the fact sheets with your elected official or their staff after the event. Updated fact sheets can be found at pancan.org/advocacy.

Step 4: Attend the event and ask your question(s)

The Q&A portion of the town hall is your best opportunity to interact with your legislator. Begin by introducing yourself by name and hometown, and very briefly mention your connection to pancreatic cancer. You can also use the talking points to provide a background/rationale for your [ask](#), but remember to keep it brief!

Then ask one of the following questions in your own words:

- Eighty percent of all pancreatic cancer research funding is provided via federal sources. Will you support cancer research by providing a \$2.5 billion increase for National Institutes of Health?
- Will you support a dedicated pancreatic cancer research program at the Department of Defense for \$10 million?

Step 5: Connect with the legislator or staff after the event

Don't worry if you are unable to ask a question at the event. You can still make an impact by handing the leave-behind material to a staff person who is with the legislator. If you have the opportunity to speak with either the legislator or their staff after the event, use your "elevator speech," or 30-second pitch, to explain why pancreatic cancer research is so important, and ask one of the questions above. Before you leave, remember to exchange business cards with any staff you meet so that you can follow up!

Step 6: Let us know how the event went

After the event, be sure to send us an email at advocacy@pancan.org so that we can follow up as needed.

Step 7: Follow up

Within a week after the event, send a written note or email to any staff whom you met at the event, thanking them for their time and reminding them of any commitments the legislator made.

District Office Hours

IN-DISTRICT ADVOCACY



Tips for District Office Hours

- May be at the office or at another location (community building, school, restaurant/coffee shop, etc.)
- Treat it like an in-district meeting, but without a scheduled time

Community Events

IN-DISTRICT ADVOCACY



What is a Community Event?

- Appearance in the district/photo op organized by the legislator
- Community fairs and festivals
- Volunteer event
- PAC check presentation

Subscribe to legislator's newsletter and/or follow them on social media to find out where they will be



**Make sure your advocates know the
difference between an official appearance
and a campaign event**

Create a Palm Card

SACHS MEDIA'S TOP TEN TIPS FOR LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

1. Remember that legislators serve communities

These are the people's representatives and they care about their constituents. Be polite, but don't be afraid to make your case.

2. Be passionate and personable

Show how much you care about your issue, and be positive. Show the need, but never be negative.

3. Be concise, prioritize your message

The legislative session is busy and time is tight. Stay on topic and make your points clear.

4. Keep it real and authentic

Lobbyists are hired advocates. You are the real deal – make sure lawmakers know how an issue affects you and your stakeholders.

5. Leverage the rhetorical triangle

Give them the facts, make an emotional connection, and leverage your credibility with a personal story.

6. Don't assume they know your issue

Legislators have different backgrounds. Recognize they may not be an expert on your issue, so be clear and concise.

7. Leave them with more information

Provide a summary of your issue that can be a resource if they have questions. This is great for both lawmakers and staff.

8. Keep banging the drum

Thousands of bills are filed every year, but only a small percentage pass. Recognize that some issues are multi-year efforts.

9. Finish your conversations with an ask

Close a meeting by letting the lawmaker know exactly what you want them to do.

10. Follow up after your visit

After visiting with members, make a point to follow up. A handwritten note can really bring home the message.

NOTES

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2012 U.S. House and Senate Palm Card



CANCER RESEARCH FUNDING

As a volunteer for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, I support continued funding for cancer research. Decades of progress have us on the verge of dramatic breakthroughs, but they may never become a reality for cancer patients if there are continued cuts to medical research funding. If you are elected, what would you do to provide sufficient funding for cancer research?

ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

As a volunteer for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, I understand that in the absence of the insurance reforms passed in 2010, some patients would die for lack of care and cancer could bankrupt more than a quarter of all families dealing with the disease. If elected, will you support these legal protections? If not, what are you going to do to make insurance coverage available and affordable for people who get sick or have pre-existing conditions like cancer?

PROTECTING SENIORS WITH CANCER

As a volunteer for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, I know that almost 60% of cancer patients are over the age of 65. Seniors paid throughout their working lives for the promise of good Medicare coverage after retirement, but now some in Congress want to partially privatize Medicare, reduce benefits, and increase out-of-pocket costs for seniors.

If elected, will you protect Medicare so that older Americans, especially those fighting cancer, have full access to the health care they need?

HELPING LOWER AND MIDDLE INCOME AMERICANS FIGHT CANCER

As a volunteer for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, I know that for many lower-income and middle-class cancer patients who have been bankrupted by medical expenses, Medicaid coverage is their only access to quality health care. Medicaid is their safety net when no other option is available for the lifesaving coverage they need. If elected, will you ensure sufficient funding for Medicaid for the one million Americans with cancer who depend on this program for health coverage?

PREVENTING CANCER

As a volunteer for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, I know that half of all cancer deaths could be avoided through prevention and early detection. In 2010 Congress created a Prevention and Public Health Fund to help pay for obesity prevention, tobacco cessation and critical cancer screenings to help Americans stay well and catch cancer early. Now Congress wants to cut the Fund – a penny-wise, pound-foolish attempt to save money that will just increase health care costs in the future. If elected, what would you do to prioritize disease prevention?



This year, nearly 1.6 million Americans will hear "you have cancer." On behalf of these patients and their families, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) encourages all voters to ask the presidential candidates when they stand on important cancer issues.

PANCREATIC
CANCER
ACTION
NETWORK

YOUR MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

Start with your story:

1. We appreciate Congress' passage of a Fiscal Year 2019 budget that included a \$2 billion increase for NIH. Please support \$41.6 billion for the NIH in Fiscal Year 2020, including \$6.5 billion for the NCI.
2. Please make the nation's deadliest cancer a priority by supporting a dedicated pancreatic cancer research program for \$10 million in the Department of Defense's (DoD) Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP).
3. Please join the Congressional Caucus on the Deadliest Cancers to support and raise awareness about the nation's deadliest cancers.

Questions?

Laura Brigandi

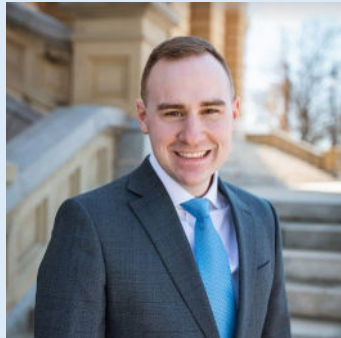
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