



Federal Advocacy at Home: A Guide to Scheduling In-District Congressional Office Visits

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Every member of Congress needs to hear from constituents who are ID or HIV physicians or health care professionals to understand how ID- and HIV-related decisions they are making impact their state or congressional district. IDSA and HIVMA members can build these relationships from home by conducting “in-district” meetings with your members of Congress in their local offices.

In-district meetings are important throughout the year but will be particularly important during the first few months of 2025 as Congress is preparing to make critical decisions impacting funding for federal ID and HIV programs. IDSA and HIVMA developed this guide to help. You can learn more and become an active part of IDSA and HIVMA advocacy efforts by joining [the Member Advocacy Program](#).

Schedule a Meeting

Contact your congressional members’ state or district offices to request a meeting. Let them know you are a constituent who is an infectious diseases or HIV physician or health care professional who would like to schedule a meeting to discuss federal funding for ID and HIV programs and other federal policy issues affecting your community.

How to Find In-State and District Offices

Information for congressional member state or district offices is available from their individual websites and is generally found under “contact us.” New members of Congress may not have information available yet. In those cases, call their Capitol Hill office to see if in-state offices have been set up.

- [Find Your Senators’ Websites](#)
- [Find Your Representative’s Website](#) (If you don’t know your representative’s name, you can find them at [IDSA/HIVMA’s Action Center](#).)

Determine What to Cover

Educate: Be prepared to communicate the local impacts of cuts or delays in federal funding for fiscal years 2025 or 2026 for the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Ryan White Program or other federal programs on your institution or clinic and the people you serve. Examples are below, and you can focus on the issues that matter most to you. **If our community does not advocate for these programs, it is unlikely legislators will hear about them.**

- Share any issues that you have experienced related to the Administration transition, including related to the pause on federal funding and the review of federal programs for alignment with gender and diversity, equity and inclusion orders.
- Make the connection between investments in global health security through the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the U.S. Agency for International Development in protecting the United States.
- Discuss the connection between ID and chronic disease, given the new focus on chronic disease.

For General ID

Highlight the importance of funding for IDSA priorities, including ID research at NIH, antimicrobial resistance programs at CDC and NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, as well as the Bio-Preparedness Workforce Pilot Program at the Health Resources and Services Administration to provide loan repayment to ID/HIV and emergency preparedness clinicians. While these programs are not in the headlines, they remain important to our field.

Share the importance of improving physician reimbursement, particularly for specialists who do not do procedures (like ID), to help ensure ID has a seat at the table for broader physician reimbursement reform efforts (a stated bipartisan priority for Congress and the Administration).

For HIV, STD, Viral Hepatitis and TB

Discuss the importance of [Ryan White Program](#) funding, [Ending the HIV Epidemic initiative](#) funding and CDC funding for HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis to your community. Check out your state's [congenital syphilis data](#) to help with educating them on the importance of STD prevention funding and evidence-based information and guidelines for STDs.

Highlight the importance of sustaining investments in the ID and HIV research supported by NIAID. Educate them on the promise of long-acting injectables for HIV prevention and treatment if everyone has access to them, promising new strategies for a cure for HIV in addition to the benefits of HIV research for cancer, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis, among other conditions.

Make the Case: Describe and quantify (when possible) the benefits of federal ID/HIV programs in terms of health outcomes and public health in addition to the fiscal sustainability and economic impacts on your institution, clinic or program. Have a story in mind to illustrate the human impact of your work and how the Ryan White Program, NIH funding, CDC funding or another federal program makes that possible. Have stories in mind to demonstrate the need for investments, such as a story about a patient with a resistant infection or examples of ID/HIV workforce shortages and how the shortages impact your ability to care for patients.

Be a Resource: Close by thanking them and asking them to contact you when they have questions about any ID- and/or HIV-related policy or public health issues.

Contact [IDSA](#) or [HIVMA](#) for talking points and fact sheets on a specific issue. Content from the IDSA and HIVMA [Action Center](#) messages may be helpful too.

Prepare: Tips for a Successful Meeting

- **Know the legislator, the district and its demographics** as well as possible. You can see their bios, recent statements and other information on their websites and social media accounts.
- **Provide information about *who you are and what you do*, and make sure the legislator/staff know how to contact you in the future.**
- **Come prepared.** Bring clinic brochures or other relevant information, such as local HIV-related data or data about how much NIAID funding your institution or state receives.
- **Know the “other side’s” positions and be ready to respectfully respond to them.**
- **Always come with an “ask,”** even if it is an invitation to an event or to visit your institution or clinic.
- **Make your case, briefly and persuasively.** Be specific about what you want the legislator to do and when.
- **Tell a personal story and incorporate local issues and data whenever possible to help make the point.**

- **Be patient and willing to follow a bill throughout the entire process**, which could take an entire legislative session and often multiple sessions.
- **Establish a time when you will expect to receive an answer or follow-up.**
- **Find ways to stay connected.** Ask to be on the legislator’s health advisory committee, receive a regular newsletter and attend local events.
- **Follow up promptly with a thank you email and any promised information for the legislators and/or staff** with whom you met. If the legislator or their staff asked a question and you didn’t know the answer, ask IDSA or HIVMA and we can help you respond.
- **Be polite but feel empowered.** As a constituent, legislators work for you and the other individuals they represent, and you have a right to talk to them and their staff about issues that concern you and impact their constituents.

Make It Local

Data that make the policy or issue relevant to the state or district are important for helping policymakers understand how the issue or policy impacts their community. Below are a few resources for infectious diseases-related data. Check your state or local public health department website for the latest data. For ID issues (non-HIV), please contact [IDSA staff](#). For Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program data or other HIV data, please [contact HIVMA staff](#).

Resource	What’s Available
United for Medical Research: Impact of NIH Funding by State	Provides state-specific information on the top NIH-funded institutions, NIH funding wards, jobs and economic activity NIH supports by state.
KFF: State Health Facts: HIV/AIDS	Provides state-specific data and policy information related to HIV/AIDS in the United States, including on HIV prevalence, testing, treatment and spending in addition to health policies and spending.
AIDSVu: Interactive Map	Provides data and maps by county on key HIV indicators, including new diagnoses, PrEP, HIV testing, viral suppression, late diagnosis and mortality.
Movement Advancement Project: LGBTQ Equality by State	Provides interactive maps that track state and local laws, such as nondiscrimination, health care, criminal justice and relationship recognition.
KFF Policy Tracker: Youth Access to Gender-Affirming Care and State Policy Restrictions	Tracks state policies regarding gender-affirming care.
American Immigration Council: State Fact Sheets State & Local Initiatives	Provides state and local immigration data, including share of population, health care contributions, DACA eligibility and more. Also maintains a state and local newsletter to stay informed on immigrant programming and policymaking.