

Recess/district work weeks are a great time to meet with your Members of Congress in their district offices!

Members of Congress regularly come back to their district to hear from constituents on issues. House members typically spend one week a month and all or part of August and winter recess in their home district. For you and your Institution, this provides an opportunity to engage your Members (Senate and/or House) on your research and the importance of NIH funding. Members of Congress need to know and understand why NIH funding is important to his or her district and the impact that funding has on you and your Institution. They won't know if you don't tell them.

Ways to Engage Your Member of Congress

District Office Meetings

Members have several district offices (Senators have regional offices all over the state) where they meet with constituents. This is the Academy's preferred recommendation as it provides for a personal meeting, focused on you, your research and your message. **To request a meeting**, you can find the district office closest to you (phone and address) through [Googling](#) your member. For help identifying your Representative or Senators, please go to the [TAKE ACTION](#) page on the Academy website and utilize the [congressional directory](#). Send a letter or email requesting a meeting.

Facility Tour of Your Department

A tour is another way to get your Senators' or Representative's attention and build a relationship and visibility. Tours allow Members to meet with larger groups of constituents, demonstrating an interest/connection to the district, and usually provides a great photo opportunity for press. For you and your Institution it is an opportunity to demonstrate amazing research while explaining the important role of the federal investment made by NIH grants in imaging research - advancing the quality and care patients receive and providing many jobs in the community. Thus, tours provide an impactful way to leave a lasting impression of what funding enables in a Member's district. However, making such an invitation does require working with the appropriate offices at your Institution which handle congressional relations. Should you wish to go this route, please email me to discuss the details.

Town Hall Meetings

Members do sometimes hold town hall meetings, open to the public, where you can seek to ask a question from the audience or submit a question in advance, depending on the process your representative follows. These events are informative and educational but do not provide the opportunity for one on one conversation. These will be posted as events on your Member's website. For help identifying your Representatives, please utilize our congressional directory on the Academy's [TAKE ACTION](#) page.

Next Steps Once You've Requested a District Meeting

Assuming you would like a meeting with your Member in his/her district office and have sent in your request letter, please wait at least 1-2 weeks for a response. If you do not receive a response in 2 weeks, then we suggest you follow-up with an additional letter, email or phone call to see if a mutually agreed upon date or time might be available. It may take several tries to get a response as Member schedules are complicated and tightly managed.

If you schedule a meeting, see below for help in preparation. Please let the Academy know you have a meeting and consider reaching out to your Institution's communications office. They will likely want to promote the meeting and can help in guiding you in what they would need to do so.

Preparing for Your Meeting in the District Office

Before the meeting: Reconfirm date and time and ask how much time you will have with the member, so you can prepare accordingly. Remember to bring your research and information on your Institution in whatever format works best for you as well as your business cards. Please also consider bringing some of the [Academy advocacy handouts](#) which can be downloaded from the [TAKE ACTION](#) page.

During the meeting: During introductions, provide background on yourself and your connection to the district/state. After this initial conversation, provide a succinct non-technical version of your research, why it is important that the Member know about it and its relation to advancements in healthcare decisions and treatments for patients. Wherever possible during your conversation weave in the importance of the funding you receive from NIH or that you are pursuing grants from NIH (or other agencies) and feel free to openly discuss your concerns about how your research will suffer when there is not an increase to the NIH budget.

Talking points: To develop talking points, review Academy Advocacy handouts on the [TAKE ACTION](#) page of our website. I am also providing key Academy priority talking points below. Your member needs to make the connection between his/her votes on funding (appropriations) bills and the impact to his/her district. You will help create this connection by explaining your research and how it is funded.

Remember, you are the expert on your research. Members have varying levels of knowledge on imaging technology and research, but all have likely been patients and experienced some form of imaging in their lives. Ask how familiar he/she is with imaging technology or scientific research; then provide the highest level of detail you think your Member and staff will understand, starting with explaining the technology differences (such as MRI vs CT). You may need to keep this conversation very non-technical depending on their level of understanding.

Provide personal stories to help frame the impact your research will have on patients. Focus on what you think would be the best "elevator pitch" for someone with potentially little or no frame of reference to your work. Keep your presentation relatively short and conversational, always asking if what you are stating is understandable or if they have questions.

Your main request is that Congress should:

- i. **Increase funding to NIH by \$3 billion in the FY21 budget**
- ii. **Increase funding to NIBIB by \$25 million in the FY21 budget**

Expect staff to be present. Members rarely have meetings alone Note that **staff are powerful in helping their bosses understand technical subjects**, so be deferential regardless of their knowledge or attitude toward what you are saying. Always, remain calm and positive.

Don't forget to take a photo! At some point, usually at the end of the meeting, don't forget to ask to have your picture taken with the Member and to leave your business card for follow-up. If you do get a photo, please email us a copy at ccappelletti@acadrad.org so we can highlight your efforts. Your Institution's media relations or communications team will likely also want a copy.

Key Talking Points:

Your **GOAL** is to educate your Member on *the incredible beauty and importance of your research and the impact it will have on advancing technology to help with health care decision-making on behalf of patients.* Without imaging, physicians wouldn't be able to make the determinations that they do on so many illnesses and diseases, which is not always understood by those in non-healthcare professions.

While you are wowing them with your research and examples of imaging technology, remember to tell your Member how important NIH funding is to you and your University. Without sustainable NIH funding it is very hard to maintain and continue with research, despite the clear expectations in our country that there will always be innovation.

Main talking points:

- **Research and NIH funding** has an enormous impact on the [economy of every state](#).
- Imaging research is a key economic driver of innovation and technology.
- For every \$100 million of NIBIB funding 25 patents are created. (See point below)

Explain how much **NIH funding** your [University or Hospital receives for imaging research in FY18](#) and [total for your state](#) (ACADEMY DATA).

Congress should:

- i. Increase funding to NIH by \$3 billion in the FY21 budget,
- ii. Increase funding to NIBIB by \$25 million in the FY21 budget

Other POINTS to consider in your conversation and/or to help you prepare:

Imaging research has a fundamental role in advancing discoveries, detection and treatment of nearly all diseases.

- Imaging research fuels private sector innovation, benefiting patients in clinical settings.
- Imaging advances create new tools for researchers in other fields to advance the disease they are studying.
- Federal grants help sustain research advancements in imaging at your institution.
- NIH funding saves and improves lives and is good for our economy.

- More than 80% of NIH funding flows back to state and local communities.
- Every dollar of NIH funding generates about \$3 in local economic activity.
- Each \$1 million of NIH funding has been estimated to create 17.5 jobs in the sponsoring institutions and their supply chains.
- ***NIH funding is awarded through almost 50,000 competitive, peer-reviewed grants and contracts to more than 25,000 researchers at over 3,000 universities, medical schools and other research institutions around the world.***
- NIH funding helps the U.S. maintain its global leadership in science and technology.
- Success of imaging research - **a return for every dollar invested: NIH puts out 5.9 patents for every \$100 million spent whereas NIBIB puts out 25 patents for every \$100 million spent.**
- Government funding of innovation helps generate private funding – not the other way around.
- Since WWII, the American commitment to science has been a continual driver of the US economy. Without government funding, there would not be the personal computer, the internet, or smartphones – these are based on research that started in labs funded wholly or in part by the federal government.

You want your Member to Oppose:

ANY decreases or flat-funding to the NIH budget. It will damage the economy of his/her district. Funding decreases will hurt America's long-standing global pre-eminence in science and technology.

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO HAVE FUN! THERE IS NO GRADE, AND THE ACADEMY WILL LOVE YOU.

Learn from the experience and share it with other people who will benefit from it, such as your communications department or your local newspaper. These meetings are a time to build a relationship with your Member.

Don't forget to have a **PICTURE** taken with your Member, they love it too!

If you have any questions about any of the material in this document, please contact Martha Nolan at mnolan@acadrad.org.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS!!