

Engaging Your Member of Congress During August Recess 2024

Time magazine remarked that Congress faces an upcoming "performance review" of the entire US House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate which highlights the critical role of elections. The August Recess is for campaigning and fundraising: Members return to their home districts to campaign for re-election, raise funds, and connect with voters. The recess is an ideal time for representatives to listen to the concerns and suggestions of their constituents and provides a valuable opportunity for you to engage directly with your elected representative.

Here's why and how you should take advantage of this time:

Why Engage During August Recess?

- **Accessibility:** Members of Congress are more accessible during this period, making it a perfect time for face-to-face meetings.
- **Influence:** Constituents can have a significant impact by expressing their views and advocating for specific legislation.
- **Awareness:** Personal interactions can raise awareness about important issues and legislation that might otherwise be overlooked.

Steps to Engage Your Member of Congress

1. Set Up a Meeting

- Schedule a face-to-face meeting with your member of Congress or their staff. This can be arranged through their local office. Review some tips and language on how to set up meetings [here](#).
- Prepare and review the [talking points](#) about the issues relevant to respiratory therapists before you attend the meeting.

2. Attend Public Meetings

- Go to town halls or public forums where your member of Congress is speaking.
- Use these opportunities to ask questions and bring attention to the issues you care about, like the support needed for respiratory therapists.

3. Advocate for Legislation

- **SOAR Act:** Encourage your Member of Congress to co-sponsor the [SOAR Act](#), (S 3821 and HR 7829) which can have significant benefits for respiratory therapists.
- **Virtual Pulmonary Rehab Legislation:** Advocate for legislation that supports virtual pulmonary rehabilitation, an essential service for patients with respiratory conditions. S 3021 and HR 1406
- Review [AARC's background information](#) and details on the legislation and what you need to know.

Preparing for the Meeting

- Research: Understand the [key issues](#) and current legislation related to respiratory therapists.
- Personal Stories: Share [personal stories](#) and experiences to illustrate the importance of the legislation you are advocating for.
- Materials: Bring informational materials or handouts, such as the cost of this legislation in the CBO style score ([Oxygen Payment Policy Revisions: Fiscal Implications](#)) document to leave with your representative or their staff.
- Example questions to ask at a town hall
 1. What is your stance on the SOAR Act, and would you be willing to co-sponsor it to support respiratory therapists?
 2. How can we improve access to virtual pulmonary rehabilitation for patients with chronic respiratory conditions?
 3. What steps can be taken to ensure adequate funding for the Workforce Diversity Act?

By reaching out during the August recess, you can make a meaningful impact on the legislative process and advocate effectively for the needs of respiratory therapists. Your engagement is crucial in ensuring that your elected representatives understand and support the issues that matter most to you and your community.