

# Engaging Your Member of Congress During August Recess 2025

The August Recess offers a rare and timely opportunity for you to engage directly with lawmakers while they are in their home districts. With the entire U.S. House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate up for re-election in 2026, Members of Congress are in “listening mode” — reconnecting with constituents, hosting town halls, and preparing for the road ahead.

This is the ideal moment to ensure respiratory therapists are part of that conversation. Your perspective is essential to shaping policies that protect patients and strengthen our profession.

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 – S. 1406 / H.R. 2902**
  - Encourage your Member to **co-sponsor** the **Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR) Act**, which:
    - Removes oxygen from Medicare’s Competitive Bidding Program
  - Establishes payment for RTs to care for supplemental oxygen patients
  - Supports patient-centered delivery of oxygen, including access to liquid oxygen

- Introduces documentation standards and cost protections for beneficiaries

- **Virtual Pulmonary Rehab – S. 248 / H.R. 783**

- Support the **Sustainable Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Services in the Home Act**, which:

- Permanently authorizes virtual cardiac and pulmonary rehab for Medicare beneficiaries
- Reduces transportation and geographic barriers, especially in underserved areas
- Keeps patients connected with care teams earlier and more consistently

## 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?
- AI Tools: Use AI platforms to generate a concise profile of your Member of Congress, including their voting record, committee assignments, public statements on health care, and past support (or opposition) to relevant legislation. This can help tailor your message and anticipate their priorities or objections.

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.

## Talking Points for In District Meetings 2025

### 1. Establish the Meeting Basics

- Clarify the duration of the meeting.
- Provide a brief overview of the role of Respiratory Therapists (RTs) and the number of licensed RTs in the state.
- Discuss your primary role as an RT and how you assist patients.
- Reference the American Lung Association (ALA) website for data on lung disease prevalence in the state and counties.

### 2. What We Are Asking For

#### **Request: Co-Sponsorship of HR 2902 and S 1406 the Sustainable Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Services in the Home Act**

- Advocate for permanent telehealth virtual pulmonary rehabilitation for Medicare beneficiaries.

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, RTs were permitted to furnish cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation services to patients at home as virtual services.
- Without additional authority from Congress, CMS lacks the flexibility to permit permanent continuation of virtual cardiac and pulmonary rehab services.
- Representatives John Joyce (R-PA) and Scott Peters (D-CA) introduced HR 248 and Senators Sinema (D-AZ), Blackburn (R-TN), and Klobuchar (D-MN) introduced S783.
- RTs are not specifically recognized in this legislation because they are billed incident to physicians.
- This bill permanently allows services relating to cardiac rehabilitation programs, intensive cardiac rehabilitation programs, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs to be furnished via telehealth at a beneficiary's home under Medicare.
- Virtual delivery of services enhances patient adherence, allows for earlier intervention, and removes barriers such as distance and transportation, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

### **Request: Co-Sponsorship of S 1406 or HR 2902 the Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR) Act**

Currently, Medicare covers oxygen as a durable medical equipment (DME) benefit for patients who experience oxygen desaturation, a lower level of oxygen in the blood due to lung disease or other chronic conditions. Supplemental oxygen can be delivered in several forms, including compressed or liquid oxygen, and portable or stationary oxygen. Since 2011, CMS implemented the competitive bidding process for supplemental oxygen, causing payment rates for all types of oxygen to drop substantially. Liquid oxygen is lightweight, portable and can deliver oxygen at higher levels for people with more advanced lung disease, which is almost impossible for patients to access.

- Removes all oxygen and oxygen equipment from Medicare Competitive Bidding Program.
- Advocate for legislative reform to establish a Medicare reimbursement rate to 1pay RTs to see supplemental oxygen patients, addressing issues that were previously overlooked.
- Emphasize the importance of ensuring patients have access to the most appropriate type of oxygen equipment for their needs.
- Emphasize establishment of protections for Medicare beneficiaries who use supplemental oxygen.
- Discuss separate payment rate for liquid oxygen.
- Discuss the cost to the Federal Government provided by the Moran Company
- Discuss the four pillars of legislative reform:
  1. Ensure supplemental oxygen is patient-centric
  2. Ensure access to liquid oxygen for patients for whom it is medically necessary.
  3. Create a statutory service element to provide adequate

- reimbursement for RTs.
4. Establish national standardized documentation requirements to ensure predictable and adequate reimbursement and protect against fraud and abuse.

## Organizations in Support

- List organizations supporting the legislative reform efforts, demonstrating broad coalition support for the initiatives.

By emphasizing these key points, we aim to garner support from members of Congress for critical legislation that will significantly impact the respiratory care profession and the well-being of patients nationwide.