I'M IN!

What do I do next?

Thank you for making the commitment to come to DC. With these February weekly updates for DOTH registrants, click below for an updated list of which US Representatives have received letters from your state and how many they’ve received. Each state has a designated Contact Person assigned to track this activity. Please assist this person in contacting cardiac and pulmonary rehab professionals where there may be gaps in participation in districts.

What about a Senate Bill?

We will post a template letter to US Senators on the AACVPR Take Action webpage in the near future. We would prefer to have a bill number first and believe we are close to obtaining that. If we don’t get one, letters to Senators are still important and appointments with Senate members are critical to the companion bill that is in the works. Everyone will be informed when the template letter is posted.

What’s the plan?

In mid-February, we’d like a “blitz” of letters to go to all Congressional members. This is very powerful for those of you walking into these offices to discuss the bill. If you can enter a meeting confidently saying, “I know you’ve heard from other constituents about this issue,” it greatly strengthens your ask.

To that end, all AACVPR members and anyone who has already sent one letter will receive a request to send a letter to their US Representative. For those who are joining late or haven’t gotten around to the actual send, this would be the time. For everyone who has sent a letter using the easy template click & send, there will be a short follow-up letter posted. The virtual tool allows only one of each “template letter” to be sent per person, so a NEW follow-up letter asking for support (i.e., your signature on the bill please) will be available to send.

What should I be doing now?

It’s time to begin to contact DC offices to request appointments. There is guidance on the DOTH web page to help you through this process. Some offices are slower to respond or commit, so be persistent. A drop-in visit, while less ideal than a scheduled meeting with the member and/or health staffer, can often turn out to be a very successful meeting.
Here are some great ideas that others are implementing:

**Ruth Akers:** I use the spreadsheet to cut and paste our three state numbers to another spreadsheet. Then it is sent to our TSSCVPR board and Chapter managers who then send it down our communication chain to our members. This way, we’re able to target areas where the numbers are low so they can ramp up their efforts. We will do this weekly.

**Ashleigh Funk:** I visited Mended Hearts Cardiac Support group and Better Breathers Pulmonary support group. I set up a computer and assisted patients with using the tool from the AACVPR website to send their congress member a letter. I also explained at each meeting to the attendees the background of HR4838 and how it relates to Section 603 of the Bipartisan Budget Act. I also spoke with our Medical Directors when we would discuss patients about this bill and reached out to their office manager for following up with our doctors to sign the letters.

**Holly Bright:** Our Arizona CR/PR society posted information about DOTH 2020 and the virtual lobbying effort on this bill to our web site. This reached state members who are not members of AACVPR.

**Murray Low:** We set up a corner of our cardiac rehabilitation center for any participants interested in patient advocacy. On a computer with public access (NOT hospital server), our patients could easily use the AACVPR virtual lobbying tool to personalize and send a template letter in support of HR 4838 and a future companion bill in the US Senate and to their US Representative.