Advocacy 101
Knowing what you want
Knowing who you’re talking to
Knowing how to talk to them
Knowing how to follow-up
Step One: Knowing What You Want
Who is the American Kidney Fund?

Vision

Our vision is a world without kidney disease. Until that day comes, we believe every kidney patient should have access to health care, and every person at risk for kidney disease should be empowered to prevent it.

Mission

Our mission is to fight kidney disease and help people live healthier lives. Through our programs of prevention, early detection, financial support, disease management, clinical research, innovation and advocacy, no kidney organization impacts more lives directly than AKF.

How we’re different:

• A full spectrum of programs for patients, caregivers, and at-risk populations
• The nation’s largest free kidney health screening program reaching people with kidney disease, diabetes and hypertension
• Direct, treatment-related financial support makes a tangible and lasting impact in people’s lives
• 100+ transplants made possible every month for low-income kidney patients
• 97 cents of every dollar is used exclusively for patients and programs
Advocacy at AKF is...

A strong voice for kidney patients and a growing Ambassador network

We are a strong, independent voice advocating for policies that will improve access to health care and strengthen quality of care for kidney patients. Our growing Ambassador network from all 50 states helps to amplify our message on the federal and state levels.

Helping patients advocate

We support kidney patients’ efforts to become effective policy advocates staying in regular contact through a special closed Facebook group, monthly newsletters, blogging regularly about the issues, and encouraging our Ambassadors to engage with their elected officials.

State Leaders Program

Our most engaged patient Ambassadors participate in our State Leaders Program. They receive training and conduct in-district meetings with federal and state officials.

Annual Washington, D.C. Fly-In

AKF hosts an in-person fly-in every year in Washington, DC, to educate elected officials on issues that are important to kidney patients. This is our first “virtual” fly-in!
Making the Ask

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM

WHAT IS YOUR SOLUTION (IN THE FORM OF A QUESTION)
Our Message to Congress: Act Now to Address Health Disparities and Help Kidney Patients

An integral part of AKF’s mission is to fight health disparities, which have been brought into sharp focus by the COVID-19 pandemic and its disproportionate impact on communities of color.

Kidney failure (ESRD) disproportionately impacts minority populations:

- Black Americans make up just 13% of the U.S. population, but they account for 35% of Americans with kidney failure.
- Hispanic Americans are 1.6 times more likely than non-Hispanics to develop kidney failure.
- Native Americans are 1.2 times more likely than white Americans to develop kidney failure.
COVID-19: Impact on minorities and people with ESRD

Among people with Medicare and who have had COVID-19:

- Black people have the highest rates of infection and hospitalization among racial/ethnic groups and have been hospitalized four times more than white people.

- Hispanic people have been hospitalized two times more and Asian people 1.5 times more than white people.

- Medicare beneficiaries with ESRD have the highest rate of hospitalization among all Medicare beneficiaries: 1,341 hospitalizations per 100,000 beneficiaries. That is $8x$ higher than the hospitalization rate for Medicare beneficiaries generally.
Bills that will address health disparities and improve the lives of kidney patients

Ask your member to cosponsor:

**H.R. 6637, Health Equity and Accountability Act (HEAA) of 2020.** This bill aims to address many of the root causes of health disparities in a number of ways, such as improving health care access and quality and enhancing language access and culturally competent care.

**H.R. 6561, Improving Social Determinants of Health Act of 2020.** This bill would create a social determinants of health (SDOH) program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to focus on the social, economic and environmental conditions that affect health and wellbeing and are significant contributors to health disparities.

**H.R. 5534 / S. 3353, Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act.** This legislation would extend Medicare coverage for immunosuppressive drugs – currently at three years -- for the life of the transplanted kidney.
Step Two: Knowing Who You’re Talking To
Knowing Who You’re Talking To

What gets them up in the morning
What keeps them up at night
What You Need to Know—The Details

- Their Committee Assignments
- Their Policy Interests
- Where they are on the political spectrum
Step Three: Knowing How to Talk to Them
Step Four: Knowing How to Follow-Up!
At Home Situations

Meetings

Written

Site Visits

Townhall

Social Media
Do the Social Media Thing
Key Outlets (almost universally used)

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Youtube
Others (office-specific)

- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Medium, Flickr, Snapchat
Best Practices

- Identify yourself as a constituent
- Engage positively
- Hashtags are your friends
Social Media – the New King?

A recent CQ report finds that social media’s impact on Congressional decision making has increased dramatically.

Replacing Email

The study polled Capitol Hill communications directors, legislative directors and legislative assistants in July and August of this year about their current use of social media at work and how they expect to use these platforms in the near future.

The survey, Fitch said, demonstrated that staffers see social media interactions as authentic communication. Because of the volume of messages, they did not see email in the same way. While email is still the dominant form of communication, 63 percent said they expected communications with constituents over social media to increase over that via email or phone calls in the next five to 10 years.

One of the major attractions of email in advocacy campaigns has traditionally been the ability to use volume to boost the authority of individual voices. Whereas one or a few constituents writing into a Hill office may receive momentary attention, thousands of constituents delivering a similar message amplified it immensely. As a result, many Congressional offices have become adept at processing bulk email campaigns, recording both the subject and volume of incoming messages.

A Single Constituent

Researchers asked staffers whether different types of constituent messages on social media were influential to the representatives and senators they serve. While respondents were most likely to say that multiple constituents participating within a group were influential, a majority of those polled said that even a single constituent commenting on their own was considered influential.
And now...

About the App!

Kaytee Yakacki
Director of Advocacy Day Services
Advocacy Associates
You will be receiving your congressional meeting schedule via email on Friday, July 10th

- Email coming from kyakacki@advocacyassociates.com
- Click the link to view your schedule
- Let us know if we need to reschedule any of your meetings
- Meetings are in Eastern Time
- Reminder email will be sent 48 hours in advance and one hour in advance
- We will follow up if you have not viewed your schedule
Use our AdvocacyDay App!

Our AdvocacyDay app provides an interactive experience which will allow you to get the most out of your congressional visits! Our app is available in the App Store for iPhone or iPad and in the marketplace for Android. You can also access a web version of the app at http://akf.constituentvoice.net/

If you are using an iPad, please press the tab at the top that says “iPhone apps only”.

Please note that the app is called AdvocacyDay (all one word) by Constituent Voice, NOT Advocacy Day Assistant.
AdvocacyDay App - Schedules

- View full meeting schedule
- Time, dial-in info, who meeting is with, other participants
- Push notifications for meeting changes
- We will also text and email you

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<td>[MN-05]</td>
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Advocacy Day App
Day-of Features

- Take notes about meetings
- View talking points
- View leave-behinds
- Email directly to staff
- Feedback surveys – TELL US ABOUT YOUR MEETINGS
- Post to Twitter and Facebook
- Chat with other advocates
AdvocacyDay App
Preparation Features

Research your legislators
- Bio
- Committee info
- Social media
- Website
- News

Research your bills
- Summary
- Status
- Cosponsorship
- Votes

You will receive your app login soon so you can research your Members of Congress and bills in advance.
Questions?

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203-770-6439
Thank you to AKF Corporate Members who support our advocacy work!