

State Advocacy Day **Toolkit**



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ACS is dedicated to improving the care of the surgical patient and to safeguarding standards of care in an optimal and ethical practice environment. For more than 100 years, our mission has been to heal all with skill and trust.

The three groups responsible for formulating and implementing policies of the College are the Board of Regents, the Board of Governors, and ACS chapters. With over 60 chapters in the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, ACS strives to offer benefits to members at the local level, including state-level advocacy activities that impact both the practicing surgeon and the patient.

This toolkit is intended as an advocacy resource for ACS chapters to plan and implement state advocacy days. Each state and chapter is unique, and therefore, variations taking into account individual circumstances may be appropriate.

Please note: Links to website addresses are as current as possible but may change at any time. ACS holds the right to update the content of this toolkit at any time.

This toolkit includes quotes from ACS members, and ACS chapter executive directors. Statements and opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of ACS.

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) would like to thank the many individuals who contributed to the State Advocacy Day Toolkit. We would like to recognize the members of the Review Committee for their willingness to provide insight into their successes and failures experienced over the years when hosting state advocacy days. Members of this committee were hand-selected to represent various stakeholder groups within the College and reside in states across the country.

STATE ADVOCACY DAY TOOLKIT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Board of Governors Advocacy & Health Policy Pillar:

Don Selzer, MD, FACS—Indiana

Board of Governors Health Policy Workgroup:

David Santos, MD, FACS—Texas

State Chapter Executive Director:

Babette Atkins—New York

State Chapter President:

Joseph V. Sakran, MD, FACS, MPH, MPA—Maryland

State Advocacy Chair:

Amy Liepert, MD, FACS—Missouri

Young Fellows Association (YFA):

Cynthia Talley, MD, FACS—South Carolina (Past chair)

Resident & Associate Society (RAS):

Julia Coleman, MD, MPH—Ohio (Past chair)

ACS would also like to thank the staff members involved in publishing this toolkit, including Catherine Hendricks, Kelly Hyde, Amy Hastings, Brian Edwards and Sarina Singh. In addition, the ACS appreciates the dedication and hard work of former team members Rebecca King, Eliana Goldstein and Luke Moreau in creating and executing this resource for ACS Members.

ACS would also like to thank those who provided comments regarding their experience with state advocacy days. These comments can be found throughout the toolkit.

STATE ADVOCACY TOOLKIT CONTENTS

ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENTS



All attachments can be found under the State Advocacy Day Toolkit [here](#) on the ACS website.

- Overview of State Legislatures Fact Sheet
- Project Plan Template & Checklist for State Advocacy Day
- Day of Schedule Template
- State Map Template
- Mastering the Legislative Appointment Fact Sheet
- Legislative Appointment Report Worksheet
- Evaluation Form Template

Advocating for our Patients

Dear Colleagues,

As surgeons, our focus every day is on caring for our patients. We are all dedicated to providing the best care possible so they can return to better health, function, and the activities of their lives. In addition to the care we deliver in the operating room or during clinic, we also have a responsibility to advocate for systemic change that benefits our patients.

While developing advocacy skills may not have been included in formal residency training, these skills are increasingly essential. Policies and laws promulgated at the local, state, and federal levels affect the care we deliver, and it is more important than ever we use our voices to speak for our patients and our profession.

Often, while we hear about federal legislation impacting healthcare writ large, many more decisions directly affecting our patients occur in the 50 state legislatures across the country, as well as in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The American College of Surgeons created this toolkit to support your efforts to advocate and communicate with elected state officials more effectively. This toolkit provides step-by-step guidance in how to create a successful “State Advocacy Day” in your state capital. We want our elected leaders to rely upon us as trusted medical professionals to understand the impact their decisions may have on patient care before they create or vote on healthcare-related legislation.

Your expertise can be an extremely valuable part of the decision-making process for a legislator. It is essential that we prioritize building strong relationships with our elected officials. We believe these resources will assist you in that process and we hope you find it useful. Our state advocacy team is prepared to answer any questions you might have and to offer their expert guidance.

Thank you for your steadfast work caring for patients and for your willingness to engage in the state legislative process. We continue to strive for policies and laws that protect the surgical profession, the patient, and improve healthcare for all.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Turner, MD, MBA, FACS

Executive Director & CEO



Introduction

Surgeons are dedicated to improving the lives of their patients. As leaders of multidisciplinary care teams, surgeons are skilled at navigating complex medical cases and building trust with those they serve. Their clinical expertise and experience working in the US healthcare system make them natural advocates when working with state regulatory, administrative, and legislative officials.

State legislators are responsible for a wide scope of issues and may not be familiar with the nuances of surgical patient care. The American College of Surgeons (ACS) is committed to educating and providing resources to state policymakers so they can make informed decisions for their constituents. One of the most effective strategies for collaborating with policymakers and their staff is to allow them to hear directly from ACS members during a state advocacy day sponsored by an ACS state chapter.

Careful planning and implementation of a state advocacy day is critical to the passage of state legislation aimed at protecting surgeons and the patients they serve. The following State Advocacy Day Toolkit is a guide for ACS state chapters to organize advocacy days in their respective state capitols. For questions regarding the planning process, advocacy training for members, or contents of the toolkit, please contact:

State Affairs Team

Division of Advocacy and Health Policy

stateaffairs@facs.org

Working with State Legislators

States are often considered to be the laboratories of democracy. States have been innovators of many new programs adopted by the federal government, and on average, state governments pass 80 bills for every one federal bill that Congress enacts. Healthcare is largely regulated and implemented at the state level. For example, states may decide::


- Who can practice medicine (licensure)
- What type of medicine can be practiced (scope of practice)
- Who pays for procedures (insurance vs. patient)
- How physicians are protected in the case of mistakes (medical liability)

While similarities exist, state legislatures operate differently than Congress and may even vary from state to state.

- Forty-nine states have bicameral (two chambers) legislatures; Nebraska's is unicameral (one chamber).
- The length of state legislative sessions vary from state to state and from year to year.
- State governors have the power to call special legislative sessions, approve or veto bills passed by the legislature, submit an annual budget, and oversee the administrative functions of state agencies.
- A state legislature has a "supermajority" if one political party controls enough seats to override a governor's veto (without any support from the minority party).

The relationship between state legislatures and the federal government is not unilateral. One of the many benefits of state advocacy is that states can more specifically tailor laws to meet the needs of their residents. A law that works for the state of Texas may not work for the state of Washington.

State legislators are also more accessible than members of Congress. Very few of them are full-time legislators, and they can be your neighbors, teachers, church leaders, police officers, local business owners, and more.

 To see an overview of how a state bill becomes law, [click here](#) to see the fact sheet.

Establishing Goals for the Day

UNDERSTANDING YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME

Before beginning to plan for your chapter's state advocacy day, your chapter—with the help of ACS State Affairs staff—needs to establish goals for the day. Every appointment with a legislator's office should have no more than three or four "asks."

Examples can include:

- Asking legislators to cosponsor or support one or multiple bills
- Asking legislators to introduce one or multiple bills
- Asking legislators to oppose one or multiple bills
- Asking legislators to pass a proclamation or resolution to raise awareness of a specific issue

- Asking legislators to recognize your ACS chapter on the floor of the legislature during your advocacy day
- Introducing your chapter as a resource for future legislation
- Thanking legislators for their previous or current support of ACS policy priorities

Understanding your chapter's desired outcomes will frame the discussions and inform your strategy for the state advocacy day. A meeting in which your chapter requests a state official to support specific legislation will be led differently than a briefing for multiple legislative offices to learn more about ACS and how your state chapter can provide support.



Regardless of the politics of the day, the consequences of state policy affect your members' daily practice and lives. Planning for your advocacy day begins well in advance of the actual event. Make sure you work with your leadership to determine what your goals of the day are and educate your membership in advance. Determine who your audience is, and don't forget to meet with your regulators! Frame your messages with credible, clear, concise, and specific asks, and encourage your members to build relationships outside of just the day's events. Make it easy for your advocates to act both in person or virtually, acknowledge them for their time away from patient care, and don't forget to celebrate in the wins, no matter how small or big.



Babette Atkins | Albany, NY
Executive Director, New York Chapter


CHOOSING YOUR STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY ISSUES


ACS advocates on behalf of a large scope of state policy issues. The issues a chapter chooses to prioritize can vary year to year depending on the state political landscape, such as what the public media is focusing on, the economy, or major national and global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapters should choose no more than three or four priority issues to focus on during their state advocacy day. Because appointments with legislators are generally shorter than 20 minutes, any more than four policy issues may be challenging to discuss during that time frame.


Currently, ACS monitors and engages with legislation regarding the following state legislative issues:

- Trauma System Funding & Development
- Cancer Prevention, Screening, & Testing
- Insurance & Administrative Burden
- Tort Reform
- Criminalization of Physician Care
- Access to Surgical Care
- Health Equity

Consult your chapter's legislative committee and the ACS State Affairs team on what issue areas you should focus on. You could also consider supporting the policy areas your state medical society is supporting. The ACS State Affairs team can facilitate conversations between the state medical society and your chapter to understand how to best collaborate with each other. The ACS State Affairs team can also review any bills that may be of concern to your chapter.

 [Click here](#) to review current legislation the ACS State Affairs team is monitoring in your state

 Developing a project plan will help you stay on track with your timeline and prevent missing any important pieces of planning the day. We have provided a project plan template for you. To access the the template, [click here](#).

 **Special Note on Prefiled Bills:** Each state has a process for legislators to introduce or “prefile” bills prior to the legislative session. Due dates for prefiling will vary but are typically in late fall or winter. The sooner a bill is filed, the more time chapters have to lobby for, or against, the policy issue.

Mastering the Schedule

SELECTING A DATE

There are a few factors to consider when selecting a date for your chapter's state advocacy day:

Choose a date early in your state's legislative session, but not too early. It's important to strike the right balance between meeting early in the session—to ensure your bill has sufficient time to move through the lawmaking process—but not so early that there are any significant unresolved questions or issues regarding the bill.

Research when other organizations plan to host their state advocacy days. Sponsoring a state advocacy day on the same day as an opposing organization's advocacy day can lead to your event being overshadowed and may force your chapter to compete for legislators' time and attention. In contrast, working in conjunction with organizations holding similar views may help maximize the impact of your shared state advocacy day.

CHOOSING A FORMAT

After deciding on the date for your chapter's state advocacy day, chapter leadership will need to decide on the basic structure or model for the day's schedule. Examples can include:


One-Day Event: Chapter members arrive in the morning for breakfast and a priority issue briefing. Following the briefing, members will meet with legislators and debrief with the greater group later in the afternoon. A reception can conclude the day, including invitations to legislators and their staff.

One-and-a-Half-Day Event: The first day can begin with an afternoon reception for legislators, staff, and other state officials, followed by a chapter council dinner meeting. The following day, chapter members will arrive in the morning for breakfast and a priority issue briefing. Following the briefing, members will meet with legislators.

Joint State Advocacy Day with State Medical Society or other State Physician Organization: Most state medical societies will sponsor their own state advocacy days. Partnering with their advocacy day can help raise the visibility of your chapter and simplify the planning process. Keep in mind, the medical society may have differing policy

priorities. Every partnering organization should have an understanding of what the advocacy day's policy priorities will be.

Hosting Dinners with Legislative Leadership: While hosting dinners with legislative leadership or other state officials can provide fewer opportunities for discussing priority issues, bringing chapter and legislative leadership together can foster the relationships essential to successful grassroots advocacy.

 **Special Note on Timing of the Day:** Many chapters will decide to begin the day later in the morning to account for travel time for participants who live farther away from the state capitol. Having a later start may also help participants avoid having to book a hotel the night before.

 To view a "day of" schedule template, [click here](#).

CHOOSING A MEETING LOCATION

If your chapter is hosting a meeting or reception prior to attending legislative appointments, reservations will be needed for a meeting space. This can be at a local healthcare facility, restaurant, hotel, or other venue. We recommend booking a location close to the state capitol buildings. Other factors to consider include:


- Parking
- Predicted number of participants
- Presentation needs, such as AV equipment and projectors
- Catering options
- Accommodations for disabilities
- Health and safety protocols
- Accommodations for nursing mothers
- Cost

SCHEDULING LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS

The most challenging aspect of hosting a state advocacy day is scheduling appointments with legislators and their staff. Scheduling appointments should begin no later than 30 days prior to the advocacy day. One person from chapter leadership should be the primary point of contact for scheduling appointments. The following are some additional tips for creating the schedule.

- Target legislators who have direct involvement with your chapter's priority issues. Examples of involved legislators include:
 - Members of legislative health committees
 - Sponsors of legislation supported by your chapter and ACS
 - Legislators who may be personally connected to chapter members participating in the state advocacy day
 - Legislators who may be connected to sponsors of legislation supported by ACS but who have not themselves agreed to support the legislation
- Work with your chapter and the ACS State Affairs team to find the contact information for the legislator's office, including the legislator, chief of staff, and scheduling assistant.
- When contacting the legislator's office, explain that your chapter is hosting a state advocacy day and you would like to schedule 15 to 20 minutes to provide information on your chapter's priority issues.
- Be as flexible as possible, and prepare to have a back-up plan in case legislators need to reschedule.
- Although the legislator may not be able to meet, meeting with their staff is also beneficial.
- Confirm each appointment time the week prior to the state advocacy day.

Once legislative appointments have been finalized, assign participating members to each appointment. No more than five members should attend a legislative appointment, due to the size of offices and meeting spaces. We recommend matching members with legislators who oversee the district they live in and/or with whom they have another meaningful connection.

 **Special Note on Bill Sponsors:** A bill sponsor is a legislator who has formally chosen to endorse a bill. A bill sponsor is a guaranteed vote in favor of a piece of legislation so Chapters will want to gain as many co-sponsors as possible. The author(s) of a bill is referred to as the "primary sponsor(s)".

TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER LOGISTICS

Coordinating Transportation: Some chapters will need to coordinate transportation for members the day of the event. This can include carpooling or reserving buses to transport members from the hotel where they are staying or from the meeting site prior to the legislative visits.

Accounting for Travel Times: When planning the schedule, remember to include time for transportation in between appointments and meetings. It is always a great idea to do test runs to check transportation times, including driving to and from each location and walking between appointment locations.


Accounting for Capitol Security Checks: Many state capitol buildings require visitors to pass through a security checkpoint upon entering the building. In addition to accounting for how much time it may take to stand in line and pass through security, it can be helpful to provide a courtesy reminder to your members regarding what they can and cannot bring into the building and how they need to incorporate a time buffer in their schedule. Visit your state legislature's website to find information on their security protocols.

Checking the Weather: Checking the weather a few days prior and informing attendees will help them dress appropriately, bring an umbrella if needed, and so on.

Identifying Your Members: Organizations should encourage advocacy day participants to wear a specific clothing item to identify them when walking the halls of the capitol. This could be a specific color tie or scarf, a white coat, or even an ACS lapel pin.

Blocking Hotel Rooms: If your chapter intends to host several members from out of town, you should consider reserving a block of hotel rooms at a discounted rate. This information will need to be provided when announcing the event. Ensure that any ACS staff attending the event have the opportunity to book a room on the reservation block before opening the block to others.

Applying for the ACS State Advocacy Grant: State chapters are eligible to apply for the ACS State Advocacy Grant and may use it to fund their annual state advocacy day. Funds provided through the grant can be applied toward expenses such as travel costs for members, catering, venue rentals, printing, and more.

 To learn more regarding the ACS State Advocacy Grant, [click here](#).

When I consider the development of the Indiana Day at the Capitol, it was a multiple-year process that led to refinements every year. We initially hosted a standalone day based on the weekly schedule of the legislature and the cycle of the session. Then, we decided to line it up with one of our seasonal chapter meetings to reduce trips to Indianapolis for those who practice far away. Throughout, we looked to bring speakers that would help our attendees understand the legislative process and many of the regulatory and advocacy issues facing the state. Ultimately, I feel strongly that it's better to just host a Day at the Capitol event even if unrefined and avoid allowing perfection getting in the way.

Don Selzer, MD, FACS | Indianapolis, IN
*Governor-at-Large and Past President, Indiana Chapter
Advocacy Pillar Lead, Board of Governors*



Recruiting Participants

CREATING A REGISTRATION PROCESS

As soon as a date and location have been secured for your chapter's state advocacy day, the chapter needs to begin recruiting members to participate. To recruit participants, you will need to create a method to capture and manage electronic registrations. There are various websites and software programs that can do this for you, such as Google Forms or SurveyMonkey.

Consider collecting the following information on the registration page from participants:

- Name
- Specialty
- Email address
- Home address
- Business address
- Mobile phone number
- What relationships they have with elected state officials (if any)
- Whether this is their first time attending a state advocacy day
- Dietary restrictions
- Need for special accommodations (such as mobility or breastfeeding)

BUILDING YOUR PARTICIPANT LIST

In addition to recruiting chapter members from across the state to participate in your state advocacy day, there are a few audiences we recommend focusing on to gain support.

1. **Chapter Leadership:** As with any chapter event, attendance by chapter leadership—including the State Advocacy Chair, Commission on Cancer State Chair, and Committee on Trauma State Chair—is critical to show strength in support, both internally and externally. There is always the possibility of an unexpected meeting with state legislative leadership, and having a chapter leader attend will provide more credibility to the organization.
2. **Fellows, Residents, and Medical Students:** A great way to engage future chapter members is by focusing on clinical fellows, residents, and medical students. Work with your chapter leadership to find the contact information of residency program

directors in the state. Reach out to the program directors, and ask if they have any residents or fellows they would like to give the opportunity to participate in the state advocacy day. While many residents and fellows would like to participate in state advocacy days, they may be prevented from doing so due to their demanding schedules. Having support from their program directors will ensure that participants' schedules are protected and they will not be penalized for missing work.



Special Note on Residents: Surgeons are dedicated to building the next generation of quality physicians, so why not the next generation of advocates, too? Take recruitment a step further by challenging each of your chapter members to bring a resident to your state advocacy day.

ADVERTISING THE DAY

Chapter members need as much notice as possible to avoid any scheduling conflicts and make travel arrangements. Ideally, marketing for the event should follow the schedule below.

As a rule, each time your chapter sends out an email regarding the state advocacy day, you should also post on any social media sites you utilize. We also recommend working with the ACS State Affairs team to advertise the event in any communications they release from the national office.

12-16 Weeks Out	Send out "Save the Dates" that include the location and date(s).
10 Weeks Out	Invite members to register and reserve a hotel room. They will need information such as event times to help plan for travel.
8 Weeks Out	Send out a reminder email to encourage members to register.
6 Weeks Out	Send out another reminder email.
4 Weeks Out	Send out another reminder email to those who still need to register.
2 Weeks Out	Provide a tentative schedule for each attendee, including legislative appointments. Remind members to be flexible with changes.
1 Week Out	Send an email to those participating providing any last-minute updates or reminders.

Components of a Professional Email:

Rebecca King

1 Cc: Chapter Leadership; ACS State Affairs Staff
Subject: Register for the ACS 2024 State Advocacy Day!

2 Greetings!

3 On behalf of the [INSERT STATE] Chapter of the American College of Surgeons, we would like to formally invite members to participate in our 2024 State Advocacy Day.

4 **DAY:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024
TIME: 10 AM to 4 PM with Reception to Follow
WHERE: Marriot Hotel & [STATE] Capitol Building, [CAPITOL CITY], [STATE]

5 [Register On Our Website](#)
[Book Your Hotel Stay](#)

6 For more information, resources, and details about the day, visit our website. Hope to see you there!

RK

7 **Rebecca King, MHA**
State Affairs Associate
Division of Advocacy and Health Policy

ACS AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

WC / (202) 384-3924 E / rebeccaking@facs.org
20 F St., NW Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20001
facs.org

1. Always include your member list in the "Bcc" line to prevent annoying "reply all" responses.
2. Begin the email with a salutation to make it more personable.
3. Utilize spacing to create a sense of organization and visual appeal for the reader.
4. Most importantly, include basic details for the event such as date, time, and location.
5. Provide links to the State Advocacy Day registration page and hotel room block.
6. Always end on a positive note. Show your enthusiasm for the day!
7. Create a signature including your title and contact information. This shows readers you are professional, and this isn't a scam.

Building Educational Materials

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATING LEGISLATORS

A critical component of legislative advocacy is educating others on why they should care about your priority issues. Much like a patient consultation, chapter members will need to simplify complex surgical policy issues so the audience understands how the quality of life for their constituents is affected. For some legislators and their staff, this meeting may be the first time they have heard the intricacies of these issues. Younger staff may never

have experienced a surgical operation or even purchased their own health insurance plan.

Our role is to show them the necessity of prioritizing surgical health issues. Legislators and their staff need to understand the issues well enough to develop solutions to provide positive long-term impacts for the people they serve.

BUILDING A BRIEFING PACKET

One way to help educate lawmakers and their staff on your chapter's state priority issues is to provide them with a briefing packet during your legislative appointments. Each briefing packet should include the following:


- Fact sheets on each of the priority issues you discuss in the meeting
- List of chapter staff and their contact information
- Copies of public statements made by the chapter or letters of testimony submitted to the legislature
- A nice folder with chapter branding to hold all briefing materials

Each chapter member should receive a briefing packet as well. Member packets should include:

- State advocacy day schedule
- Appointment schedule with room locations and contact information of the people they are meeting with
- Important chapter contact information in case of emergencies
- Copies of priority issue fact sheets

- Copies of public statements made by the chapter or letters of testimony submitted to the legislature
- Map of the capitol building
- State advocacy day evaluation form
- Legislative appointment report worksheet

Chapters may also want to provide a notepad for members to take notes on throughout the day. All materials should be held in a chapter-branded folder that is distinct from the briefing packet folders designed for the legislators.

 **Special Note on Letters of Testimony:** Letters of testimony, also known as comment letters, are formal statements submitted on behalf of the chapter in support or opposition of specific legislation. Letters are a powerful way to make a chapter's position known on a particular issue. The ACS State Affairs team is available to assist in writing letters and framing the chapter's message.

QUALITIES OF A GREAT FACT SHEET

Fact sheets are an excellent way to quickly disseminate information that is eye-catching and can be referenced during discussion. Fact sheets should be one-page documents (front and back) providing key information, facts, and figures in a visual manner. The writing style must be clear, concise, and always include a specific call to action.

Attention to details such as spacing, white space, colors, font sizes, and shapes are essential to producing high-quality fact sheets. If executed well, fact sheets can elevate the ACS and your chapter's brand and show that they can be a reliable source of information when discussing potential policy solutions to surgical care issues.

1. ACS branding at the top with a concise title regarding the issue
2. Brief overview of the issue and call to action
3. Data and statistics regarding the issue, as well as visually appealing infographics
4. Talking points to use for discussion
5. Information on what should be included in legislation, or any legislation you are currently supporting
6. Contact information
7. Date when the fact sheet was last updated
8. References for any data used in the fact sheet

Front

1 STATE LEGISLATION

A victim can die of blood loss within **7 minutes**. The average amount of time for 1st responders to arrive.

2 The Issue
According to the National Institutes of Health, the average time for emergency responders to arrive on scene after a 911 call is 7 minutes. For rural and underserved areas, the wait increases to 14 to 30 minutes or longer. Victims with traumatic bleeding can die from blood loss within several minutes.

2 The Solution
STOP THE BLEED® kits contain items that can dramatically reduce mortality by enabling bystanders to save lives during the crucial minutes immediately following a traumatic bleeding injury. Training for STOP THE BLEED® is supplied free to all by Department of Defense training partners, including the American College of Surgeons which has trained over 3.2 million people to date. STOP THE BLEED® training teaches participants how to safely use direct pressure, pack wounds, and place tourniquets to control life-threatening bleeding.

In Your State
Massachusetts has two STOP THE BLEED® bills in play:
• H. 2982 Introduced by Representative Marcus Vaughn (R-9th Norfolk)
• S. 1460 Introduced by Senator Mike Rush (D-Norfolk and Suffolk)

3 10 States Have Passed STOP THE BLEED® Legislation

- States without STB legislation
- States with STB kits in schools
- States with STB kits in public
- States with STB training for students

Back

3 Key Facts

- Severe bleeding injuries can result from falling, vehicle crashes, farming accidents, natural disasters, gunshot wounds, sporting injuries, and more.
- Like public AEDs, providing visible, public access to STOP THE BLEED® kits is an effective way to allow the public to render first aid to assist victims suffering from severe bleeding injuries while waiting for emergency responders to arrive.
- Promptly controlling life threatening bleeding is essential to increasing the chances of patient survival.
- The ACS provides STOP THE BLEED® training for free and has trained over 3.2 million people to date.
- STOP THE BLEED® kits contain items not typically found in standard first aid kits and are designed to be used by most age groups.

5 State Model Legislation

To be supported by the ACS, all proposed state legislation should include:

- 1 Requirements for placing STOP THE BLEED® kits in public places, including schools
- 2 Specifications of STOP THE BLEED® kit contents
- 3 Requirements concerning the use & maintenance of each STOP THE BLEED® kit
- 4 Immunity from civil liability in the event of using the STOP THE BLEED® kit (Good Samaritan Law)

For more information regarding state STOP THE BLEED® legislation, please contact Catherine Hendricks, State Affairs Manager, at chendricks@facs.org.

4 Each STOP THE BLEED® kit must include the following supplies:

- Tourniquet*
- Scissors
- Compression Bandage
- Gloves & Marker
- Instructions**
- Bleeding Control Bandage


8 developed by the STOP THE BLEED® national awareness campaign of the US Department of Homeland Security or the ACS Committee on Trauma
*Tourniquet must be endorsed by the Committee on Tactical Combat Casualty Care
Fact sheet last updated: September 2023

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ACS State Affairs
Division of Advocacy and Health Policy
20 F Street NW, Washington, DC, 20001
facs.org

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Please reach out to the State Affairs team at stateaffairs@facs.org for customization of a fact sheet.

 For a blank state map that can be customized to your marketing needs, [click here](#).

Review the issues prior to meeting with your state or federal legislators; you do not need to know every little detail, but understand the overall problem. Besides understanding the basic problem, it is always best to come with a story about how that issue affected your ability to take care of a patient or get a patient access to care. We are there to help frame the issue, explaining why it is important for this legislator to get engaged on that issue. Just like you use nonmedical terms to explain an operation to a patient, use the same approach when framing the issue for a legislator.



Ross Goldberg, MD, FACS | Miami, FL
Past President, Arizona Chapter
Chair, Board of Governors

Mastering the Day

PREPARING FOR LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS


With some preparation and research, meeting with legislators and their staff can be productive and instrumental in raising awareness on chapter priority issues and moving legislation. As we mentioned under “Scheduling Legislative Appointments,” most appointments only last 15 to 20 minutes and should not consist of more than five people due to meeting space restrictions.


If possible, match members with legislators they have a commonality with, prioritizing those who are constituents residing in a particular legislator’s district. When meeting with legislative leadership such as the senate president, speaker of the house, or committee chairs, include chapter leadership.

Prior to meeting with legislators and their staff, research their general biographical information, which can often be found on their website. Work with ACS State Affairs staff to pull information on past voting history, committee assignments, and any leadership roles they have within the legislature or party caucuses.

Brief chapter members on the priority issues and talking points for each meeting and encourage them to practice their introductions and any anecdotes they can provide. Within each meeting group, identify who will take the lead during the discussion, who will take notes, and who will ensure that staff receive the prepared briefing packet.

The ACS State Affairs team can provide an in-depth overview of your chapter’s priority issues, as well as brief training on how to have successful appointments with state legislators.

 To view an overview on how to master the legislative appointment, [click here](#).

 **Special Note on Appointment Assignments:** If you have an appointment scheduled with a legislator, but none of the advocacy day participants are constituents, it is still okay to send chapter members to meet with them. Try to ensure no chapter members meet with a legislator by themselves. Some chapter members will need to participate in multiple appointments.

OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANT ROLES DURING LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS

Role	Qualities of Role Owner	Responsibilities in Appointments
Host	This person should know each of the participants and not be afraid to introduce the team.	This person kicks off the appointment and makes sure the team moves through the agenda on time.
Storytellers	These people should be one or two advocates who have compelling stories on the impact the policy has on their patients. Ideally, they come from two different communities within your advocate network, such as different geographical locations or surgical specialties.	These people will each provide a 2-3 minute story of who they are, how their patients or practice have been impacted by the issue at hand, and how the desired change (i.e., bill passed or not passed) would create an impact on their life.
Issue Expert	This person should be deeply knowledgeable on the specifics of the policy and may be an ACS State Affairs staff member who is supporting the meeting.	This person is most responsible for answering questions. Stories from advocates are the most powerful part of the meeting and will take up most of the agenda, but they will want to be able to respond to questions or feedback on the ins and outs of policy.
Social Media Lead	This may be a member who is excited to participate but is more shy and less comfortable speaking up in the meeting. This could also be the host in a smaller group.	This person will coordinate a photo at the beginning or end of the meeting and make sure that it is shared with chapter leadership and the ACS State Affairs team to distribute via various media channels.
Notetaker	Similar to the social media role, this may be someone who is less comfortable talking in the group. In a smaller group, the host or issue expert could also play this role.	This person records the most important discussion points, points of conflict with the legislator, questions from the office that the group wasn't able to answer, and other follow-up considerations.

THE LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENT: SAMPLE AGENDA

Chapter members will likely only have about 15 minutes when meeting with a legislator in their office. Some state capitol offices are so small that the legislator may have to meet with you in the hallway. With a short amount of time and lack of private space,

chapter members need to have an organized agenda to ensure that they achieve all their goals. Here's a template you can share with chapter members ahead of their legislative appointments:

Time (15 Minutes)	Topic
2 minutes	Introductions of each person in the meeting from the group
2 minutes	Explain the ask: What is the bill or budget request they're discussing, and what is the action needed from the legislator (sponsorship, vote, public statement, etc.)
6 minutes	Constituent stories from attendees (2-3 minutes each)
4 minutes	Questions from the legislator or staff
1 minute	Thank you and photo

ADVOCATE STORYTELLING TEMPLATE

Stories from the chapter members are the most impactful part of the legislative appointment. While chapter members can write their requests in an email or communicate them during a larger advocacy meeting, their stories are most impactful face-to-face. And while your chapter members are intimately familiar with their own personal experiences,

coaching can help make sure the story accomplishes its goals. Consistently using the same structure will also help legislators and their staff best remember the key points.

Here are a few key points for members to include in their stories when seeking a new bill or legislative action:

Phase of the Story	Goal
Introduction	Chapter members should begin by stating who they are and the role they play in the story.
Status Quo	Describe the challenges of how surgical care is now and how the legislation will affect your practice (positive or negative).
Desired Change	Reiterate the action they want the legislator to take to support the end goal: sponsor the bill, vote a certain way, etc.
New Status Quo with Desired Change in Action	End the story by stating the positives or negatives their practice would experience if the desired legislative action is not taken. How would life change for the better or worse?

A key difference to note is whether your chapter is looking to change existing policies, protect the status quo, introduce new proactive legislation, or receive additional state funding. If your goal is to introduce new proactive legislation or receive additional funding, advocates should begin the story with

challenges and end with the expected improvements, whereas if you are trying to prevent a bill from being passed, advocates should start with the benefits of maintaining the status quo and end with the hypothetical harm their patients could experience.

TIPS FOR YOUR CHAPTER MEMBERS TO EFFECTIVELY ADVOCATE DURING LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Stick to policy priorities and preplanned talking points.
- Speak to the staffers.
- Have a dedicated spokesperson and a separate notetaker.
- Always frame the conversation around the impact on patients.
- Refrain from using jargon or acronyms. Always state the full name of the College.
- Avoid discussing political contributions (donating to their campaigns).
- Ask to take a group photo at the end of the meeting and let them know you plan to post on social media.
- Report meeting results to the chapter executive director and ACS State Affairs staff.
- Do not speak poorly of other medical specialties, organizations, or people.
- Remember when speaking with elected officials, you are neither a Democrat or Republican, but a surgeon advocating on behalf of your patients and profession.

Encourage chapter members to request to take photos with the legislator. These can be posed or candid. Photos from state advocacy days provide excellent media content for ACS, the ACS state chapter, and the legislator involved.



Being a surgeon advocate to our local and national government can seem intimidating but works best when you have a strategy. Since you will be working in teams, divide roles among your colleagues and make sure you know your talking points. Equally valuable is implementation of emotional intelligence. You will often interact with representatives with differing viewpoints and agendas than you. Knowing how you react to someone and how they react to you will help adjust your communication style to convey issues effectively and build allyship. Lastly, recognize that politicians are not surgeons, and their level of understanding might be different than yours. Approaching our government leaders is like approaching patients—make a quick assessment of how to present your case in the best way they will understand it.



David Santos, MD, FACS | Houston, TX
Governor and Vice President, South Texas Chapter

REPORTING BACK

Before returning to their respective areas of the state, chapter members should submit a legislative meeting report to the chapter executive director. On the report, members should note what was discussed, what the legislator's stance was on each priority issue, and if there are any follow-up action items.



To view a legislative appointment report worksheet, [click here](#).



Special Note on Voter Registration: When engaging chapter members in state advocacy activities, we often forget one of the easiest actions everyone can take to become involved—registering to vote. Our vote is our voice. Legislative offices have the ability to check if their constituents are registered to vote prior to meeting with them. A legislator's number-one goal is to keep their office and will prioritize meeting with individuals who can vote for them to do so.

Encourage your chapter members to register to vote, or to update their address and contact information if they are already registered to vote. A great way to do this is to offer the ability for them to register during your state advocacy day. A simple flyer on display at the check-in table with a QR code to the registration website can be an effective way to increase voter participation.



Special Note on Building a Report Worksheet: Want to go digital? Add a QR code to the printed report template and invite chapter members to fill and submit the report electronically. Printed copies in the briefing folders will still be helpful for chapter members to take notes on during their appointments.

Crossing the Finish Line


After your chapter's state advocacy day is finished, there are several follow-up items to review.

The Following Business Day: Email every chapter member who participated in the state advocacy day expressing the chapter's gratitude for volunteering their time. Chapter members should be encouraged to send personal thank you emails to each elected official or staff member they visited. The chapter should also consider sending a thank you letter from the executive director or president.

The Following Week: Inform the overall chapter membership of the success of the state advocacy day. This can "be done through a special announcement or by publishing an article in the chapter newsletter. The announcement can include the number of chapter members who participated, legislative offices visited, and next steps the chapter intends to take. Pictures captured throughout the day can be used to show the success of spending time in the state capitol and may encourage members to become more involved in the legislative process.

The Following Months: Chapter leadership and staff should review and assess the state advocacy day and any improvements to be made in the future:

- Evaluating comments from participants can provide insight into how well the event was received; determine the value of briefing sessions and materials; and highlight details requiring attention in the future.
- After compiling all the feedback from the day, begin planning for the next one using an updated project plan.
- To avoid losing momentum, encourage your members to maintain a relationship with their state legislator by inviting them to do site visits at their offices, visiting the legislator in their district when the legislature is out of session, and following their legislator on social media.
- Host an online presentation with the ACS State Affairs team to provide an update on how the overall day went and call members to action.

 To view a state advocacy day evaluation form template, [click here](#).



What makes a successful State Advocacy Day is the same thing that makes advocacy successful all year round: relationships. If you want to be involved in advocacy on any given day, the best way to do this is to establish relationships with your representatives, lobbyists, and ACS leaders. On the state level in particular, this allows for grassroots advocacy and ongoing conversations about ACS-related asks.

Julia Coleman, MD, MPH | Columbus, OH
Former Chair, ACS Resident & Associate Society



Frequently Asked Questions

<p>Our state chapter is interested in applying for the ACS Chapter State Advocacy Grant. How do we go about doing so?</p>	<p>All state chapters interested in applying for the Chapter State Advocacy Grant should click here and download the application and FAQ documents.</p>
<p>Our state chapter has never sponsored an advocacy day before and we're unsure of where to begin. Are there ACS staff available to help?</p>	<p>In addition to the State Advocacy Day Toolkit, ACS State Affairs staff are available to help guide you through the planning process. For questions regarding state advocacy days or examples of how various state chapters plan their days, contact the State Affairs team at stateaffairs@facs.org.</p>
<p>We received a Chapter State Advocacy Grant and intended to use the funds for our state advocacy day. What are considered legitimate expenses for grant funds? What if we exceeded our grant limit?</p>	<p>Examples of expenses that may be applied to the Chapter State Advocacy Grant include member lodging, travel, food and beverage, meeting space rental, receptions, and other related expenses. If a state chapter decides to cosponsor a larger advocacy day with a state medical society, the chapter can use grant funding to financially contribute to planning costs. All state chapters are responsible for expenses that exceed the amount and/or purview of the approved grant .</p>
<p>What policy issues should we advocate for during our state advocacy day? Are there specific issues the College would like us to focus on?</p>	<p>We highly recommend working with the ACS State Affairs staff to identify specific policy priorities for your state. ACS may already be working on specific legislation in your state and can provide additional insight as to what issues may have a higher likelihood of receiving attention from the state legislature. Meeting with your state medical society's legislative staff can also ensure a more united advocacy strategy.</p> <p>These policy issues will vary not only by state but by legislative session as well. Depending on who is elected to office or what major events are taking place, it may be more productive to pursue some legislative issues than others.</p>

We have never scheduled a meeting with a state legislator before. Is there a best practice for creating a schedule? Is help available from the ACS State Affairs team for this activity?

We recommend scheduling appointments with state legislators as early as possible in the process. Once your state chapter has established its policy priorities for the advocacy day, you will be able to determine which legislators to schedule appointments with. Most state chapters will choose to target legislators who sit on the legislature's health committees. If there are specific pieces of legislation your state chapter is advocating for, you will want to gain as many bill sponsors as possible, preferably on the legislative committees the bill will be presented to.

You can find the contact information of each legislator online. Once the appointment is scheduled, you will need to send a follow-up email the week before indicating who will be attending the meeting and what issues will be discussed. The ACS State Affairs team is always happy to help match program attendees with legislators; however, appointment requests will be more welcome from local state residents.

Should we take pictures with legislators or other officials during the state advocacy day?

Absolutely! If the opportunity arises, request to take a photo with each legislator you meet with. Not only are photos with constituents good publicity for the legislator, but pictures can also be used in future newsletter articles and other chapter marketing. ACS members who chose not to attend one year may be more inclined to do so the following year after seeing positive media attention of the day.

My chapter is interested in hosting a STOP THE BLEED® Awareness Day at our capitol. Is that the same as a State Advocacy Day?

No. While similar in goals, a State Advocacy Day will focus on more than one issue and is led by chapter leadership and not the ACS Committee on Trauma. STOP THE BLEED® Awareness Days will typically have a training or demonstration component for legislators and their staff to attend. For more information regarding STOP THE BLEED® please visit stopthebleed.org or reach out to ACS State Affairs staff.

My chapter has a lot of experience planning state advocacy days and we don't need the help of ACS. Do I still need to contact the ACS State Affairs team?

Yes! The ACS State Affairs team is here to support, consult, and guide chapters where needed. Even if your chapter is an expert in leading State Advocacy Days, we want to hear from you. The ACS State Affairs team is always available to attend the day and present best practices on meeting with state legislators. In addition, we can use national ACS platforms to advertise the day and increase member participation. By including the ACS State Affairs team in your strategy, we will be able to better advocate on behalf of all chapters in further discussions with ACS leadership.

GET SUPPORT FROM YOUR STATE AFFAIRS TEAM

State Affairs Team

Division of Advocacy and Health Policy

stateaffairs@facs.org



facs.org/advocacy/state-legislation/