

AMCA CONGRESSIONAL VISITS ON MAY 12, 2009

Some guidance/hints for our day on Capitol Hill

While attending the 11th Annual AMCA Washington Spring Conference, we are planning on visiting well over 100 Congressional offices. This will take some planning and coordination on all our parts.

We are requesting that each Washington Day participant (and/or the state team leaders for states that traditionally have sent larger Washington Day delegations, such as Florida, California, Utah and New Jersey) **to make your own Capitol Hill appointments for Tuesday, May 12, to occur from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm** (please see another AMCA “Washington Day” website posting for some greater details for how to do this). Please call the congressional office and ask to see either the Member of Congress or a congressional staff assistant. If the Member can’t provide some time, then ask for the staff assistant who deals with public health or environmental issues, preferably the chief-of-staff. If no staff person is available, then ask for the legislative assistant who handles the types of issues we want to address. The issues selected might also reflect some of the Member’s committee assignments, and are surely those of importance to the AMCA.

Twenty-to-Thirty Minutes to Talk, Ten to Walk

All appointments should be scheduled to allow for a total of 40 minutes, giving you 20-30 minutes to talk (and no more than 30 minutes max in any Member of Congress’ office, so as not to wear out your welcome!), and then 10 minutes to walk to the next appointment for consecutive Senate appointments, or for consecutive House appointments; however, about 30 minutes will be needed to travel from the Senate side of Capitol Hill to the House side, or vice versa. While you will be leaving a copy of the Legislative Packet with each Senator, Representative or legislative aide containing all our Position Papers, you will only have the time to verbally discuss about 2-3 of our issues. An additional wrinkle this year might be opening up your visits with about a 5-minute overview for why mosquito control is important and for why you need to do such in your home MCD/MAD, presented either as an introduction for why you’re here, or as a refresher for why you’ve once again returned for yet another year. Guidance and recommendations for what will be the AMCA’s priority topics to verbally discuss during your brief Capitol Hill visits will be provided by the AMCA, both in advance of Washington Day and at the meeting too, subject to change almost up until the time of your Capitol Hill appointments. During your actual 20-30 minute meetings, start your discussion on the first targeted topic, and then pace yourself to review the other one or two targeted topics too, such that you cover our priorities but also don’t overextend your 20-30 minute visit. One of our “targeted topics” will probably really be more of an “open slot” to allow you to cover a topic perhaps of much more local interest within your home MCD’s jurisdiction, and as such not necessarily one of our overall Association’s highest priority themes this year.

“Do’s and Don’ts” When Visiting Congressional Offices

Stay focused on your objectives, your time limitations, and your issues. Do not talk about your favorite sports team, the weather, or the latest gossip about anyone in D.C. Do not become argumentative. Make your points as succinctly as possible, and do not beat them to death! If a congressional aide asks a question for which you do not know the answer, explain that it is a good question and that someone from the AMCA will respond in writing if necessary.

Plan Your Visit Strategy to Maximize Effectiveness

The state team leaders or captains from the states that traditionally have sent larger delegations to Washington Day (e.g. FL, CA, UT, NJ) might have already provided you with a tentative schedule for these appointments. They have probably attempted to group these meetings by building, so you do not have to run back and forth among Senate or House Office Buildings (the Senate and House have 3 office buildings each). Please do not

plan to go back-and-forth over Capitol Hill between the Senate and House buildings more than once! (it's a bit of a haul and takes time, about 30 minutes one-way). For your Senate or House side visits, it's also best to start at the top of the any building and walk down (it's faster!).

If the staff or legislative assistant you want to see (on any particular issue) is not available, out of the office, or on vacation, please ask if there is someone else on the Member's staff who you or your AMCA group could speak with. Adjust to their time schedule, and reorganize the suggested tentative schedule to reflect their availability. If no one can see you on any of the issues we're discussing, then please ask them if you could drop off the AMCA Legislative Packet.

On the Senate side, the legislative staffs are usually larger and more narrowly defined. Please ask for the staff or legislative assistant covering our priority issues. If that assistant is out of the office, move on to the next issue.

The Message: What are we going to SAY?

For all congressional visits (on House and Senate sides), individual AMCA members or the team for each state will be meeting with elected officials who are active on issues and possibly serve on committees important to us. We want to inform them about our important issues, and then urge them to get involved with their resolutions.

Each congressional office will receive an AMCA Legislative Packet consisting of a fact sheet describing the AMCA and our AMCA 2009 Position Papers.

Public Health and the Importance of Public Health Pesticides

At each congressional office, it is important for you to emphasize our role as stewards of human health, and the important role that public health pesticides play in preserving and protecting our people, especially the most vulnerable subpopulations such as seniors and children. Let them know what your local priorities are, and how you go about defending public health.