



Contacting Members of Congress

Pediatricians and other child health care providers are natural advocates for global immunizations. As a clinician or public health champion, you understand how vaccines reduce morbidity and mortality and allow for more productive healthy lives. As a subject matter expert in child health, it is important to share this information with policy decision makers like Members of Congress.

Identifying United States Members of Congress

Plug in your address to identify your Representatives and Senators.

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/members>

Contacting Members of Congress

You can contact your Members of Congress by writing an e-mail or a letter, by calling, or by visiting. All questions and comments regarding public policy issues, legislation, or requests for personal assistance should be directed to the Members from your state and district. It is important to note that nowadays, sending an e-mail is sometimes more effective and faster than a written letter. Please be aware that as a matter of professional courtesy, many Members will acknowledge, but not respond to, a message from another Member's constituent.

US Senate

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators.cfm

US House

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/>

AAP Contacts

Prior to meeting with a Member, you should contact your local AAP chapter or the AAP Department of Federal Affairs for technical advice and support.

AAP Chapters

<http://www2.aap.org/member/chapters/chaplist.cfm>

Federal Affairs

<http://federaladvocacy.aap.org/> or kids1st@aap.org

Know the Facts

Review the data before making a call, scheduling a meeting, or penning a letter. You are the expert, and it is your job to educate and raise awareness. Visit the AAP Global Immunization Web site (<http://www2.aap.org/international/immunization>) for resources to help develop your talking points.

Begin with the 'Ask'

The first thing your congressional leader needs to know is who you are and why you are contacting them. Focus on your request, and emphasize why global immunizations are important internationally as well as domestically.

Keep Your Message Simple

It is important to use your time, whether on a call, in a meeting, or via a letter, judiciously. Global health advocacy can be an overwhelming, data-heavy undertaking, so we encourage you to keep your message simple and focused. Draw upon your clinical expertise, and concentrate on the issues being addressed by the AAP's global immunization efforts. Create an outline of your major objectives and include references to any related legislation to help guide the discussion.

Spread the Word

Mobilize others interested in the message to amplify your impact. This may include your colleagues or your state AAP chapter. Letters, e-mails, phone calls, and meetings focusing on the same message from multiple constituents will help Members prioritize the issue. Strength in numbers!

Begin and End with a Thank You

Before you engage a Member, check their past voting records to see if they have supported global immunization efforts in the past. Thank them for their leadership and encourage them to continue to advocate on your behalf.