

SGIM26: PREPARING FOR DIY HILL DAY

As internal medicine physicians, your voice is incredibly powerful in shaping health policy. Lawmakers rely on personal stories and real-world examples from their states and districts to make informed decisions. By engaging with your members of Congress, you can help protect the programs that support your patients and the future of health care.

This resource provides the information you need to be an effective advocate and build relationships with your members of Congress while representing SGIM, including tips on scheduling meetings and a checklist of things to prepare and bring. SGIM appreciates members' willingness to advocate to drive meaningful change through federal policy.

MEETING WITH YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

In-person meetings in Washington, D.C., as well as in your state and district, are one of the most effective ways of letting a public official know about you, SGIM, and SGIM's priorities. Build relationships with your Representative and Senators and become a resource for them for issues related to primary care!

Requesting a Meeting

Contact your members of Congress' D.C. offices by phone or email to schedule a meeting. You should request to be connected to the member's scheduler or health legislative assistant. Mention that you are a physician and member of SGIM, identify where in the state you practice, and outline the key issues you wish to discuss. Suggest a few preferred dates and times. It isn't always possible to meet with your members of Congress, so accept opportunities to meet with their staff if offered as an alternative.

Best Practices for Meetings

Before the Meeting:

- Review your talking points and practice your key messages.
- Bring business cards and printed leave-behind materials, if any.
- Bring a pen and paper to take notes.
- Arrive at offices 5-10 minutes before meetings.

During the Meeting:

- Introduce yourself with your name and where you live and practice.
- Provide a background of SGIM, primary care, and general internal medicine.
- Highlight the issues you are there to discuss.
- Share a brief patient story or your personal experience to illustrate the impact of the issues you would like to discuss.
- Ask the Member if they are willing to support your requests, or (if a staff-only meeting) ask the staff if their boss is willing to support.
- Thank them for their time.

After the Meeting:

- Send a thank-you email.
- Include any follow-up information you promised.

Pro Tips

- Be on time and silence your cell phone.
- Be respectful and professional.
- Stay on topic and remember your “asks,” keeping in mind that you are representing SGIM.
- Give the staffer your business card and ask for theirs.
- Follow up with a brief email thanking them for their time and providing any information you may have promised.
- If they ask you a question that you do not know the answer to, do not make up an answer. You can always tell them you will find out and send them the answer after the meeting. It’s a great opportunity to follow up and build a relationship.
- Share your experience with peers to encourage more advocacy meetings back home.

CHECKLIST

Schedule a Hill Meeting

- Call or email your member of Congress’ office to schedule a 30-minute meeting, ideally 3-4 weeks out from May 6, 2026.
- Mention that you are a physician and member of SGIM, identify where in the state you practice, and outline the key issues you wish to discuss.

Preparing for a Hill Meeting

- Join the SGIM26 Advocacy 101 Webinar from 3-4pm ET on April 15.
- Do your research: Know your member’s stance on key health issues. Be aware of any recent votes or public statements they've made. You can find this information on their websites, social media, and congress.gov.
- Refine your message: Personal stories and data can be compelling. Make sure your message is clear, concise, and directly related to the policy issues.

During a Hill Meeting

- Bring business cards and printed leave-behind materials, if any.
- Bring a pen and paper to take notes.
- Arrive 5-10 minutes early: Make sure you can get through the security line and find the meeting room before your meeting.
- Be respectful and professional: Even if you disagree with the member’s positions on specific policies, maintain a respectful tone.

After a Hill Meeting

- Send a thank you email to the office and include any follow-up information you promised.
- Complete a feedback form.