



# IMPACT 2020

## VIRTUAL

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 22-23, forty-seven members of the COPD Foundation's (COPDF) patient and caregiver community participated in IMPACT 2020, a virtual advocacy event designed to encourage the United States Congress to support critical policies to improve the lives of people living with COPD, ultimately leading to a cure.

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, no travel to Washington, D.C., was required. Instead, advocates representing 26 states met virtually with elected officials and their staff from both the House of Representatives and Senate, resulting in close to 100 virtual meetings. In most cases, individual participants were grouped together depending on geography and availability of elected officials. It should be noted that at the peak of the program, 63 advocates had registered for IMPACT 2020. However, due to unforeseen health issues and other contributing factors, 16 had to withdraw during the final week.

Several key communications channels were used to recruit participants and amplify the program, including the State Captain and Faces of COPD newsletters, COPD360social, Facebook, and Twitter. During the recruitment period, Facebook posts resulted in 14,880 engagements, 1,481 likes, comments, and shares, and 782 clicks, and Twitter posts resulted in 18,301 engagements and 192 likes, comments, and shares. Additionally, an IMPACT 2020 banner was displayed on the COPDF landing page, leading those who clicked on it to a dedicated IMPACT 2020 web page. Two advocate profiles also were featured in COPD Digest.

The full IMPACT 2020 program, which lasted for approximately six weeks, focused on building participants' advocacy, storytelling, and relationship-building skills, and knowledge about COPDF's critical policy priorities for the COPD community. This was achieved through a series of progressive weekly homework assignments, advocacy training webinars, and storytelling sessions, culminating in the IMPACT 2020 Workshop and virtual Congressional meetings on September 22 and 23, respectively.

***"I felt well prepared for the discussions that we had. The pace was just about right for the preparations and allowed enough time to learn about the process and issues in bite-sized chunks."***

The IMPACT 2020 Workshop was facilitated by Stephanie Williams, RRT, Senior Director of Community Education Programs. Dr. James Crapo, Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer, welcomed participants, followed by a review of the critical policy priorities from Sara Latham, Chief Operating Officer, and Dave Zook, Chair, Faegre Drinker Consulting. Bill Clark, Vice President of Patient Experience, and Eddie Fisher, State Captain Florida,

presented their personal patient and caregiver advocacy stories, respectively. This was followed by a keynote address from The Honorable Mike Crapo, U.S. Senator from Idaho and Founding Co-Chair of the Congressional COPD Caucus. Lauren Bloch, Director, Faegre Drinker Consulting, took advocates through several virtual meeting reminders and

***“It truly was a rewarding experience.”***

best practices. Stephanie then facilitated the Q&A session and Sara delivered the closing remarks.

In advance of the virtual meetings on September 23, a document outlining COPDF’s critical policy priorities and facts about COPD was sent to all members of Congress and their staff with whom advocates had scheduled meetings. Soapbox Consultancy, a company that helps organizations facilitate advocacy, fly in, and lobby days, arranged the virtual meetings and provided a platform for participants to manage their meetings, including individualized schedules, conferencing details, whether the elected official was a member of the COPD Caucus, contact information, and initial feedback forms.

***“I am learning so much and want to thank everyone for all you do for us with COPD.”***

IMPACT 2020 participants focused on four critical policy priorities and asked their elected officials to:

- Provide the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with funding for the Chronic Disease Education & Awareness program to combat COPD;
- Urge the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to continue the suspension of competitive bidding for oxygen supplies through at least 2022;
- Urge CMS to include billing codes for pulmonary rehabilitation services on the list of telehealth services covered during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

- Join the COPD Caucus to support the COPD community and help advance policies that benefit people living with this condition.

Initial feedback indicated participants felt their virtual meetings went well overall, their interactions were positive, and their voices were heard. Interest expressed by elected officials and their staff

included potentially joining the COPD Caucus, wanting to learn more about COPD in general, efforts specific to their state, as well as sharing their personal connections to individuals impacted by COPD. Because advocacy is such an urgent and sustained process, ongoing relationship-building,

***“I felt as though I was part of some big changes to come.”***

***“Just sincere gratitude for all the efforts to make IMPACT a success by equipping all the advocates with the information.”***

identifying opportunities for connecting, and following-up with elected officials and their staff is required.

Within the first week of the conclusion of the program, participants were asked to complete a feedback survey from the IMPACT 2020 planning team. Of note:

- 100% said they would participate in future “Hill visits” with their elected officials;
- 97% said they felt confident and prepared for their meetings with their elected officials; and
- 94% said that because of IMPACT 2020, they are excited to participate in more activities with the COPD Foundation in the future.

***“Our state representatives really listened to our stories and expressed appreciation and a new understanding of what our patients face.”***

Participants were also asked to describe what advocacy means to them in three words, resulting in the following:



IMPACT 2020 demonstrated that one does not have to travel to Washington, D.C., to be an effective advocate. Had IMPACT 2020 followed last year's two-day face-to-face format including Capitol Hill visits, many of this year's advocates would not have been able to take part. Because of the virtual nature of this year's program, a greater number of advocates participated, both veteran and new, who otherwise would not have been able to do so due to physical or financial limitations. Though arguably not the same, meeting with elected officials virtually instead of physically indeed has merit and should be considered a valuable means to effect change for the COPD community.

The COPD Foundation would like to thank our Corporate Partners for providing the funding to deliver this important program. Without their support, IMPACT 2020 would not have been possible.



**GRIFOLS**

