



IMPACT Lung Health 2026

Executive Summary

On March 18, 2026, lung health champions representing the COPD Foundation, the Bronchiectasis and NTM Association, and its patient, caregiver, and health care community met with policymakers on Capitol Hill for IMPACT Lung Health 2026. This eighth annual legislative advocacy campaign engages stakeholders to urge the United States Congress to take action on critical legislation to improve the lives of those affected by chronic lung disease.

This year, lung health champions called for support on three crucial policy priorities:

- 1 Increase Funding for Lung Health Research and Promote Innovative Treatments through FY27 Appropriations Provisions**
- 2 Co-sponsor the Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR) Act (H.R.2902/S.1406) to Ensure Medicare Patients have Access to Essential Oxygen Therapy**
- 3 Co-sponsor the Sustainable Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Services in the Home Act (H.R.783/S.248) to Enact Permanent Medicare Coverage for Virtual Pulmonary Rehabilitation.**



Bronchiectasis & NTM
ASSOCIATION



COPD FOUNDATION®

The IMPACT Lung Health advocacy agenda is informed by the COPD Foundation’s strategic policy priorities and approved by the Advocacy and Public Policy (APP) Committee. The APP Committee is comprised of patients, caregivers, scientists, clinicians, and policy experts who provide expertise and insight into lung health-related public policy. These strategic priorities include increasing research funding, advancing patient-centered treatment approvals, improving access to oxygen therapy, and expanding pulmonary rehabilitation. The COPD Foundation works collaboratively with professional organizations, such as the American Association for Respiratory Care and the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation, to strategically advance lung health legislation in coordination with dozens of other advocacy organizations.

IMPACT Lung Health 2026 Champions

54

Lung health
champions

28

States
(8% increase)

45

House districts

56

Senate districts

101

Legislative
meetings



“
The best part of the year.
The sharing of similar
stories of life and feeling
like we are changing the
world.
”



“
Attending IMPACT is a great way to make our needs heard by our legislators.
It’s empowering. Also, it’s a great way to get to know fellow State Captains and
COPDF staff better.”
”

A Year of “Firsts”

While this year’s IMPACT Lung Health marks the eighth annual legislative advocacy campaign since it began in 2019, this was a year of “firsts.”

This was the first year that participant recruitment targeted specific legislative districts and advocate characteristics. Recruitment prioritized constituents of lawmakers serving on the House Energy & Commerce and House Ways & Means Committees, which are the committees of jurisdiction for the SOAR Act. Recruitment also prioritized patient and caregiver champions, providing space for the patient voice to spark change and lead to better patient-centric care through policy action. Thanks to these strategic recruitment efforts, 72% of lung health champions represented a targeted demographic.

This year’s event was also the first year where IMPACT Lung Health included a specific policy priority related to bronchiectasis. With the recent launch of the Bronchiectasis and NTM Association within the COPD Foundation, this year was an opportune time to pilot a bronchiectasis-specific “ask” that could be championed by advocates from the Bronchiectasis and NTM Association. Five teams of lung health champions submitted 13 budget requests to their lawmakers to support the development of new bronchiectasis treatment approaches through FY27 appropriations report language.

Finally, IMPACT Lung Health 2026 featured an appearance by Pennsylvania lung health champion Tom Manges and his “C. O. P. D. Awareness” semi-truck. Tom drove his truck from his hometown of Donora, PA to Washington, D.C., spreading awareness of COPD to motorists along the way. Tom led the bus full of lung health champions to Capitol Hill in his truck before parking in front of the Capitol building all day long on March 18. The COPD Foundation published a media advisory and a post-event release in a targeted outreach to Washington, D.C. and Donora, PA, sending 39 distinct communications. Tom’s truck spread awareness of COPD in Washington, D.C. while also boosting morale among lung health champions.



Event Program

The IMPACT Lung Health 2026 advocacy campaign was a multi-day event that focused on skill development, legislative advocacy, and building fellowship in the lung health community.

Before leaving their hometowns to travel to Washington, D.C., lung health champions were provided several pre-reads for the event, including the full advocacy agenda, talking points, a storytelling worksheet, and the full event itinerary, to prepare them for the hill day. Two optional “office hours” sessions with IMPACT Lung Health 2026 program facilitators were provided the week before the event for any advocate who wanted to talk through the plans for Washington, D.C., ask questions, and chat with other participants. Lung health champions were also asked to complete an anonymous pre-event survey to gauge their existing confidence and comfort levels with concepts like legislative advocacy, empowerment, and connection to the lung health community.

Once in Washington, D.C., advocates participated in a day-long training session on March 17, where they were updated on current political affairs in Washington, D.C., educated on the IMPACT Lung Health policy priorities, and trained on how to have an effective legislative advocacy meeting. Lung health champions were grouped into advocacy teams based on their geographic regions and their individual skillsets, ensuring that each team was strong and capable for their day on the hill. The training session ended with a live roleplaying session with advocates and facilitators, providing lung health champions with an opportunity to see how a legislative meeting may unfold and how to handle potentially difficult questions from lawmakers and/or their staff.

The March 18 hill day kicked off with Pennsylvania lung health champion Tom Manges leading advocates with his “C. O. P. D. Awareness” semi-truck to Capitol Hill. Advocates then split into their assigned teams and spent the day meeting with their lawmakers, urging their support for the critical lung health policies that comprised the IMPACT Lung Health 2026 advocacy agenda. During the meetings, lung health champions provided their lawmakers’ offices with a folder complete with facts about chronic lung disease, a summary of the policy priorities, and state-specific lung health prevalence data. After each meeting, advocates reported outcomes to the facilitators, ensuring efficient communication of important follow-up information from lung health champions to the COPD Foundation advocacy team.



After the event, advocates followed up with their lawmakers to thank them and their staff for their time, reshare the policy priorities, and reinforce their relationship as constituents and lung health champions. Advocates also completed an anonymous post-event survey to report how their skills and confidence levels grew as a result of their time in Washington, D.C. at IMPACT 2026.

Continued Progress

Since the completion of IMPACT Lung Health 2026, progress continues on all of the COPD Foundation policy priorities. 194 budget requests for priority report language have been submitted to legislative offices for the FY27 appropriations cycle. All three distinct priority report language drafts have been included in the respective House of Representatives’ draft budgets. The draft budget also includes an increase for FY27 NIH/NHLBI funding. The SOAR Act has gained more than 25 new co-sponsors to date and continues to be championed by members of the supplemental oxygen coalition. The Sustainable Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Services in the Home Act also continues to be championed by lung health partners.

Lung Health Champion Feedback

During IMPACT Lung Health 2026, lung health champions were encouraged by their conversations with lawmakers and their staff about critical lung health policies. Advocates remarked that they felt they were continuing conversations about chronic lung disease and the policies that would make life better for those affected, rather than starting from scratch on disease awareness and having to introduce concepts such as supplemental oxygen reform. Lung health champions reported they spoke confidently about the 2026 policy priorities while infusing their personal perspective to tell their stories and make the “asks.” Advocates reported that the March 17 training session prepared them for their day on the hill, with several advocates noting that they were able to overcome challenges during their meetings due to lessons learned during training.

“*I love getting to socialize with the other advocates. Being able to make connections with people about something you are equally passionate about is so special. It is also nice to get to know everyone past the shared commonality of being advocates.*”



The results of the IMPACT Lung Health 2026 pre- and post-event surveys exhibit advocates' growth of key skill sets:

Confidence for speaking with lawmakers about lung health policies grew: **21%**

Understanding of the U.S. legislative process grew: **13%**

Knowledge of lung health policies grew: **26%**

Feelings of empowerment to influence federal lung health policy grew: **17%**

Understanding of policy issues discussed by the COPD Foundation grew: **33%**

Feelings of connectivity to the lung health community grew: **18%**

“*Every aspect of the week was impeccably and thoughtfully planned and executed.*”

Thank You to our Sponsors!

IMPACT Lung Health 2026 built on the success of the COPD Foundation's previous policy campaigns and continued the momentum of advocacy work from lung health coalitions. Lung health champions gained valuable knowledge, increased their skills, and uplifted each other while using their voices on behalf of those affected by chronic lung disease throughout the country. This year's event exemplified the impact that a passionate and well-prepared team of lung health champions can have on Capitol Hill.

Thank you to our sponsors who supported this year's event and shared their time with us in Washington, D.C.

Thank you for joining us for IMPACT Lung Health 2026!



“I felt very much supported.”

“As a first-time attendee, this experience helped build my confidence as an advocate and showed me that my voice matters.”

“Excellent organization of the whole experience. Wonderful preparation.”