



IMPACT 2021

VIRTUAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During October 2021, 27 volunteer COPD Foundation patient and caregiver community members representing 25 states participated in IMPACT 2021, 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, the volunteer advocates met virtually with elected officials and their staff from the House of Representatives and Senate, resulting in close to 85 virtual meetings. In most cases, individual participants were grouped depending on the geography and availability of elected officials.

“Our role as advocates is to encourage legislators to support programs that improve the lives of people living with COPD.”

– Carol Rubin, COPD Foundation Captain, New Jersey
IMPACT Advocate

The full IMPACT 2021 program focused on building participants’ advocacy, storytelling, relationship-building skills, and knowledge about COPDF’s critical policy priorities for the COPD community. This was achieved through a series of advocacy training webinars and storytelling sessions, culminating in the IMPACT 2021 virtual Congressional meetings on October 12, 2021.

In advance of the virtual meetings, 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.

“What advocacy means to me is being active in getting COPD the recognition it deserves. Research funds should be allocated to help find treatments and maybe even a cure.”

– Louise Hobden, COPD Foundation Captain, New Hampshire
IMPACT Advocate

IMPACT 2021 participants focused on four critical policy priorities and asked their elected officials to:

- Urge the Food & Drug Administration to prioritize the qualification of outcome measures and biomarkers that reflect the greatest needs of COPD and other chronic lung disease patients;
- Extend and make permanent Medicare billing codes for pulmonary rehabilitation services delivered via telehealth;
- In the final FY 2022 Labor HHS Education Appropriations Bill, include \$5 million as recommended by the House Appropriations Committee for the Chronic Disease Education & Awareness program at the Center for Disease Control & Prevention’s (CDC) Center for Chronic Diseases and Health Promotion; 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, and sharing their connections to individuals impacted by COPD. Because advocacy is such an urgent and sustained process, ongoing relationship-building, identifying opportunities for connecting, and continued dialogue with elected officials and their staff is critical.

After the program's conclusion, participants were asked to complete a feedback survey from the IMPACT 2021 planning team. Of note:

- 100% said they have a better understanding of what the COPD Foundation does to help the COPD community;
- 87% said they would participate in future "Hill visits" with their elected officials; and
- 87% said that because of IMPACT 2021, they are excited to participate in more activities with the COPD Foundation in the future.

Participants were also asked to describe what advocacy means to them in three words, with the main themes of EMPOWERING, IMPACTFUL, EXCITING:



IMPACT 2021 demonstrated that one does not have to travel to Washington, D.C., to be an effective advocate. Because of the virtual nature of this year's program, many advocates could participate who otherwise would not have been able to do so due to physical or financial limitations. While face-to-face meetings are preferred, IMPACT 2021 and 2020 highlighted that meeting with elected officials virtually instead of in person has merit and should continue to be considered a valuable means to effect change for the COPD community.

We are thankful to all who participated and supported this very important virtual event.
THANK YOU for joining us for IMPACT 2021!

The COPD Foundation would like to thank our Corporate Partners for providing the funding to deliver this important program.

