

AOTA Capitol Hill Day Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I register for Hill Day?

Complete the [Capitol Hill Day Registration Form](#) and return it to AOTA Federal Affairs staff by: Email at hillday@aota.org; Fax at 301-652-7711; Mail to AOTA, Federal Affairs Dept., 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-3449.

2. What meetings am I supposed to set up for Capitol Hill Day?

You are responsible for setting up the meeting with your Representative (House of Representatives). You have 1 Representative and 2 Senators. AOTA will be arranging ALL Senate appointments. For step-by-step instructions on how to identify your Representative, how gather their office contact information, and how to schedule a meeting, follow [How to Set Up a Congressional Meeting](#).

3. What time should I schedule my meetings?

AOTA is working to schedule Senate appointments between 11:00am and 1:00pm. Your House meeting should be scheduled no earlier than 1:30 pm. This will ensure you have a sufficient amount of time to get to your meetings. If your legislator can only meet at an earlier time, then by all means take the meeting and promptly inform AOTA Federal Affairs staff of your meeting time by filling out a [Congressional Meeting Confirmation Form](#) and submitting it to hillday@aota.org.

4. How long should each of my meetings last? How much time should I schedule between my meetings?

You should expect each of your meetings to last around 15–30 minutes, depending on the availability of staff or the Member of Congress. It will take you approximately 20 – 30 minutes to get back and forth between the Senate side and the House side. Therefore, you should allow 1 hour between your Senate meetings and your House meeting to give yourself enough time in the event that a meeting starts late, runs longer than expected, or to ensure enough travel time between the House office buildings and the Senate office buildings. However, if you have no choice but to schedule your meetings closer together, then go ahead and do so, and inform AOTA Federal Affairs staff of the scheduling conflict via email at hillday@aota.org. AOTA staff might be able to reschedule the Senate meetings to avoid the conflict; however, if that is not possible, contact the office and give the Congressional staff notice that you might be running a little late. Also, AOTA will provide you with on-site Congressional staff contact information.

5. What should I wear to my meetings?

Business attire is appropriate. However, be sure to wear comfortable shoes as you will be doing a lot of walking outside and on marble floors.

6. Are joint meetings with other colleagues acceptable?

Absolutely, coordinating appointments is a must. It is likely that attendees from different schools or different districts within the same state will be scheduling appointments. Utilize [OT Connections](#) to assist in coordinating with other practitioners and students from you district. Also, as Capitol Hill Day approaches, and AOTA's Federal Affairs staff has a clearer picture of registrants and potential appointments, we will work closely with you to coordinate meetings. (You should notify congressional staff about how many people will be coming to the meeting, and ask if there is a limit to the number of people you can bring – meeting space can be a factor).

Also, give specific attention to members of Congress that serve on Committees with jurisdiction over issues that affect occupational therapy. That information can also be found on the legislators' profiles on AOTA's [Legislative Action Center](#). Typically, Committees include the Senate Finance Committee; Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee; House Ways and Means Committee; House Energy and Commerce Committee; and the House Education and Labor Committee.

7. Do you prefer students to stay together or split up and go to different offices?

The more Members of Congress and Congressional staff we can educate about the profession of occupational therapy, the better. If students are from various different states, feel free to split up and contact your personal Congressional office from your home state. If students would feel more comfortable going in a group, then by all means go together provide support for one another.

8. If it is not possible to meet with the actual Congressman/Congresswoman, should I try to schedule time with their staff?

Absolutely! Congressional staff plays a very important role in the determining the direction of legislation and providing information and input to the Member of Congress regarding their area of interest. Congressional staff does the majority of gathering information, taking meetings with many special interest groups, and listening to constituents who have an interest in their particular issue. As Members of Congress rely heavily on their staff for input, meeting with them is an opportunity that should not be missed. Typical Congressional staff that we meet with includes the Health Legislative Assistant and the Education Legislative Assistant depending on the issue. To determine the correct Congressional staff member refer to [How to Set Up a Congressional Meeting](#).

9. If I am having trouble getting an appointment, what do I do?

Follow the step-by-step [How to Set Up a Congressional Meeting](#). If you have already done so and are still having difficulty getting a hold of your Congressional office or are not able to work out a time, contact AOTA at hillday@aota.org and AOTA Federal Affairs staff will give you further guidance on a case-by-case basis. Keep in mind that it may take a while to get a response, so remember to be patient.

10. How will we get to Downtown D.C. (Capitol Hill)?

You will be responsible for arranging all of your travel, including travel/transportation into Washington, D.C. the morning of Capitol Hill Day. Information as to where the briefing will be held will be provided as it becomes available. Information about arranging [travel, lodging and transportation within D.C.](#) (including metro, cabs, buses, and shuttles), navigating [Capitol Hill building complex](#), and [accessibility within the building complex](#) are currently available.

11. Will there be handouts available for us to leave behind for Congressional staff?

Yes. AOTA staff will prepare a folder that will include a brief overview of occupational therapy and any specific issue fact sheets that are relevant. AOTA Federal Affairs contact information will also be included in the packets as well as any other pertinent materials. These materials will also be available on the [Hill Day webpage](#) as they become available.

12. Can I provide my own handouts or do all materials need to go through AOTA?

AOTA will be providing all the necessary and pertinent information in the folders that will be left with Congressional staff. You may include your own materials; however, *everything* you discuss should be relevant to occupational therapy as you are representing AOTA. *Personal matters should not be discussed in these meetings.*

13. What issues are we supposed to talk about?

The most important message to get across in your meetings is for the Member of Congress or staff to understand what occupational therapy is and how it benefits consumers (their constituents), communities, districts, states, and society as a whole. Other specific issues to be familiar with can be found on the [Legislative Action Center](#). The specific issues to discuss will depend on what legislative issues we are working on at the time of the Hill Day. This includes issues such as:

- Medicare Part B Outpatient Therapy Caps
- Occupational Therapy and Mental Health
- Funding and other Issues in Special Education
- Rehabilitation Research

AOTA staff will provide information beforehand at on the website ([Capitol Hill Day](#)), handouts and talking points, as well as a briefing on the issues impacting our profession. If you have a specific interest in any issues related to occupational therapy, feel free to discuss those in your meetings, but remember the priority of educating them about occupational therapy.

Becoming familiar with what you want to talk about before your meetings is important. More details about the logistics of the meetings and what to expect will be provided during the pre-meeting briefing. You should focus your efforts now on getting your meetings set up, scheduling travel and lodging arrangements, and familiarizing yourself with the issues found at the [Legislative Action Center](#).

Remember, AOTA staff is with you every step of the way. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact the Federal Affairs Department at hillday@aota.org