

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 5, 2024, 53 advocates representing the COPD Foundation and its patient, caregiver, and healthcare community traveled to Washington, D.C. for IMPACT Lung Health 2024, an advocacy campaign designed to urge the United States Congress to act on critical legislation to improve the lives of those affected by chronic lung disease.

IMPACT 2024 is the COPD Foundation's sixth annual legislative advocacy campaign and the first to take place in-person since the COVID-19 pandemic.



March 4-5, 2024  
Washington, D.C.

With **92 meetings**, IMPACT 2024 marked the **most in-person meetings** of any **IMPACT** event. Advocates represented **26 states**, **38 unique House districts**, and **54 unique Senate districts** on Capitol Hill.

The full IMPACT 2024 program was a multi-day event in which participants received training to improve their advocacy skills, developed their personal stories, and promoted the Foundation's policy priorities. Advocates were encouraged to share their authentic voice and emphasized their genuine lived experiences and feelings as they related to the crucial policies that support the COPD Foundation advocacy agenda.

The program culminated with advocates on Capitol Hill to encourage their elected officials and their legislative staff to support critical policies to raise the standard of care for those living with chronic lung disease, while strengthening relationships with legislators, their staff, and each other. Advocates provided their legislative offices with a folder complete with facts about chronic lung disease and details about the COPD Foundation policy priorities for 2024 as well as tailored state-by-state prevalence statistics.



The chosen IMPACT 2024 priorities are influenced by the organization's fundamental policy priorities and approved by the Advocacy and Public Policy Committee. These guiding priorities include access to effective, affordable, and equitable pulmonary rehabilitation and access to safe, effective, and affordable oxygen therapy. The COPD Foundation partnered with professional organizations to inform the organization's work with furthering legislation regarding pulmonary rehabilitation. The COPD Foundation is also an active member of a coalition of 25 patient and health care-centric organizations collaborating on the implementation of supplemental oxygen access reform. As a result of a year of collaborative cross-cutting work, IMPACT 2024 advocates focused on the following three (3) critical policy priorities and urged their elected officials to:

- ➔ Co-sponsor H.R. 1406 or S. 3021 to **Extend and Make Permanent Medicare Coverage for Virtual Pulmonary Rehabilitation.**
- ➔ Co-sponsor S. 3821, the Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR) Act, or forthcoming House companion, to **Ensure Medicare Patients have Access to Essential Oxygen Therapy.**
- ➔ **Increase FY25 NIH Funding and Prioritize COPD, Bronchiectasis, and NTM Research through NHLBI Appropriations Report Language.**

*"Everyone did a great job of creating a team of super advocates!"*

*"Great event and superbly executed!"*

*"The best part of IMPACT Lung Health 2024 was the staff's energy/enthusiasm, knowledge and appreciation, organization, education about legislative policies and how to advocate, meeting with representatives and watching them show a genuine interest, working as part of a team and knowing we had so much support, feeling so well cared for and respected, meeting others-patients and staff-and hearing their stories, learning lots of new things, the hotel and its great location."*

Initial feedback from advocates indicated that they spoke confidently on the policy priorities, enjoyed meeting their elected officials and sharing their stories with legislative staff, and felt that their voices were truly heard during their meetings on Capitol Hill. Elected officials and their staff were interested in the details of the Foundation's FY 2025 Appropriations request, the history and background of access issues for supplemental oxygen users, potential solutions for access to virtual pulmonary rehabilitation, and a strong desire to learn more about COPD, bronchiectasis, and NTM lung disease. Advocates followed up with their elected officials and staff to thank them for their time, reshared the policy priorities, and emphasized their relationship as constituents and lung health champions. Sustained communication with legislators and legislative staff on the policy priorities solidifies the constituent relationship and encourages legislators to act on these policies.



*“The meetings really seem to have an impact on the person we meet with.”*

*“It was an exciting and important event, and a great couple of days with everyone!”*

Advocates who attended IMPACT were asked to complete a feedback survey after the event. Of note:

**100%**

**AGREE**

that they would participate in future

**IMPACT**

Lung Health legislative advocacy events.

**88%**

**AGREE**

that because of

**IMPACT**

they are *Excited* to participate in more activities with the COPD Foundation.

Advocates were asked to describe their experience participating in IMPACT 2024 in three words, resulting in the following:



Progress continues to be made on all three of the COPD Foundation's policy priorities. A companion to the SOAR Act Senate bill has been introduced to the House as H.R. 7829. The virtual pulmonary rehabilitation bill passed the Subcommittee on Health and moved forward through to its next committee stop. As a result of the COPD Foundation's advocacy efforts, over 600 calls to action have been sent directly to legislative offices and over a dozen combined sponsors and co-sponsors have been secured for H.R. 1406/S. 3021 and H.R. 7829/S. 3821. Additionally, close to 80 individual requests for the COPD Foundation's FY 2025 Appropriations priority have been submitted to legislative offices.



IMPACT 2024 was a resounding success, exemplified by the knowledge, relationships, and skills that advocates gained during their time in Washington, D.C. Advocates worked together in-person to elevate their voices and share their stories on behalf of those affected by lung disease throughout the country. This year's event proved that lung health champions can come from anywhere and the most important factors in advocacy are teamwork and passion.

We are thankful to everyone who supported us and shared their time with us in Washington, D.C. for this very important event. THANK YOU for joining us for IMPACT 2024!

*"It was really such an impressive event. Everything was so well-organized and leaders were obviously confident and prepared. I don't know that it could have gone any better."*

A big thank you to our corporate partners for providing critical funding for IMPACT 2024:



*"You are true pros! You are content and process experts, which isn't typical in my experience. You know when/how to leverage other experts as well. You seem to genuinely care for each other and for the work you're doing. It was wonderful to watch! Being part of a mission focused, well-organized endeavor/organization makes me want to get more involved."*