

September 24, 2012 AOTA Capitol Hill Day
Frequently Asked Questions (updated 9/4/2012)

1. What time should I set up my meetings for Capitol Hill Day?

AOTA will schedule all Senate appointments. We are working to schedule them between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Your first House meeting should be scheduled no earlier than 1:00 p.m. It will take between 15 and 30 minutes to get from the Senate side to the House side, so be sure to allow yourself sufficient time to get to your meeting. If your legislator can only meet at an earlier time, then by all means take the meeting.

2. 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 between 10 to 30 minutes, depending on the availability of staff or the member of congress. You should schedule about 20 - 30 minutes to get back and forth between the Senate and House. You should schedule anywhere from 15 – 30 minutes between meetings to allow yourself enough time to get to a meeting when a previous meeting might have lasted longer than expected, or to include 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 give the staff notice that you might be running a little late. AOTA staff will provide you with the phone contact for Hill staff on site.

3. 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 on marble floors.

4. Am I supposed to set up meetings with my 2 Senators and Representative? Are joint meetings with other colleagues acceptable?

AOTA will schedule the meetings with Senators. You should make an appointment with your Representative. Based upon previous experience it is likely that attendees from different schools or different districts within the same state will be scheduling appointments. Coordinating appointments is a must. Congressional schedules are very hectic and it is unlikely that a congressional office will schedule more than one meeting with representatives from the same organization. As AOTA 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 be found in legislators profiles in the AOTA Legislative Action Center. In general, these committees would include the Senate Finance Committee; Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee; House Ways and Means Committee; House Energy and Commerce Committee; and the House Education and Labor Committee.

5. If it is not possible to meet with the actual Senator or Representative, should I try to schedule time with the appropriate health staffer?

Absolutely! Congressional staff plays a very important role in the determining the direction of legislation. They do much of the research and meet with many special interest groups and constituents who have an interest in a particular issue. Educating policy makers at every level is an opportunity that should not be missed. Members of Congress rely heavily on their staff for input.

6. What issues are we suppose 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 and society. 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, such as health care reform, the Medicare Part B therapy caps on occupational therapy and the Medicare home health benefit. AOTA staff will provide handouts at the briefing on several issues that impact OT. If you have a specific interest in any issues, feel free to discuss those in your meetings, but remember the priority of educating them about OT. You also have the flexibility to cover any other issues that you feel strongly about but remember that you are representing AOTA.

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](#).

7. Will there be handouts available for us to leave behind for Hill 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 as well as any other pertinent materials.

8. How will we get to the Hill?

You will be responsible for arranging all of your travel, including travel into Washington, DC and to the morning briefing. Information as to where the briefing will be held will be provided as it becomes available. Information about getting around DC (including metro) and the [Capitol Hill building complex and accessibility](#) are available on the AOTA Web site.

9. How do I register for Hill Day?

Complete the [Hill Day registration form](#) and return it to AOTA Federal Affairs staff by e-mail at hillday@aota.org, fax at 301-652-7711, or by mail to AOTA, Federal Affairs Dept., 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-3449.

Last update: 9/4/12