



Many U.S. senators and representatives hold town hall meetings so that they can hear what you, the constituent, want them to do. These events are typically held at a school or a community building and are a great opportunity for the pancreatic cancer community in YOUR area to come out, put on the purple, and really let the member of Congress and their staff know we need them to act on our behalf – **and quickly**.

Here are some tips for being an effective participant at a town hall meeting:

### **STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS**

Click [here](#) and enter your zip code at the top of the screen to find the names of your two senators and one representative. Click on each to find their website and local office phone number (under the “Contact” tab). Also, be sure to check whether or not your senators/representative are co-sponsors of the *Pancreatic Cancer Research & Education Act* (S. 362/H.R. 733), which can be found under the “Bills” tab.

### **STEP 2: FIND A TOWN HALL MEETING**

Check the websites of your members of Congress to see if they have any constituent events coming up, such as a Town Hall, breakfast, or open meeting. You should only attend forums that are health-related or not topic-specific (i.e. update from Washington). Can't find anything online? Call their local or state offices and ask, “Are there any opportunities to meet Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_ coming up in the district?”

### **STEP 3: RECRUIT SUPPORTERS, FAMILY MEMBERS, AND VOLUNTEERS TO ATTEND**

Numbers matter! The greater the number of pancreatic cancer advocates that show up, the more that member of Congress has to listen to you. Ask everyone to wear purple and be sure to make your presence respectfully known to the staff working the event.

### **STEP 4: PREPARE INFORMATION PACKETS AND BUSINESS CARDS**

Be sure to bring one or two informational leave-behind packets (one for the elected official and one for any staffers you meet), just as you would for a district meeting. Click on the links below to print out the materials.

- [Fact Sheet on the \*Pancreatic Cancer Research & Education Act\*](#)
- [Chart on NCI Funding and Survival Rates for the Top 5 Causes of Cancer-Related Death](#)

If you have Pancreatic Cancer Action Network business cards, bring them to distribute to the staff working the town hall meeting. If you don't have business cards from the organization, bring any other business cards you might have and write “pancreatic cancer advocate” on the card.

### **STEP 5: ATTEND EVENT AND ASK YOUR QUESTION**

The Q & A portion of the town hall is the main opportunity for us to have our voices heard. The question you ask will depend on whether or not your senator or representative has co-sponsored S. 362/H.R. 733 (see Step 1).

When the floor is opened to questions, raise your hand and pose your question. Begin by introducing yourself by name and hometown, and very briefly mentioning your connection to pancreatic cancer (i.e. “I am John Smith from Anytown, CA and I am a pancreatic cancer survivor.”). Then,



**If your member of Congress has NOT co-sponsored S. 362/H.R. 733, ask this question:**

As you may know, pancreatic cancer has some of the worst statistics associated with any cancer: the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., a five-year survival rate of just 6%, a projected increase in new cases of 55% over the next 20 years, and still no early detection tools or effective treatments. Given these statistics and the fact that the status quo is not working, are you willing to co-sponsor the *Pancreatic Cancer Research & Education Act*? This legislation does not tell the National Cancer Institute how to do science, but it does require them to develop a long-term and comprehensive strategic plan for combating the disease.

**If your member of Congress is already a co-sponsor of S. 362/H.R. 733, ask this question:**

I want to thank you, Senator/Representative \_\_\_\_\_, for co-sponsoring the *Pancreatic Cancer Research & Education Act*. Your support for this legislation has brought hope to the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have been impacted by this disease, particularly here in [name of state]/our congressional district. Please accept my deepest gratitude for your willingness to change the status quo for this disease and be a leader on this critical issue. Would you be willing to reach out to other members of Congress in our state who have not yet co-sponsored this bill and ask them to join you in this effort?

**STEP 6: MAKE CONTACT AT THE EVENT WITH THE STAFF AND THE MEMBER**

Do your best to personally hand the information packet to at least one staffer, and ideally, the Member. If you have the opportunity to speak with either of them after the event, use your “elevator speech”, or 30-second pitch, to explain why the bill is so important to you. You can also let them know about your affiliate, our nationwide advocacy efforts, and our organization’s mission.

**STEP 7: BE SURE TO FOLLOW UP!**

After getting a group to attend, preparing a question, and ensuring that you make contact at the event with at least one staffer and hopefully the Member, make sure you take it to the bank! Follow up with a call and a letter letting them know you’re eager to hear if they took the action we requested. Accountability is key!

Finally, let us know how it went! Did the staffer or Member have any questions? Did they indicate they will co-sponsor the bill? Send us an email at [advocacy@pancan.org](mailto:advocacy@pancan.org), or if you have any questions contact the Government Affairs & Advocacy office at 202.742.6699.