

# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO TOWN HALL MEETINGS



Many U.S. senators and representatives hold town hall meetings so that they can hear what you, their constituent, want them to do. These events are a great opportunity for the pancreatic cancer community to show their purple and tell members of Congress that we're serious about increasing funding for pancreatic cancer research!

Here are some tips for being an effective participant at a town hall meeting. If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact us at [advocacy@pancan.org](mailto:advocacy@pancan.org) or 202.742.6699.

## STEP 1: FIND A TOWN HALL MEETING

Check our list of town halls [here](#). If your member of Congress is not listed, go to the websites of your legislators to see if they have any constituent events coming up, often called a town hall, breakfast/picnic or public meeting. You should attend only forums that are general or health-related. If you can't find anything online, try calling your legislator's local or state office(s) and ask if there are any upcoming opportunities to see the representative/senator in your area.

## STEP 2: RECRUIT A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS TO ATTEND WITH YOU

Once you have found a town hall to attend, let us know by emailing us at [advocacy@pancan.org](mailto:advocacy@pancan.org) so that we can add it to the town hall web page. Then recruit others to join you at the meeting. The more people that attend with you, the more likely it is your member of Congress will notice your group. Ask everyone to wear purple!

## STEP 3: PRINT OUT THE LEAVE-BEHIND MATERIALS (it is ok to print these in black and white)

Before the event, print out the following fact sheets that you can hand to your elected official or their staff after the event.

- [Pancreatic Cancer Fact Sheet](#)
- [Our 2015 Legislative Priorities](#)

## STEP 4: ATTEND THE EVENT AND ASK YOUR QUESTION

The Q&A portion of the town hall is your best opportunity to interact with your legislator. When the floor is opened to questions, raise your hand and pose your question when called upon. Begin by introducing yourself by name and hometown, and very briefly mention your connection to pancreatic cancer. Then ask one of the following questions in your own words:

- **[Reps only]**: I was very pleased to see the House pass the 21st Century Cures Act (HR 6), which includes mandatory funding increases for the NIH.] **All legislators**: H.R. 6 is an important bill for pancreatic cancer, because pancreatic cancer is projected to be the 2nd leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States by 2020. And the NIH's decreasing purchasing power over the last 10 years makes progress challenging. What are you doing to ensure that there is a budget deal so that the NIH can be put on a sustainable path for long-term growth?
- This year, almost 49,000 people will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer – the deadliest major cancer, with a 5-year survival rate of just 7 percent. And pancreatic cancer is expected to become the 2nd leading cause of cancer-related death by 2020. Given these facts, are you willing to support increased cancer research funding and join the Congressional Caucus on the Deadliest Cancers so that patients (like \_\_\_\_\_) know they have a real champion in Congress?

## STEP 5: CONNECT WITH THE LEGISLATOR OR STAFF AFTER THE EVENT

Don't worry if you are unable to ask a question at the event. You can still make an impact by handing the leave-behind materials to a staff person who is with the legislator. If you have the opportunity to speak with either the legislator or their staff after the event, use your "elevator speech," or 30-second pitch, to explain why pancreatic cancer research is so important, and ask one of the questions above. Before you leave, remember to exchange business cards with any staff you meet so that you can follow up!

## STEP 6: LET US KNOW HOW THE EVENT WENT

After the event, be sure to send us an email at [advocacy@pancan.org](mailto:advocacy@pancan.org) so that we can follow up as needed.

## STEP 7: FOLLOW UP!

Within a week after the event, send a written note or email to any staff whom you met at the event, thanking them for their time and reminding them of any commitments that the legislator made.