What to Expect in Your Congressional Meetings and Suggested Meeting Outline
Intended only for PPF Attendees. Do not share this document with Hill offices.
Updated June 6

How should I prepare?

❖ At our congressional meetings, we will be discussing the Expanding Access to Diabetes Self-Management Training Act. See the leave behind document that you were provided for more information on the bill and key talking points. Leave behinds can be found here.
  o Please note that our champions are aiming for reintroduction on June 6, so please keep an eye out on June 7 for updated materials with the bill numbers. They will be posted on the ADCES website and in the Advocacy Associates portal you’ll use to access your schedules and meeting Zoom links.

❖ There will likely also be an opportunity to discuss other legislation/issues like permanent telehealth expansion, the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA), the Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) Act, and Medicare payment reform. Please review materials in advance and determine who in your group could speak to each bill/issue.
  o Please note that most of these bills have also not been reintroduced yet but we expect them to be materially similar in the 118th Congress (2023-2024) as they were in the 117th Congress.
  o For telehealth expansion and the MNT Act, the leave behinds do not have bill numbers.
  o For TROA, we are using the leave behind from last Congress, so please make sure offices know that these are old bill numbers.
  o For Medicare payment reform, there is a House bill but no Senate bill yet.

❖ Prepare for the visit by reviewing the leave behinds, but do not get overwhelmed by legislative details. It’s okay to say “I don’t know” if you are unsure about the answer to a question. ADCES staff can easily assist you in following up with the congressional office to provide additional information.

❖ An important aspect of discussing the legislation is thinking about how policy impacts your ability to provide care as a diabetes care and education specialist. One of the most effective advocacy tools is sharing personal stories and discussing how this policy impacts you or would impact people with diabetes, obesity, etc. in their daily lives. Discuss during your breakout groups who can share what types of stories.

❖ Your legislator may be interested in diabetes or related statistics for your state. Consider pulling 2-3 statistics to have ready a reference:
  o American Diabetes Association diabetes statistics per state.
  o America’s Health Rankings: Diabetes
  o Percentage of adults who have been told they have prediabetes, by state
  o Burden of diabetes fact sheet for each state
  o Senior obesity data (click on far-right tab “National Obesity-Ages 65+)”
Adult obesity prevalence maps

- Do a little research on your member of Congress. Are they a member of the Diabetes Caucus (see the list you were sent on June 1)? Do they sit on any of the committees of jurisdiction for the DSMT Act?
  - Senate Finance
  - House Ways & Means
  - House Energy and Commerce

- Did they cosponsor any of our priority bills last Congress? If so, it’s an easy ask for them to sign back on this year!
  - Expanding Access to DSMT Act of 2021: S. 2203/H.R. 5804
  - CONNECT for Health Act of 2021: S. 1512/H.R. 2903
  - Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021: S. 596/H.R. 1577
  - Medical Nutrition Therapy Act of 2021: S. 1536/H.R. 3108

- Also do personal research. Do you share an alma mater or have any areas of shared interest? Does your member of Congress have a connection to diabetes in some way? This is a time to set political views aside and focus on ways to connect. Even if you didn’t vote for your representative or senator, their support for our issues is still important.

- There will be a breakout session during PPF where team members will get an opportunity to meet each other. Please use the resources on the following pages to make a plan about who is saying what in each meeting.
What should I expect in the meeting?

❖ We will be conducting virtual meetings (Zoom, Teams, or phone). All meetings will be accessed from the Advocacy Associates meeting portal that you will receive access to by June 2.
  o See how to use the portal: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ockRbaU3dyM

❖ You are the expert! This is an opportunity to share your knowledge about diabetes, clinical and self-management, and the role of the diabetes care and education specialist. Be confident in your ability to promote the specialty.

Suggested Meeting Outline

1. Introductions: Discuss who you are and where you are from in the district. Ask legislator/staff about their own ties to the district.

2. Discuss the role of the diabetes care and education specialist.

3. Tell the legislator/staff why you are meeting, e.g. “We’ve asked to meet today to discuss the Expanding Access to DSMT Act and to discuss the permanent expansion of telehealth services to better serve people with diabetes.”

4. Provide background on diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES)/diabetes self-management training (DSMT):
   a. What is DSMES/DSMT and who provides it?
   b. DSMT refers to the Medicare benefit for DSMES
   c. What is the purpose of the legislation? Despite the benefits of DSMT for people with diabetes – lower hemoglobin A1c, weight loss, improved quality of life, healthy coping skills and reduced health care costs – only 5 percent of Medicare beneficiaries with newly diagnosed diabetes used DSMT services. This legislation works to address some of the barriers to accessing DSMT.

5. Discuss the legislation, specifically the bulleted provisions in the DSMT Act Leave Behind. Try to share personal stories, where possible.

6. Ask the legislator to sign on as a cosponsor of the DSMT Act. (Or thank them if the bill has been reintroduced and they are listed as a cosponsor.)

7. Discuss the need to expand telehealth services. Refer to the ADCES leave behind for specific information. Share personal stories discussing your experience with telehealth. Stories are more important than the details at this stage.

8. If you have time, consider also discussing TROA, the MNT Act, and/or Medicare payment reform depending on the time remaining and the expertise in your group.

9. Thank the legislator or staff member for their time. Offer to serve as a resource.

10. Designate one person to complete a meeting report in the Advocacy Associates portal for each meeting.
**How Should I Follow-up?**

The person you are meeting with will likely share their contact information with you, or you should have it in the meetings portal. After the meeting, designate one person (ideally a constituent) to send a follow-up e-mail thanking them for their time and sharing any materials discussed in the meeting. Copy everyone who attended the meeting on the email. It’s also great to offer your expertise should they have any future questions about diabetes.

**Sample ‘Thank You’ E-mail to Congressional Staffer**

Below is a sample e-mail to send after your congressional meeting. Please tailor the sample message to best reflect the context of your meeting. We have included links to a number of studies/references you may want to send about the DSMT Act. Only include the ones that came up during your discussion.

Dear XX,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me (and list other names of those who attended your meeting) from the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists. We appreciated the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the Expanding Access to Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT) Act (and insert any other issues/bills you discussed). These are all important issues for health care providers and individuals with or at risk for diabetes.

We hope Senator/Representative XXXX will sign on as a cosponsor of these important bills, especially the Expanding Access to DSMT Act. If you have any questions about the legislation, or about diabetes in general, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are happy to serve as a resource.

Thank you,

**Additional Information that Might be Requested:**

Only send materials related to topics that come up during your meeting. You want to be responsive to their specific questions but not overwhelm them with resources.

**What are the benefits of DSMT?**

I also wanted to share some additional information highlighting the benefits of diabetes self-management training:

- [Improving Quality Outcomes: The Value of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists](#)
- [CDC Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) Toolkit: How people with diabetes benefit from DSMES](#)
- [CDC Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) Toolkit: Overview of the Business Case](#)
- [Systematic Review – Effectiveness of Diabetes Education](#)
- [The Value of Diabetes Education](#)
What is the cost of the legislation?

The Senate Finance committee has requested a score, but we are still waiting for that from CBO. External estimates show that passage of the Expanding Access to DSMT Act would result in an average cost savings of $1,276 per year per Medicare beneficiary and added cost-savings to people with diabetes. Click [here](#) for more information.