TALKING POINTS FOR ADVOCATES

Effective advocates must be prepared to give legislators and their staff persuasive information in a short period of time. To help you make the most of your meetings, n4a has developed the following framework and talking points for you to use on n4a’s Capitol Hill Day and beyond. For background and more information on n4a’s policy agenda, see our 2019 Policy Priorities.

YOUR TOP PRIORITY ➔
Make sure your Member understands who you are and what your organization’s role is in providing services to older adults.

- Because federal policies and priorities are changing rapidly, the MOST IMPORTANT conversation you can have is ensuring that Members understand what your agency does, who you serve and why the programs you administer are critical to their constituents.
- Be prepared to speak about the demographic realities for older adults in your Member’s district or state, both now and the outlook for the future.
- Talk about both the need for and cost-effectiveness of home and community-based services, and share some personal stories/anecdotes about older adults who have been served through your programs.
- Offer to help make their jobs easier when they receive requests from older adults and caregivers by being a resource for their case-managers, who work in the District to solve constituent concerns.
- Bring some leave-behind informational materials from your agency and from n4a.

Once rapport is established, go through your top asks and priorities and describe how/why they are important to your agency and to your district/state. Remember, personal stories are powerful! You don’t have to get through all asks. Highlight those most important to you and adjust as time and Member interest demands.

AND DON’T FORGET TO... Extend to your Member an open invitation to visit or volunteer at your agency. This one activity can really help build your relationship with the Member, deepen their understanding of your programs, and allow them to realize what a resource you are on aging issues. Mention it while on the Hill, but you will need to follow up in writing with their scheduler. Note: House and Senate will both be in recess March 18-22 and April 15-26.
YOUR TOP CONGRESSIONAL “ASKS” 

Promote Policies that Enable Aging at Home and in the Community

1. Reauthorize the Older Americans Act
   • **The Situation:** The Act expires on Sept. 30, 2019, so Congress needs to reauthorize (i.e., update and reconfirm commitment to) the law. That’s not a firm deadline of course, but hopefully it motivates Congress to get reauthorization done.
   • **The Ask:** We have lots! See our reauthorization recommendations for details, but the main point now is to educate lawmakers and their staff about the OAA and what it means to their constituents, then mention that it is up for reauthorization. They need to know you are a local expert and n4a is a national expert on just about every part of the Act, so they should turn to us as they develop positions!

2. Invest in Cost-Effective Aging at Home and in the Community in FY 2020
   • **The Situation:** The big-picture issue is that unless Congress passes a bipartisan budget deal to lift the Budget Control Act caps for FY 2020, appropriators would be forced to make deep cuts across discretionary programs like OAA. Meanwhile, as we push for that relief, advocates must also champion the highest possible spending levels for the programs we most care about and older adults rely upon, like OAA.
   • **The Ask:** Lawmakers must protect investments in critical, cost-effective aging programs and continue to increase funding to fully meet the need for these programs. They should support a commonsense lifting of the caps and then significantly increase funding for OAA.
   • **Specifically:**
     - Congress should increase **Title III B Supportive Services and Title VI Native American aging programs** by at least 20 percent, and the **Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program** by at least 10 percent.

3. Improve Health by Addressing the Social Determinants
   • **The Situation:** Opportunities abound for our network now that policymakers everywhere have caught on to the importance of the social determinants. But they need to know the role n4a members can play in changing health care and other supports to reflect this!
   • **The Ask:** Lawmakers must protect Medicaid, Medicare and essential, affordable health care and long-term services supports for vulnerable older adults.
   • **Specifically:**
     - Reauthorize **Money Follows the Person** (S. 548/H.R. 1342) so that states and AAAs can continue to help rebalance Medicaid toward HCBS and allow older adults and people with disabilities to return to the community!
     - Maintain the mandatory provision of **Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation services**; CMS is considering proposals to make it optional for states.
     - **Use us!** AAAs and their provider networks can bridge the gap between acute and community care, but they must be made partners in these efforts and paid for their services. Share examples from your area or mention the new CMS guidance on MA plans and supplemental benefits for the chronically ill.

*If you can’t answer a question, don’t worry, just promise to get back to them with the answer when you are back home.* Feel free to put the staffer in touch with n4a’s policy team, Amy Gotwals and Autumn Campbell, who can be reached at 202.872.0888 or agotwals@n4a.org and acampbell@n4a.org.