

Advocacy and Legislative Affairs Committee Report

Advocacy Committee of APPNA 2018 started work at the beginning of the year. The target was to engage all politically active APPNA physicians as well as APPNA alliance members. Two PACs (Political Action Committees) comprising majorly of APPNA physicians were brought on board with APPNA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE and an MOU was signed with PAKPAC to get help from its resources as well as consultant for APPNA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE was hired via that MOU. PAKPAC agreed to do exclusive Luncheon during Day on The Hill and invited Congressman Raul Ruiz, MD, a son of an immigrant and a Harvard trained physician. APPAC had to cancel their dinner during Day on The Hill due to some other commitments but it has assured its unconditioned help and support.

With the consensus of all committee members, Wednesday, April 25th, 2018 was picked. It was almost impossible to get nice room on “Wednesday” during election cycle, but using relationship of PAKPAC with Congressman, Mike Turner (R-OH), prestigious Speaker room H-122, exactly under the dome of capitol hill was obtained and by the time you will be reading this report, we would have had a great Day On The Hill. The agenda is simply one liner,

“100% visa clearance for all matched residency candidates on time”.

The revolutionary step taken by APPNA PRESIDENT 2018 Dr. Iqbal Zafar Hamid and APPNA PRESIDENT ELECT for 2019 Dr. Naseem Shekhani, earlier this year during strategy meeting was to sign an MOU among APPNA, AAPI and BMANA to work together to improve healthcare in South Asia. This MOU gave rise to invitation of AAPI to APPNA to join their Day on The Hill on April 12th, 2018 and a delegation under the leadership of Dr. Shekhani attended it which gave us a chance to meet legislators and invite them on APPNA Day on The Hill on April 25th, 2018.

PLEASE FIND BELOW THE AGENDA AND THE LIST OF CONGRESSIONAL AND SENATE MEMBERS

2018 Day on the Hill

10:15AM – Strategy Discussion with Director of Field Operations
State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs
600 19th Street NW - Washington DC 20006

12:30PM – Exclusive Lunch Briefing with Congressman Raul Ruiz, MD (D-CA)
20 F Street, NW – Washington, DC 20001

1:30PM – Strategy and Preparation Meeting
20 F Street, NW – Washington, DC 20001

2:00PM - Group Divides for Direct Lobbying With:
-Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)
-Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
-Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH)
-Office of Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

- Office of Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV)
- Office of Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
- Congressman Jim Banks (R-IN)
- Congressman Brett Guthrie (R-KY)
- Congressman GT Thompson (R-PA)
- Congressman Dave Brat (R-VA)
- Congressman Kenny Marchant (R-TX)
- Congressman Dina Titus (D-NV)

4:15PM – Bipartisan Congressional Dessert Reception
H-122 – Speaker’s Private Dining Room

Honored Guests

- Congressman Mark Takano (D-CA)
- Congressman Brendan Boyle (D-PA)
- Congressman Mike Turner (R-OH)
- Congressman Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX)
- Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL)
- Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (D-WA)
- Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)
- Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)
- Congressman Brad Schneider (D-IL)
- Congressman Jim Costa (D-CA)
- Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)
- Michael Kugelman, Woodrow Wilson Center

Since last year, there has been an epidemic of J1 refusals which got improved immensely with efforts of Advocacy Committee and YPC but it affected residency programs since residents couldn’t join on time, the focus this year is to work on it in a way that it is solved permanent basis. Questionnaire was created to get all the information from applicants about the irregularities which might had caused “red flags” last year and gave chance(s) to visa councilor to refuse visas under section 214. Councilor can refuse visa under this law that the applicant will not return to the country of origin and his decision is final. At present there is legislation in senate to revoke 214. We will explain to the state department that our J1 visa holder physician are all legal and follow the guidelines of B1/B2 during residency quest.

The plan during state department meeting is

1. A group of five members will meet with state department officials to explain what happened last year and that we don’t want it to repeat again and are we want to help State Department anyway possible
2. We are preparing list of matched candidates in 2018 and also segregating lists of candidates according to constituency to give pertinent congressmen relevant cases of residents to get the support.
3. We are asking our representative to ask the state department to explain the reasons for last year epidemic and make sure this doesn’t happen to our visa applicants this year.

4. We plan to circulate a petition to be signed by our members to be sent to secretary of state, if needed
5. We have retained a lobbyist/consultant via MOU with pakpac to facilitate our work at the congressional and state level.

WHAT CAN YOU ALL DO?

- Call your representative to support visa issues.
- Ask them to cosponsor the GRAD ACT.

We are very hopeful to get 100% visa clearance this year

Regards,

Rao Kamran Ali, MD

Chair Advocacy Committee APPNA