

Grassroots Newsletter

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Hill Day '19 Recap

On March 27, 2019, the final day of HM19, 160 of your fellow hospitalists fanned out across Capitol Hill to advocate for our patients and our specialty. In Congressional meetings throughout the day, hospitalists drew attention to two pressing issues (observation care reform and high-skilled visa reforms) while educating Congress about the critical role and impact of hospital medicine on the healthcare system. With nearly a quarter of members of Congress being new to the job, this was an important introduction to hospital medicine and the issues we care about.

The day started with a two-hour morning briefing. The morning briefing included a presentation from Jennifer Bell and Melissa Bartlett of Chamber Hill Strategies, who represent SHM on Capitol Hill. They explained how to effectively communicate SHM's message, as well as what to expect from Congressional meetings. Amit Vashist, MD, FACP, MBA and Ann Sheehy, MD, MS, members of the Public Policy Committee, educated attendees about the two issues they would be taking to the Hill: observation reform and H1B visa reform.

At the conclusion of the morning briefing, participants boarded buses and headed to Capitol Hill for meetings with their individual Congressional and Senate offices.

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The Issues

During meetings throughout the day, Hill Day participants asked their legislators to cosponsor and support the passage of the following bills:

- The Improving access to Medicare Coverage Act of 2019 (H.R. 1682, S. 753)
- Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019 (H.R. 1044, S. 386)

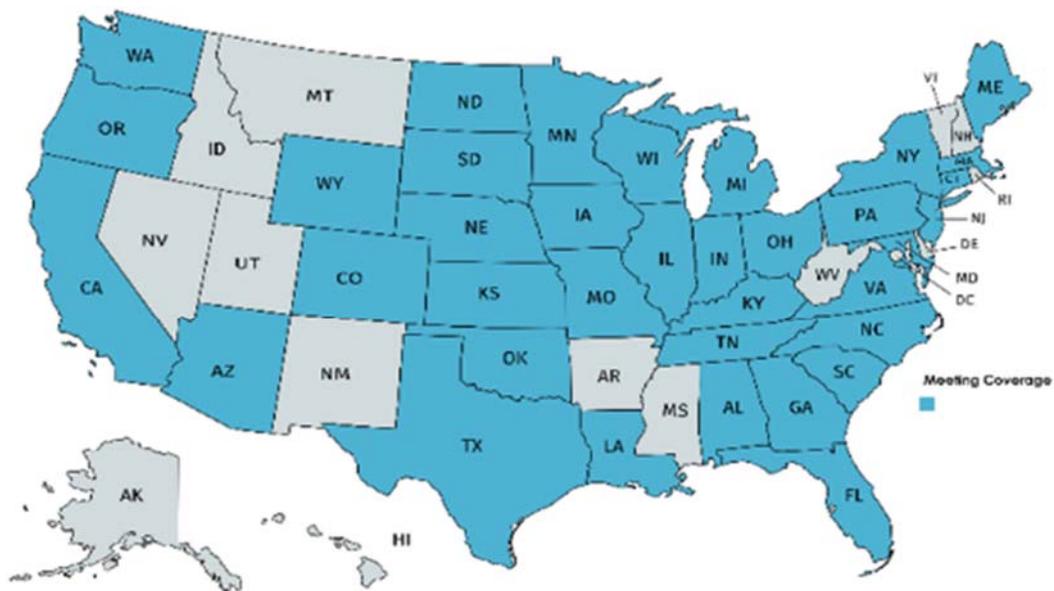
The Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act makes days spent in observation count towards Medicare's three-day stay requirement for skilled nursing facility (SNF) coverage, ensuring Medicare beneficiaries receive the quality care they need without facing exorbitant and unexpected medical bills. It is a first step to solve one of the problems with observation care. The Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act converts the employment-based immigration system into a "first-come, first serve" system that does not discriminate on country of origin. This bill will help alleviate the decades-long green and permanent residency application backlogs.

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By the Numbers

Hill Day '19 was a huge success--and we had a 29% decrease in attrition from Hill Day '15!

- Number of attendees: 160
- Number of total meetings: 189
- Number of states covered: 36



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Missed Hill Day? You can still take action!

If you were unable to attend Hill Day, or if you would like to continue your advocacy work, click [here](#) to send a message to your elected representatives voicing your

support of the High Skilled Immigrants Act, and click [here](#) to send a message about observation reform.

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Feedback

Through conversations with attendees and formal surveys, feedback regarding Hill Day '19 was overwhelmingly positive, with nearly all attendees indicating their interest in attending a future Hill Day event that would include both an educational component and direct advocacy on Capitol Hill. Members had this to say:

- "It was great! SHM staff did a great job organizing, and when meetings were moved at the last minute Josh and the other staff were able to be flexible and roll with it. The Florida contingent had great meetings with our Senatorial staffers, and my one-on-one meeting with my rep went well also."
- "Had a patient yesterday we are trying to get into SNF. He talked to me about his frustration with the regulations. I told him about hill day and talking about that very issue with our state reps and he took my hand and expressed a deep appreciation. I did not expect his response and it was a great follow-up moment to the experience- thank you very much for offering."
- "great experience - highlight of the conference for me actually; a couple small hiccups along the way, but overall seemed quite well organized and was a very positive experience"
- "I've enjoyed Hill Day three times and come away feeling good each time. SHM does a great job making all the arrangements."

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Hill Day Photos



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