

AARC/SDSRC PACT Meeting

April 3rd and 4th 2017, Washington DC

I would like to personally thank each one of you for sending us to represent you in Washington DC. We represented the 485 South Dakota Respiratory Therapists in the annual PACT meeting and day on the hill. There were 120 Respiratory Therapists from across the United States at the meeting and hill day. We would also like to thank everyone who took the time to write to their South Dakota Representatives to support us and our efforts. 79 people from SD took the time to that. That is up significantly from last year! If you have not taken the time to do this yourself, or if you have not done it this today, PLEASE keep writing to our representatives. It is never too late to show them what is important to us. It is very simple to write them. The AARC has done all of the work for you. Simply type on your web browser AARC Virtual Lobby Week, click on E-mail, AARC Capitol Connection, Respiratory Therapist, fill in your personal information and send. It is that easy. Colorado PACT representatives shared with us that they all write daily.

Their Senator became interested in talking to them because of their persistence.

This year our efforts were still centered on tele-health, but we do not currently have a bill that has been introduced yet. We did have Senator Harper from Mississippi as a guest speaker at our pre-hill meeting. He and his administrative aids assured us that the Medicare Tele-Health Parity Act would be reintroduced. This is good news for us, since the Parity Act is the only tele-health bill that actually names a Respiratory Therapist as a provider. Once this bill is reintroduced, you can count on some more e-mails from Carleen, Dawn and myself to ask that you send in more e-mails.

Our first meeting in Washington DC was with Congresswoman Kristi Noem's Legislative Assistant Matthew Hittle. We were accompanied by Shawna Strickland from the AARC. Our meeting with Matt was very productive. He asked some great questions and he states that the Congresswoman and him have witnessed e-care in SD themselves. They are very supportive of e-care within our state. I was able to share a story of one of my patients and the impact that RT has made on him. I did share this story during every visit with every one of our representatives.

Our second visit was with Senator Thune, Justin Bergeson -Senator Thunes Legislative Correspondent, and with Brian Walsh-the AARC President. This meeting also seemed productive. Senator Thune told us that he was very supportive of e-care, but he did stop short of supporting RT in tele-health. Bran Walsh felt that the AARC would need to follow up with Senator Thune and again, this is where your e-mail support helps us in our efforts.

Our third and final meeting was with Senator Rounds and Andrew Rothe-Senator Rounds Senior Legislative Assistant. This meeting went pretty well, but Senator Rounds was making sure we knew just how focused they all are on the Supreme Court nominee right now. He did take a few minutes to talk and listen to us about the importance of tele-health in our state though.