FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
AACAP ADVOCACY DAY 2014

When and where is Advocacy Day?  AACAP’s annual Advocacy Day will be held on May 8-9 in Washington, DC.  The event will start with registration at 2pm on Thursday, May 8th, followed by an Advocacy Day Orientation and reception, and continue on May 9th with an early morning policy tutorial and meetings on Capitol Hill.  All events will take place at The Hyatt Regency Washington (400 New Jersey Avenue, NW Washington DC 20001) or on Capitol Hill.  For a more detailed schedule of events, click here.

How do I make hotel reservations?  To make hotel reservations at The Hyatt Regency Washington, please click here or call (888) 421-1442.  Be sure to mention that you are with AACAP to receive the discounted rate of $189/night on your room.  If you are a family member or youth, please contact Bryan Shuy at bshuy@aacap.org or (202) 966-7300 x107 or Adriano Boccanelli at aboccanelli@aacap.org or (202) 587-9671 to arrange your hotel stay.

Who will arrange my Capitol Hill meetings?  AACAP staff arranges all meetings for each Advocacy Day attendee in conjunction with meeting attendees.

How will I know what to do during my Capitol Hill meetings?  Should I attend the Advocacy Day Orientation?  On Thursday, May 8th, AACAP will hold an introductory advocacy training, starting at 3pm at the hotel.  The training is designed to help new advocates become more comfortable during congressional meetings and will cover the basics of advocacy and the public policy process.  We will also take some time to practice the skills you learn during the training.  If this is your first time attending Advocacy Day or you would like a refresher on advocacy techniques and strategies, we encourage you to attend Thursday’s training.

On Friday morning, May 9th, AACAP will host a breakfast briefing during which we will review the messages you will be addressing during your congressional meetings.  All Advocacy Day attendees should attend this breakfast briefing.  You do not need to prepare in advance for the training or the briefing, but do come ready to learn and participate.

Will I need to prepare materials?  No, you do not need to prepare any materials.  AACAP will give you personalized “briefing sheets” to prepare you for your visits.  The briefing sheet will include: the specific issues to discuss; information about whether your Representative and Senators have been supportive in the past; talking points; and your meeting location, time, and other attendees.  Prior to your congressional meetings, AACAP staff will review all of these issues with you and answer your questions.  AACAP will also provide you with folders to leave

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with your congressional offices. The folders will include information on all of the issues that you will discuss in your meetings.

**What will I talk about?** The issues you will discuss will relate to improving mental health workforce, services, and research for child and adolescent psychiatry. **On Friday morning, AACAP will brief all Advocacy Day attendees on the overall messages of the day.** Remember, you are the expert and have the greatest facts about children with mental illness. The congressional staff and elected officials are interested in hearing from you.

**Who will attend the meetings with me?** AACAP works with you to arrange meetings by congressional district, so your meetings will be with the elected officials who represent you. The meeting may just include yourself or it could include other attendees who are also in your district. These other attendees may include physicians, residents, medical students, and family members. Each family will attend their meetings with at least one AACAP member. Every attendee from your state will meet with your senators’ offices.

**With whom will I meet?** Depending on availability, your meeting may include a House member, Senator, and/or their staff. Each is very important. The staff with whom you may meet with has a primary responsibility to work on health-care issues. Although you may not necessarily meet with your Representative or Senators, staff members have a good deal of influence within the office, and it is important that they become experts on children’s mental health issues.

**What do I bring?** Business cards are encouraged, as they allow congressional staffers an easy exchange of contact information. You are also welcome to share your program brochures or other information.

**What do I wear?** While it is important to look professional, there is a lot of walking and standing between congressional meetings. **Be sure to wear comfortable shoes and dress as professionally as possible.** Try not to carry too much metal and limit the amount of pocket items that you have, as there are mandatory metal detectors as you enter each congressional building.

**How will I get to Capitol Hill?** The hotel is located on Capitol Hill and within walking distance of all congressional office buildings. We will provide you with a map of the area and walking directions.

**How will I know where my meetings are?** The booklet that AACAP provides will have your day’s schedule and a map of where the congressional offices are located. If you get lost or confused, each building will have Capitol Hill police officers who will be happy to help you.

**What if I can’t answer a question?** At Friday morning’s breakfast briefing, AACAP will provide an orientation on the day’s events. If you are in a congressional meeting and are asked a question you cannot or do not feel comfortable answering, simply tell the congressional office that you, or an AACAP staff member, will get back to them on that issue. This is honest and allows for a follow-up contact with the office.