



CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

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Introduction

#MEAction has developed this guide to give you the basic tools to advocate for ME/CFS before Congress. If you haven't done lobbying before, don't stress - remember two things. You will feel good taking action (whatever happens or doesn't happen) and relax - there are people available to help you through this process.

You do not need to read through this to get started on Congressional advocacy. You may have already received emails or social media alerts with self-explanatory guidance about how to take a particular action - such as requesting your representative to sign a letter. This manual is intended to give you the tools to “go deeper” into advocacy work, especially if you are getting ready to set up a meeting with a Congressional office. We also explain about the “call to action” process, discuss the potential to participate in town hall meetings, and aim to give you a greater understanding of how Congressional advocacy works.

If you're just starting out, we want you to be aware of the following important points. First, Congressional offices meet with you because they expect you to ask them to do something specific. They do not have time for informational meetings. Hence, as a general rule, especially with such a sick population, it may be better to save your energy for a coordinated national or state-wide push by #MEAction or other advocates in conjunction with a particular call-to-action. That said, if you have the time/energy to set up a meeting outside such a push, or if the opportunity arises to meet your representative/staff, by all means do so and contact us for updates about the most current “Ask” - i.e. what action we are currently requesting the Congressional member to take.

Second, you may be lucky and have the member agree to your request the first time out. But, truthfully, that's unlikely. Advocates have made the most progress by persistent and consistent cultivation of individual staffers or by building on a personal connection to the member of Congress. We are implementing a long game - the immediate goal is to establish relationships with as many offices as possible so that we develop a reservoir of supporters for future “Asks.”

A few other points:

- Any advocate - independent or with another organization - is welcome to use this toolkit. If you choose to volunteer with/advocate through #MEAction, please sign up [here](#).
- The desired name for our disease is a challenging issue. Because many in Congress are more familiar with CFS or ME/CFS than Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, #MEAction is using Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) in Congressional communications. (ME/CFS is also used by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) with whom Congress interacts.)
- For those who find reading difficult and/or prefer to follow webinars, there are several webinars on YouTube. #MEAction and the Solve ME/CFS Initiative (SMCI) jointly did two webinars in the spring of 2017 to train constituents to participate in a May advocacy push.

[Webinar](#) (April): Introduction to advocacy, how to set up the meeting, how to tell your story.

[Webinar](#) (May): How to handle the actual meeting.

Lastly, many thanks to Emily Taylor, Director of Advocacy and Communications for SMCI, whose knowledge and experience have enhanced the content of this toolkit.

I. Background

#MEAction was founded in 2015, and began doing Congressional advocacy almost immediately. We worked on our own and in collaboration with the Solve ME/CFS Initiative (SMCI) and the Congressional subgroup of the US Action Working Group (USAWG), a coalition of ME/CFS advocates and organizations.

The first big national push was in August, 2015, when #MEAction and SMCI lobbied for Congress to add provisions for ME/CFS research in connection with passage of the 21st Century Cures Act, a bill appropriating billions of dollars in new funding to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). At the time, ME/CFS funding was just \$5 million per year, almost the lowest of all NIH-funded diseases. While we lacked enough support to amend the bill, #MEAction's first quick-strike campaign brought together a network of patient advocates from around the country who were determined to keep fighting for health equality.

In March of 2016, #MEAction, USAWG, and SMCI conducted a series of meetings on Capitol Hill that resulted in the restoration of ME/CFS funding for the Centers for Disease Control. Then, in May of 2016, #MEAction organized its first in-person lobbying effort in conjunction with the first Millions Missing protest in Washington, DC. Protesters participated in both in-person and phone meetings on the Hill. The meetings resulted in several promises of support from prominent members of Congress to write the NIH in support of ME research, among other actions. In the wake of the meetings' success, #MEAction formed an official Congress subcommittee and began holding regular meetings. About this time, SMCI expanded its research-oriented mission to add a focus on Congress, hiring the first paid professional in the ME/CFS community to do Congressional advocacy.

In August, 2016, #MEAction, SMCI, USAWG, and other advocates did our first big "call to action" and asked constituents to request that their representatives sign a House of Representatives' [letter](#) to the NIH. The letter asked the NIH to strengthen its efforts in ME/CFS research, consider input from the NIH's Request for Information from the community, and provide an update to Congress on NIH's ME/CFS activities. Despite

having only ten days to get signatures, the community was able to get 55 representatives from 23 states to sign the letter. (In 2014, only 11 representatives had signed onto a letter to the NIH concerning ME/CFS.) The community did a second call-to-action in spring, 2017 with another tight deadline asking representatives to sign a letter requesting language supporting ME/CFS in the NIH appropriations bill. Thirty-one representatives signed the [letter](#).

The year 2017 became a breakout year for meetings with Congressional offices. #MEAction, the Massachusetts CFIDS Association, and independent advocates joined SMCI-led meetings with 30 Congressional offices in March. In May, #MEAction and SMCI partnered to sponsor the first ME/CFS Advocacy Week. Fifty-two advocates held 71 meetings with Congressional offices, including 8 meetings with the members themselves. [Senator Ed Markey](#) sponsored a Capitol Hill briefing, delivering moving and inspired introductory remarks. (Unfortunately, turnout for the briefing was less than we'd hoped for, pointing out once more the need to cultivate more and deeper relationships with Congressional offices.) Additionally, building on the release of [Unrest](#) (Jennifer Brea's documentary about ME) #MEAction, SMCI, and the Time for Unrest campaign held a virtual reality exhibit of Unrest sponsored by Sen. Cory Booker.

In the spring of 2018, #MEAction and SMCI partnered for another call-to-action. Like the 2017 letter, the 2018 letter requested that language supporting ME/CFS be included in the NIH appropriations bill. Forty four representatives from twenty states and the District of Columbia signed on to the 2018 [letter](#). Then, in May, SMCI sponsored a second Advocacy Week in Washington, D.C. during which 102 advocates met with 122 offices!

A major leap forward occurred during Advocacy Week. After a two year push by #MEAction, SMCI and the Massachusetts CFIDS/ME & FM Association, Senators Edward Markey (D-MA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Angus King (Independent - ME), and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) introduced S.Resolution 508, the first ME/CFS resolution since 1994! Additionally, an intense effort by all the advocates resulted in the restoration of the \$5.4 million Chronic Fatigue Syndrome program at the CDC the last several years. Each year the budget for the program had been zeroed out of the House budget and each year we succeeded in restoring it.

The end of 2018 saw two further accomplishments! On November 2nd, #MEAction, the Solve ME/CFS Initiative, and eight other ME/CFS organizations sent a [letter](#) to our champions in the House of Representatives – Representatives Eshoo (CA18), Lofgren (CA19), McGovern (MA02), and Raskin (MD08) – requesting that they create legislation for ME/CFS. To our knowledge, this is the first time a coalition of this size and breadth came together to explain the needs of our community to Congress. We explained why legislation is urgently needed to fill the void left by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) dissolution of the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Advisory Committee (CFSAC) and to address other key needs of the ME/CFS community. Then, thanks to another strong turnout from the ME/CFS community, 14 Senators and 28 Congressional Representatives joined together to sign [this bipartisan](#).

[bicameral letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in support of people with ME/CFS. Led by Senator Ed Markey (MA) and Congresswoman Anna Eshoo (CA-18), the letter was drafted as a response to the sudden termination of the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Advisory Committee (CFSAC) and requires HHS to answer specific questions about its ME/CFS activities.

Looking forward, #MEAction is developing our strategy based on this core mission:

- Persuade Congress to advocate for ME/CFS needs to HHS and other federal agencies
- Persuade Congress to pass legislation and appropriate more funding for ME/CFS
- Engage Congressional members to support ME/CFS publicly to help build awareness

II. Finding your Member (Representatives and Senators)

We are using the term “Member” to refer to both Representatives and Senators.

- A. To find your House representative, go here and enter your zip code:

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

To find your Senators, go here and choose your state:

<http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/>

- B. These sites will give you the office phone numbers and other contact information. FYI, you must be a constituent to email a member through their website - email addresses for Members and staff are not on Congressional websites. Once you do establish a contact and hear back from a staff member, you will get a direct email address to contact that person.
- C. The most important Members to reach will always be those (1) sitting on the Health Committees and Appropriations Committees and (2) any member with whom you have a personal connection. And a member in a “swing” district who needs every vote may be more receptive than someone who is in a safe seat.

III. Whom to Contact in the Office for a Meeting - and How

- A. We recommend that you check first to see if there is a record of anyone else meeting with your Member/office so that you know whether you’re starting from scratch or building on a previous effort. If you email congress@meaction.net, we generally should be able to tell you whether anyone else has met with your Member’s office. And if that person is willing to disclose who she is, we can

connect you.

- B. A constituent rarely gets to meet with the actual Member - hence, the primary emphasis here is making contact with the staff and building an ongoing relationship with them. When a particular push is going on (as there was in May 2017), we and other advocates may encourage you to focus on Member meetings and give you the tools to do that via email and social media announcements. Also, attending town hall meetings in the district is another way to meet the Member in person. [See Section VII.](#)
- C. Figuring out the best staff to contact: Each Member has district and Washington, DC offices. Typically, actions/decisions pertaining to legislation/ appropriations are handled by the Washington staff. Thus, unless you have a personal contact with a staff person in the district office or there is a national advocacy initiative in the districts, it is generally better to contact the legislative assistant (LA) responsible for health and/or appropriations matters in Washington. That said, it is possible the district office works on policy issues. If you have a reason to know that, or otherwise prefer to start locally, by all means set up a meeting with district staff. And take advantage of district town hall meetings. [See Section VII.](#)

Ideally, you'd call the Washington office and see if you can get the name and email of the Legislative Assistant so that you can contact her directly. You can also email us - we try to stay on top of the offices' staffs. If that fails, then send your meeting request through the Member's website as discussed in [Section II.](#)

- D. Here are some sample emails that you can use to [request](#) an appointment with your member, and [follow-up](#) periodically about your request with your member. If you have a personal connection, be sure to add that to your request. Include your address and full zip code, i.e., 11111-2222. If you can, please reference the estimated number of people with ME/CFS in your district/state in the request. To see how, go to Research under [Section IV. A.](#)
- E. Try to set up the meeting as far in advance as you can - especially if you are seeking a meeting with the Member. If you don't hear back - which is often the case - try and try again. You may need to both phone and email. And if the meeting you're seeking is part of a national advocacy initiative, mention that too.
- F. If the meeting is by phone, let the office know you will need a conference line. They generally have the ability to conference people in. Or #MEAction can set up a conference line for you. Email congress@meaction.net.
- G. Request for Reasonable Accommodation
 - i) Normally, staff only want to hear from a constituent. However, you may feel too ill to speak/meet or be nervous about speaking. You can request a meeting but

explain that you are asking a non-constituent (NC) to speak for you/with you as a “reasonable accommodation” for your illness.

ii) There are various options. You can request the NC to meet without you; you and the NC can both meet and share responsibility for talking; or you and the NC can both be there but the NC does all the talking. But a caution - if you’re meeting with the actual member, he/she is very unlikely to agree to do it without a constituent present in person or by phone.

iii) Email congress@meaction.net if you want the help of a NC. We have people who are available to help out.

IV. Meeting Preparation

You should expect/plan for a meeting no longer than 15 minutes. Hence, it is critical to carefully prepare in advance and rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. We also recommend doing prior research to make your meeting more effective.

When meeting with you, offices will want to know the following:

1. What actions do constituents want me to take?
2. Why do constituents want me to do that?
3. What are the current and/or potential local impacts?
4. What are constituents’ personal stories or connections to the policy?
5. How many constituents are affected by a particular policy decision;
6. What is the estimated economic impact on a community.

We’ve incorporated those considerations into the steps outlined next.

A. Research

- 1) Look up the number of people suffering with ME/CFS in your district/state using this [prevalence spreadsheet](#). The first tab on the bottom row will take you to the numbers for your state. The remaining tabs on the bottom will take you to the numbers for each district in the states listed in that tab and includes the name of your representative and the number of people affected with ME/CFS in his/her district.

(If you need help with this, email congress@meaction.net). This will go into your talking points. Try to include the economic impact in your state as well - this information is also included on the spreadsheet.

The prevalence spreadsheet is a reference tool for advocates to quickly identify the relevant statistics for your district or state. It is **not** meant to be attached and

forwarded to elected officials. Instead you should copy and paste the relevant statistics from the spreadsheet into your correspondence with elected officials

- 2) We recommend researching the caucuses and groups that your member sits on that may be relevant to ME. If, for example, your representative is in the House caucus on NIH, that would tell you that the Member has already taken an interest in, or advocated for, health research. That may make her more receptive to ME issues. (#MEAction tries to track this information so if you need help finding it, email congress@meaction.net.)
- 3) See if you can find out any background information about the staffer you're meeting with that might be pertinent to ME, or help you make a personal connection with that staffer. Perhaps the staffer has been active on women's issues - if so, you'd emphasize that in your meeting. Or you see that you both are active in the same organization or were in school at the same time, giving you a potential bond.
- 4) Identify two to three materials that you will leave behind with the staff. #MEAction and other organizations like SMC1 have fact sheets with the basic facts about ME as well as compilations of informative news articles. [See Section X](#).
- 5) Contact #MEAction to find out the current "Asks." The "Ask" is the action(s) we are requesting the member to take. You are of course free to make up your own "Ask." However, the more voices with a consistent message, the stronger we will be. Additionally, if there is a concrete "Ask," like wanting a member to sign a letter to NIH, we want to get as many Members to sign the same letter as possible. (If you are affiliating yourself with #MEAction, you should follow the #MEAction "Ask.")

If the member will not agree to our current "ask," we have other actions we can ask them to take. If it's your first meeting with the office, you are unlikely to get an immediate answer/decision in which case you will not get to the "back-up" asks until you hear their post-meeting response to your request. See Section V.C.

B. Meeting Structure:

A good rule of thumb is:

- 5 minutes for introduction/basic facts
 - 3-5 minutes for your personal story
 - 5 minutes for the "Ask" and closing.
- 1) First five minutes: Introduction and exchange of business cards/contact information, i.e., your name, address, and whether you're a patient, parent/caregiver, etc.. Also ask how much time the staffer has. If it's the typical

15 minutes, then you really need to stay on top of the time. If it's thirty minutes, then you know you have more time to provide factual background and/or take questions.

- 2) Next - are you familiar with ME/CFS; do you know anyone with ME/CFS? Depending on the response, hit the major facts on the fact sheet. And definitely tell them the prevalence/economic impact in the district/state. A good line is to say something like "You undoubtedly know someone with ME/CFS but either they have yet to be diagnosed or they haven't told you."
- 3) Then tell your story. Up to 5 minutes if only one constituent. Half that if two constituents are in the meeting. Here, the purpose is to tell YOUR story, not to discuss ME/CFS generally. Succinctly describe your history and the impact ME/CFS has had on you and, as appropriate, loved ones. Stay factual. Be honest and personal.

Given the time constraints, it's critical to stay focused (as tempting as it is to pour your heart out about all the ME challenges) and, as best as possible, relate your story to the "Ask." For example, if the ask pertains to NIH funding, you can point out that you've been ill for XX years during which there was virtually no progress in understanding the disease. Or if the "Ask" pertained to medical education, you might focus on your doctor's inability to advise you or that you were given advice that harmed you (e.g. to exercise).

- 4) Then explain the "Ask," see if they have any questions, discuss next steps, and mention the "leave behind" materials again.

Here is an [example](#) of a meeting agenda that an advocate used in 2017 to give you a sense of how the meeting goes. If you contact congress@meaction.net, we can provide you with the most current agendas we're using (based on the current "ask.")

Rehearse rehearse rehearse. Use a timer. Ideally let someone else give you feedback on how you're doing. With rare exception you'll find the staffer quite courteous - it's their job - but you may still find the meeting stressful, especially given the time constraints. Practice and feedback will give you a lot more confidence. And, if you can, do a dry run of the call with all the participants.

C. The Day Before:

1. Email the staff to confirm the meeting and, if it's over the phone, email them the fact sheet and two "leave behinds" - literature about ME/CFS. [See the Resources in section X](#). For in-person meetings, take several extra copies of handouts. And if you have personal business cards, bring them along. Staff love to collect them.

2. If you have requested an accommodation, remind them of that as well.

3. Arrange with the other participants to determine who will take notes on the call. If it's just one person, try your best to keep detailed notes of what the staffer asks/says.

V. The Meeting

A. Do's and Dont's

- Be positive. You have every reason to vent/complain but that turns people off.
- Stayed focused on your message. (And if the staff members veers off course, try to bring her back to ME, e.g. I know your time is precious; I want to make sure we cover what we'd like you to know/do before time runs out.)
- Don't make assumptions about the staff's political leanings. Democratic staffers can work for Republicans and vice versa.
- Don't be surprised to be meeting with someone young. Most staffers are in their 20's or early 30's.
- Pay attention to cues - for example, play it by ear to decide whether this is a good instance to mention that ME is another example of an illness primarily affecting women that receives less attention.
- Grin and bear it. If the staffer says something clueless or offensive, gently correct them, i.e, let me explain why ME is not a matter of simply feeling sleepy at times, or forcing yourself to push through.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. Conversely, don't hesitate to say that you don't know the answer to their questions. Just say you'll get back to them with an answer and ask us for any needed assistance.
- Don't forget to refer to the "leave behind" materials.
- Thank them liberally.

B. Dealing with Pushback and Alternative Asks

- 1) You may be given a variety of reasons/excuses for why the member can't do "X." Review [these](#) anticipated reasons in advance so that you can "pushback" as needed. For example, if staffer X says the Senator doesn't take on particular

diseases, you might be able to say “But I saw that Senator Y sits on the autism caucus so it appears he does support specific diseases.” You can also respond to some of the comments in your thank you note; it can be challenging to respond on the spot..

2) As mentioned previously, if the staffer turns down your “Ask,” you can explore whether they’d be willing to undertake any of the alternative Asks. You are unlikely to get a flat “no” in an initial meeting but here are some general Asks that can be used at any time.

- Request that they watch *Unrest* and/or listen to Jen Brea’s [TED talk](#). The TED talk is around 20 minutes and has been viewed 2,000,000 times!
- Tell them that *Unrest* is a beautiful and moving 90 min, award-winning love story about ME/CFS and chronic illness. Tell them they can email hannah@meaction.net to request a free film screener or view it on Netflix, iTunes, Amazon, Google Play, or Vimeo.
- Write a newspaper Op Ed that is supportive of ME/CFS patients and increased research funding
- Request a joint briefing/meeting from the NIH with ME/CFS advocates
- Write a letter to the NIH asking for more funding for ME/CFS and more announcements of research grant opportunities (aka “RFAs/requests for applications”)
- Write to the Centers for Disease Control about the need for improved and expanded medical professional education about ME/CFS and to increase the pool of ME/CFS specialists
- Raise ME/CFS concerns in the next relevant Congressional hearing.
- Issue a supportive statement or press release, or post on social media, in support of ME/CFS patients and research

D. Closing the Meeting

1. At the end, try to get a timeframe for their action. Will they do this? What do they need in order to do this? Perhaps they will have recommendations for whom you should talk to next. Are they going to get back to you?

For example, when they say “I’ll talk to the Senator,” you may say something like: “Thanks so much, I really appreciate it. Do you have any idea of the timeframe for that?” They may give you one or say, “No, I don’t.” You can then say, “I understand. When would you suggest that I check back in with you?” That then gives you the leave to follow-up with them.

If they say they need to consult with, or do a hand-off to someone else, try to get the name, position, and contact information for that person. And their business card if possible.

2. And, again, thanks.

VI. Post-meeting

A. Please fill out this [survey](#) to let us know who you are, who you met with, and what came out of the meeting. And let us know if you need help handling the followup or responding to questions.

B. Send a thank you note/call:

1. After a day or two, send a thank-you email or make a thank-you call. Repeat the Asks and repeat some of what they said to show you listened. (Only one person should do the follow-up.) Here is a [sample](#) follow-up note.

If you said you’d provide them with further information, send that along with the thank-you or when you receive the information. And if you’ve received pushback during the meeting that you were unable to deal with then, you might use this opportunity to politely rebut what you heard.

2. If they’ve said they’d do something and you haven’t heard from them in two weeks or in the timeframe they gave you, contact them.

3. You want to walk that fine line between being a pest and making sure your “Asks” are not forgotten. Short emails that reiterate their promises are best, something like,

“Thanks again for meeting with me on xx/xx/xx about ME/CFS. I very much appreciate your promise to [whatever they promised to do]. You had suggested that I check back this week about the results of our meeting with...” [or whatever is appropriate given what they'd agreed to do], etc.

4. You can also ask them in the email what they’d recommend for follow-up. As long as you're polite and not overbearing, something like this should be okay:

"You had said that you'd be able to meet with the Senator last month, but I understand that you're extremely busy. Please let me know if you have an idea when this might happen and when I should check back in."

C. Periodic follow-up:

Even if you've gotten a "no" and are not working with a staffer, stay in touch! It's important to make sure the office remembers you and knows that you are not going away. Unless you are already exchanging several emails between your contact, send periodic or, if you can, monthly emails to the office to keep the momentum going! A good excuse to email them is to include a recent article/news clip/scientific finding that you can tell them about. See [Section X](#) for examples of news articles on ME/CFS.

Here is a [sample](#) monthly follow-up note.

VII. Town Hall Meetings

- A. Members traditionally have periodic town hall (or other) meetings in their district, although as you've probably read, some Members have stopped meeting their constituents. If there are meetings, this is a good chance to talk to the actual Member instead of/in addition to their staff. And if you have not succeeded in getting a meeting with the staff, this is a good opportunity to confront the Member. At least two advocates have garnered support from their member this way. Here is one [example](#) of an advocate who spoke about ME at a town hall meeting and succeeded in getting support from her Senator.
- B. If you sign up for the Member's newsletter or go to their website, you should be able to find out about district meetings. If you can afford to make a small donation - even \$10 - you may receive invitations to events that you might otherwise not be aware of.
- C. You will likely only have a few minutes to make your point. So, again, practice:
 - (1) A brief explanation, e.g, you/your family member has ME/CFS, a devastating illness.
 - (2) How many people in their district/state have ME/CFS (see [Prevalence spreadsheet](#) to find the number for your district/state and the economic cost)
 - (3) Prepare your "Ask." As in the case of other meetings, you can have someone speak for you as proxy.

- D. The more the merrier to make an impact. That gives the opportunity to question the member more, and someone may be able to record what's happening for potential future use.
- E. Bring the same kind of hand-out materials you would bring to the meetings previously described. [See Section X](#) for "leave-behinds."
- F. Try to get a name/contact info to follow-up after the meeting.
- G. Follow-up:
 - Send a thank-you note or call to thank them for listening to you during the meeting. In the thank-you note:
 - i) Repeat what you said, briefly, at the town hall meeting, including the number of people affected with ME/CFS in their district/state.
 - ii) Repeat your "Ask."
 - iii) Inquire about a follow-up meeting with the congressional representative if you desire.

Bird-dogging technique:

"Bird-dogging" is a more targeted strategy used by some activists to seek out elected officials in a public forum (a town hall meeting, a "meet-and-greet" etc.) to pin them down with specific questions and/or find out their position before a public audience.

Learn more about the strategy [here](#).

VIII. Call-to-Action: One-time Call & Email Blasts

- A. Sometimes the Congressional team will request that the community "blast" Congress simultaneously with the same request or message. When this happens, we will notify the community with the message and specific instructions.
- B. If you're going through the #MEAction website, the easiest way to contact the office is to send a message through the 1-click Countable tool. *However*, if you can do your own email and phone outreach, this personal approach is more effective – especially if you already have contacted a staff person in the Congressional office and have their email address.

- C. To make a phone call, you'd ideally reach or ask to leave a voicemail for the legislative assistant. While leaving a message with whoever answers the phone is not preferred, it might be your only option provided. If you leave a voicemail, please follow up with an email as well.
- D. The next best is to email the member with your request. Most Congressional Members have forms to submit comments on their websites. [See Section II](#) on how to find the names of your representatives and their respective websites. Of course, if you already have a contact, use it directly!
- E. Please email congress@meaction.net to let us know what type of response you have gotten.

IX. Social Media Tools

While the traditional methods of communication outlined in [Section VIII](#) will always remain necessary, social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are a great way to reach members of Congress. Please see this [link](#) for how to use social media for ME Congressional advocacy.

X. Resources

We've mentioned throughout that you should be providing briefing materials in connection with your meetings as well as forwarding media discussions in subsequent communications.

1. **Fact Sheet.** For your first meeting you should always send a basic fact sheet. Here's the link to the current [#MEAction Fact Sheet](#).
2. **Articles about ME.** Select a few articles about ME to provide to the staffer / Member. In our media summary, we've summarized some of the most useful/compelling/recent media discussions of ME, and categorized them as of general interest, science/medically oriented, or focused on women.

XI. Provide us with feedback on the toolkit

Please email congress@meaction.net to let us know how we can make the toolkit better. We intend for it to constantly evolve as we learn more and more.

