



BREATHE
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Breathe California Travels to Capitol Hill to Urge Congress to Help Save Our Breath

SAN JOSE, CA -- On May 13th, Breathe California CEO Margo Sidener and Board Member Roslyn Bienenstock joined representatives from 20 other respiratory health organizations in Washington D.C. for the first-ever United for Lung Health Advocacy Day. There, the coalition of advocates descended on Capitol Hill, where they met with key legislators from their home states and districts to make their case for further protecting lung health.

“It is critical for our representatives to understand how various pieces of legislation will affect lung disease patients back home and the overall health of our communities,” said Sidener. “The United for Lung Health Advocacy Day offers us the unique opportunity to speak directly with our elected officials and influence public policy.”

During their visit to Capitol Hill, the Breathe California delegation met with representatives for Sens. Boxer and Feinstein, as well as Reps. Eshoo, Honda, Lofgren and Stark. There, they promoted a number of key lung health proposals currently before Congress, including legislation to:

1. Give the FDA the authority to regulate tobacco products;
2. Provide Medicare coverage for pulmonary and cardiac rehabilitation services;
3. Clean up existing diesel-powered fleets; and
4. Increase funding for TB control, lung cancer research and federal agencies like the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In addition to the positive response offered on many of the group’s policy priorities, Sidener has also been pleased that many of the representatives’ staff members have since reached out to Breathe California as related legislation has progressed and other key health issues have arisen.

“Our trip to the hill really helped us further engage our local representatives as partners in key efforts to improve the health of our communities,” added Sidener. “And as pieces of our policy agenda continue to make their way through Congress, I think we’ll see a number of victories for lung health throughout California and the nation.”

The United for Lung Health Advocacy Day was organized by the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago and also included partners such as the Alpha-1 Foundation, the American Respiratory Alliance of Western PA, the COPD Foundation, Arkansas Respiratory Health Association, Chicago Thoracic Society and the National Lung Cancer Partnership.