

GLOBAL LONELINESS AWARENESS WEEK

6 Steps to Meeting with Your Lawmakers

Please use the best practices below to guide your federal advocacy efforts.

1 Identify Your Representatives


If you are not available or planning to join the hill meetings CESIL scheduled, we encourage you to schedule your own meetings either in-person or virtually. The first step is to identify your representatives. You can visit www.congress.gov/members and use your zip code to find your members of Congress. Additionally, visit your representatives' individual websites for information on committee assignments, key issue areas, and sponsored and co-sponsored legislation. While gathering this information, you may identify additional stakeholders that align with your goals and objectives.

2 Schedule Your Meetings

We recommend making meeting requests to staffers as concise as possible, under 150 words is preferred. Include a short paragraph about your organization, if applicable, and a brief bio on each attendee, including their full address so staffers know they're in the lawmaker's district.

3 Know Your Audience

Prior to your meeting, it is a good idea to prepare for your audience. Oftentimes, depending on your lawmaker's schedule, you will meet with the staffer. These staffers, typically younger adults in their 20s and 30s, are the true policy experts and end up writing the legislation behind the scenes. Speak to them just as much as you are to the lawmaker. Perhaps engage in small talk about where they are from in the respective area/state (e.g., colleges or universities,



sports teams, and restaurants) to begin an easy flowing conversation. In any follow-up communications, thank the staffer(s) and foster a professional relationship.

4 Determine Your Talking Points

To communicate effectively, your remarks should be concise, clear, and highlight the key information you want to convey as you educate lawmakers and/or staffers on social isolation and loneliness. If you only have 10 minutes, what information do they need to know?

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the examples listed on the following page.

Note: Lawmakers want to hear from their constituents so feel free to personalize your talking points to your experiences and share why this issue is important to you and/or your organization.

5 Share Your Ask


Make sure the ask is clear when targeting each elected official. In other words, what action would you like the elected official to take (i.e., co-sponsoring legislation, supporting legislation, funding an agency or department, etc.)?

Ask: We urge lawmakers to address social isolation, loneliness, and social connection in legislative packages within the 118th Congress to ensure all Americans have the opportunities and supports necessary to be socially engaged in society.

6 Follow Up

Send Thank You emails to staffers and lawmakers who participated in the meeting and include the “leave-behinds,” and contact information for the member or staffer to reach out to with any follow-up questions. Follow up individually with staffers/lawmakers on action items, if necessary.

Sample Talking Points

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- ✓ **CESIL Overview:** The Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness is the premier national alliance that brings together some of the most influential consumer groups, patient advocates, health plans, community-based organizations, behavioral health groups, and private sector innovators committed to advocating for policy change to combat the adverse effects of social isolation and loneliness. Our 60+ fellow members are on board and urge for federal action [share member sign on letter].
 - ✓ **GLAW Overview:** June 12-18th is Global Loneliness Awareness Week (GLAW), an annual campaign dedicated to raising awareness of loneliness, and encouraging people to start the conversation around belonging, connection, and resiliency. This Global Loneliness Awareness Week, the Coalition is focusing on key populations that are at high risk of loneliness, including parents and caregivers, youth and young adults, and Veterans.
 - ✓ **Brief Issue Description/Key Stats:**
 - About 65% of parents and guardians classify as lonely; more than 77% of single parents classify as lonely.
 - Loneliness affects people across all generations. 41% of older adults aged 65 and older and 79% of adults aged 18-24 feel lonely.
 - Four out of five wounded women Veterans reported feelings of loneliness, isolation, and disconnect from their peers.
 - ✓ **Impact:** Social isolation and loneliness are detrimental to one's health and well-being. This can include one's physical health (premature mortality, cardiovascular disease), mental and behavioral health (depression, suicidality, addiction), cognitive health, and economic health (\$6.7B in Medicare spending, lower productivity/quality of work, increased absenteeism).
 - ✓ **Key Priorities to Advocate for Connection:**
 1. Establish a Social Isolation and Loneliness Task Force to develop a national strategy to address social isolation and loneliness and prioritize the benefits of social connection among all populations.
 - a. *Instead of working in silos, this could allow for a coordinated, diverse set of federal stakeholders to come together and combat social isolation and loneliness*



2. Support federal legislation that would establish grants and opportunities for braided funding for state and local governments to implement social interventions and foster social connection in health, education, employment, housing, transportation, environment, and arts sectors.
 - a. Too often, only the negative health effects of social isolation and loneliness are highlighted. Instead, states should have the flexibility to deploy certain evidence-informed multi-sector interventions.
3. Expand the scope of screenings for health-related social needs or social drivers to include social isolation, loneliness, and social connection.
 - a. It is difficult to help those experiencing social isolation and loneliness if it is not properly identified. We encourage Medicare and state Medicaid and CHIP programs specifically to identify social isolation, loneliness, and social connection in current screening assessments.
4. Remove federal and state barriers that impede access to mental and behavioral health care services provided through telehealth and remote communication technology (RCT) for those socially isolated.
 - a. Use of telehealth holds great potential for addressing social isolation and loneliness, especially when thinking about populations in rural areas where access to physicians and other healthcare providers is difficult.
5. Bolster nationwide screening and surveillance efforts for social connection by prioritizing specific items related to social isolation, loneliness, and connection in existing surveillance data such as the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey and the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS).
 - a. There is currently a large amount of research directed at the physical and mental health effects of social isolation and loneliness, but little about interventions that strengthen social connection. It is imperative that surveillance data is bolstered to ensure it is expansive and inclusive of different subpopulations.

Please reach out to Abby Gadbois (agadbois@healthsperien.com) or Rachel Jordan (rjordan@healthsperien.com) with any questions or if you need additional information.