



State Advocacy

Table leader: Angela Y.

Angela Young advocates for her son, Cameron who was diagnosed in 2009 at the age of 8 with psoriatic arthritis. Now 13, Cameron works with her to advocate on his own behalf. In January of 2014, Angela learned about a "Child Advocacy Day" being held at the KY State Capital in Frankfort. As a member of the Great Lakes Region Public Policy and Advocacy Committee and an Arthritis

Foundation Ambassador, she was interested to see what an "Advocacy Day" would look like on the state level. She contacted both her state Senator and Representative and made appointments. After these meetings, her Representative had HB 578 drafted and filed in the KY House of Representatives. The key focus of the bill was that it capped how much an insurance company could charge as a copay/coinsurance for a single specialty tier drug. At a later date, Cameron received citations on both the House and Senate floors, promoting awareness for JA.



Tips to take home

- State legislators are eager to talk to their constituents and WANT to meet our kids!
- Appointments are not difficult to obtain. Some may be willing to sit down at a restaurant over a cup of coffee with you.
- If missing school, ask the school about an "Educational Enhancement Opportunity Field Trip" excuse. Some schools will count this as a field trip and the student will not be counted absent.
- Connect with your member on social media and publically thank them for taking time to talk to you.
- Don't hesitate to ask if they have any ways to honor your child on the floor such as a citation, resolution, introduction, etc.
- Always keep your Arthritis Foundation staff informed on what happens at your meeting if they
 are not able to attend.
- Ask your Arthritis Foundation staff for state specific statistics. The legislators WANT numbers! Tell them how many children in the state have arthritis, the percentage of the state's population with arthritis, the cost of arthritis for their state, etc.
- Take a picture of your child with the legislator and submit it to your local newspaper with info about JA. (Your local AF staff will also be glad to receive pictures!)

Want to get involved?

- Contact your local Arthritis Foundation office to let them know you want to schedule a meeting. They may be able to go with you as support. They would also be able to tell you if there are any bills already filed in your state or if new legislation is being planned.
- Find out who your state legislators are by searching google (ex: KY State Legislature)
- Contact your Representative and Senator and schedule a face to face meeting.
- At the meeting, be prepared to not only tell your story, but to educate your member about JA.

Challenge:

Find your local Senator and Representative and send them an email explaining JA and the struggle your family faces on a daily basis. Invite them or their staff to attend the next AF program or event in their district so they can learn about the many resources available for their constituents.