

Grassroots Impact: MRA Volunteers Help in Big Legislative Battles

By Howard Fienberg

MRA has been lobbying to exclude marketing research incentives from the federal Physician Payment Sunshine Act since 2007. We've had dozens of meetings with Congressmen, Senators and their staff.

But the Government Affairs staff did not attend some of the most important meetings – those held across the U.S. this summer by our volunteers, with their legislators and legislators' staff, in their hometowns. Thanks to our volunteers, we are close to being excluded from the Act, which is part of the healthcare reform bills in the House and Senate.

Hearing from constituents means a lot to most legislators – and meeting with them makes an impression.

You too can make an impact, by volunteering with the Capital Network. Capital Network members are our power on the ground, across the nation. They act as advocates for the research profession, building relationships with their state and federal representatives and helping to protect research interests in coordination with Government Affairs staff.

Even if you don't consider yourself to be "political," you can play a critical role in the success of the research profession across the country. Relationships with state and federal policymakers are critical building blocks in our government affairs efforts. You can educate them about the research profession, the challenges you face and the issues critical to your organization's success -- and lay the groundwork for important victories to come!

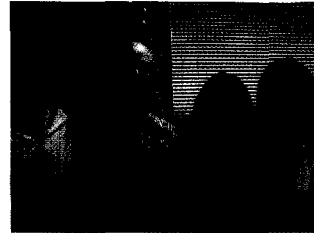
Get involved at <http://www.mra-net.org/ga/scn.cfm>.

Note: Not pictured:

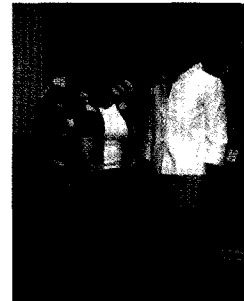
- **Aaron Nichols** (Nichols Research) met with **Marci Harris**, healthcare aide for **Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA)**, Healthcare Subcommittee Chairman on the Ways & Means Committee.
- **Sharon Chamberlain** and **Tyler Walker** (Chamberlain Research) met with a staffer for **Sen. Herb Kohl**, a co-author of the Sunshine Act.



Howard Fienberg is the director of government affairs for the Marketing Research Association.



Scott Baker, PRC (Adept), Allen Hellman, PRC and Debby Schlesinger-Hellman, PRC (Schlesinger Associates) with **Lisa Pinto**, a staffer for House Energy & Commerce Committee Chairman **Henry Waxman (D-CA)**.



Lisabeth Clawson-Couturier (Las Vegas Field & Focus) with **Kate Leone**, the chief healthcare aide for Senate Majority Leader **Harry Reid (D-NV)**.



Marisa Pope, PRC (Jackson Associates) and **Stephenie Gordon, PRC (Schlesinger Associates)** with **Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)**, a member of the House Ways & Means Committee.