



Above (clockwise from left): Congressman G.K. Butterfield (D-NC) receives the leadership award from Paul Blanchfield, Chair of the PPTA North America Board of Directors and Head of US Immunology Franchise, Shire; Fly-In attendees meet with Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS); Rep. Earl "Buddy" Carter (R-GA) reading PPTA's advocacy materials, "Uniquely Saving Lives" which highlights the unique nature of plasma protein therapies.

● Walking the Halls of Congress

BY CHASE THOMAS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, PPTA

On Thursday, May 17, PPTA held its annual Capitol Hill Fly-In, where the Association brings together producers of plasma protein therapies, patients with rare diseases, and patient group representatives to "walk the halls" of Congress. The Fly-In provides the plasma protein therapy community an opportunity to inform Congress about the unique nature of these therapies and the chronic diseases they treat and to discuss policies that preserve access to safe and effective treatments. With the Trump administration releasing its "Blueprint to Lower Drug Prices," on May 11, the 2018 congressional Fly-In was a timely opportunity to remind staff in Congressional offices of the value of plasma protein therapies. Further, the 2018 Fly-In came on the heels of the North America launch of the "How Is Your Day?" campaign and the February

2018 publishing of the economic analysis by Bates White Economic Consulting, "*Key economic and value considerations in the U.S. market for plasma protein therapies.*"

Congressman G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), who serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee and is co-chair of the Congressional Rare Disease Caucus, provided opening remarks and received a leadership award from the PPTA North America Board Chair Paul Blanchfield.

After Rep. Butterfield's remarks and a quick briefing on Federal Government Relations issues by Tom Lilburn, Senior Director of Government Relations, the 32 participants departed the Reserve Officers Association and met with more than 50 congressional offices.



Above (left to right): Fly-In attendees visit the office of Rep. Joe Kennedy III (D-MA); Fly-In attendees pictured with Rep. Leonard Lance (R-NJ) (center).

During our congressional meetings, PPTA stressed the importance of preserving policies that uphold necessary patient protections established in the Affordable Care Act. Specifically, we continue to advocate for protecting the “four pillars,” which are essential for preserving patient access to plasma protein therapies:

1. No exclusion for pre-existing conditions
2. No annual or lifetime caps
3. Ability for dependents to remain on parents insurance plans until age 26
4. Limit on maximum out-of-pocket expenses

In addition, PPTA advocated to ensure new insurance plans protect patients, as there is growing concern that

administration efforts with association health plans, Medicaid waivers, and short duration plans could allow health plans with no prescription benefits and none of the above patient protections. States are implementing “non-insurance” health plans that could eliminate access to plasma protein therapies. Fly-In participants urged that Congress must exercise oversight to ensure adequate access protections for these extremely vulnerable patients.

PPTA appreciates everyone who was able to participate in the Fly-In this year and would like to encourage those interested in attending next year to please contact Chase Thomas, Assistant Director of Government Relations, at cthomas@pptaglobal.org. We hope to see you in Washington, D.C., for the 2019 congressional Fly-In next spring! ●