



Erin Shearon, ACNP Deputy Director

ACNP Advocacy Efforts

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” – Mahatma Gandhi

Is it really only May?!? The past five months have felt more like five years. I know the past five months have been very challenging for members and colleagues in the field. Please know ACNP Council has been advocating for you and for other scientists in the field. Council has spent many hours and numerous emails discussing and approving advocacy efforts with other organizations. The College has signed-on to countless letters to Congress and provided statements detailed below. The statement on the [NIH Imposed Standard Indirect Cost Rate](#) was finalized in February 2025 under the direction of President Bill Carlezon. This was a significant undertaking for Council. The efforts, led by Bill Carlezon, enabled the College to put together a joint statement. Support for the statement was received from the American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry, American Brain Coalition, American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology, Flux: The Society for Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience, Research Society on Alcohol, Society of Biological Psychiatry, and the Society for Neuroscience. Additionally, the ACNP [Safeguard Pets, Animals, and Research Ethics \(SPARE\) Act](#) statement was finalized in April 2025. Thanks to our Animal Research Committee chairs, David Jentsch and Stephanie Dulawa, for their efforts in drafting this statement for Council’s review. Our members might not know that Council reviews many statements every year on behalf of the College. However, 2025 has been a record year thus far!

Please read [ACNP's advocacy efforts](#) so far in 2025. You will be able to read the letters we have signed on to ranging from the American Brain Coalition, Research!America, Friends of AHRQ, CPDD and Friends of NIDA, AAMC, and APA to name a few.

Not only have we signed on to numerous support letters, the College has also sent past Travel Awardees and members of the Liaison Committee to Capitol Hill to advocate for research! 2024 past Travel Awardees, Rodolfo Flores Garcia, Serena Gumusoglu, Karthik Sarma, Lana Grasser, and I attended SfN Hill Day (virtually) on March 11-13, 2025. The congressional asks from SfN were to support robust funding to neuroscience research in FY2026, how crucial stability is for the research enterprise and how recent actions by the administration have destabilized it, and to support the ethical and responsible use of animals in biomedical research that is already well regulated. The following comments were provided by the past Travel Awardees who attended.

Rodolfo Flores Garcia

Participating in SfN's 19th annual Hill Day in March 2025 was an incredible opportunity to advocate for robust support of neuroscience research at the national level. I was honored to represent ACNP and the neuroscience community, speaking about the importance of continued investment in scientific discovery. This experience deepened my appreciation for the intensive efforts of SfN's advocacy division, from identifying legislative priorities to organizing training and facilitating effective Hill Day meetings. I also had the opportunity to connect with fellow neuroscientists from my state who share a strong commitment to public engagement. Most importantly, this event challenged me to communicate my science clearly and compellingly to broader audiences, a skill that is important for any scientist, now more than ever.

Lana Grasser

I am so grateful to ACNP and SfN for the opportunity to receive advocacy training and join scientists from around the U.S. as part of SfN Hill Day and Brain Awareness Week. Now more than ever it is critical for scientists to speak out about the value and necessity of research in a productive and meaningful way so that we can all benefit from lifesaving biomedical science funded by the federal government. Recent Executive Orders have threatened critical funding to sustain lifesaving biomedical research in the United States, as well as the educational institutions and hospitals in which this work is conducted. In the midst of chaotic and heartbreaking disruptions to the research enterprise, it felt empowering to use my voice and my expertise to advocate for science with the goal of reversing federal funding freezes, reversing the indirect cost cap, and actually increasing the budgets for federal research agencies like the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation.

Serena Gumusoglu

My Hill Day experience was great. Coming from a conservative state with representatives who support cuts to NIH indirects and shrinking of the federal workforce, Hill Day felt particularly relevant and timely. Despite ongoing federal instability and threats to US science and the academy, conversations with my representatives were productive. I had an opportunity to share why neuroscience funding is so critical to my career and the careers of my colleagues, trainees, and community. In the process, I learned more about effective lobbying, and the incredible science advocacy infrastructure that SfN has built. This is an infrastructure that I will encourage others to take advantage of as we fight for the future of academic science in America.

Karthik Sarma

I was honored to represent the ACNP at the 2025 SfN Hill Day at a critical time for advocacy in science policy. In collaboration with scientists from across the SfN, I met with the offices of members of Congress from California to discuss this year's policy asks, which were 1) to support robust funding to neuroscience research in FY 2026, 2) support stability for the research enterprise and oppose recent changes and proposed changes that have destabilized it, and 3) support the ethical and responsible use of animals in biomedical research. I was assigned to focus on ask 2, and had the opportunity to specifically highlight how the proposed changes to the NIH indirect cost rate had destabilized research efforts, the importance of indirect cost-funded services to science overall, and the negative impacts that staff and service reductions have had both on basic science and clinical research (including the loss of access to clinical trials that some patients have suffered). The offices were very receptive to our input, and it was wonderful to work with colleagues from across the neurosciences to help explain the impact that our research has on society. I very much enjoyed the opportunity and would recommend any other interested colleagues to participate next year!

Additionally, Liaison Committee members Hilary Marusak, Tiffany Love, Jennifer Dwyer, and Sara Nixon along with Sarah Timm attended the American Brain Coalition's Hill Day May 7, 2025 in Washington D.C. They advocated for continued federal investment in neuroscience research, urged Congress to restore funding to \$680 million for FY 2026 for the BRAIN Initiative, and authorize a new long-term investment to build on the Initiative's successes. After the morning meetings with representatives, they attended the American Brain Coalition congressional briefing, "Advancing Neuroscience for Americans: Breakthroughs in Addiction Research Enabled by the NIH Brain Initiative" at the Congressional Visitor's Center. The panel of BRAIN Initiative experts included John Ngai (The NIH Brain Research Through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies® (BRAIN) Initiative), Nora Volkow (NIDA), Edward Mowery (BRAIN Study participant), Prasad Shirvalkar (University of California, San Francisco), and Paul Kenny (Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai).



Stay tuned for additional advocacy efforts through the year!