

# NAEVR's EVS Advocacy Day

## EVSs Request Short-Term CR, Final FY2017 Appropriations

The 22 EVSs, who conducted 50 Capitol Hill visits—including eight with Members of Congress who wanted to hear their concerns directly—urged Congress to enact a short-term CR to keep the government funded with the start of FY2017 on October 1, and after the election recess finalize FY2017 appropriations before year's end to include the \$2 billion NIH increase, as proposed by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Within this larger request, they described their breakthrough research and why federal funding is important to their future success. NAEVR encouraged each of the EVSs to invite their Members

of Congress and staff to visit their labs, as well as to serve as a resource for the office.

RPB's Dr. Hofland participated, noting his organization's support for early-stage investigators. Macula Vision Research Foundation (MVRF) Executive Director Dawn Prall George joined Pennsylvania Senate delegation visits. MVRF, a NAEVR/AEVR member, was a co-sponsor of the AMD Congressional Briefing. ARVO's Matt Windsor, Ph.D. assisted NAEVR's James Jorkasky and David Epstein in accompanying the advocates and documenting their visits.

## NASEM Releases Report While EVSs Visit Capitol Hill

While the EVSs were engaged in advocacy visits, just a few short blocks away in the Washington, D.C. headquarters of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, NASEM released its report entitled *Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: Vision for Tomorrow* for which NAEVR served as a sponsor. The report presents nine recommendations to raise nationwide awareness and take action toward reducing the burden of vision impairment and eye disease. (see back page)

## EVS Impressions/Development

The EVS program is an important part of an early-stage investigator's development, as noted by participants.

"I would like to thank you for this opportunity to learn a new aspect essential to my career. After my visit, I received a really nice handwritten card from Cong. Ted Yoho (R-FL), who said that he was impressed with our Usher Syndrome research."

-Astra Dinculescu, Ph.D. (University of Florida)

"Personally, I was quite enlightened by these visits in gaining an understanding of the nuts and bolts of how science policy and funding decisions are made at the government level. I feel that this experience helped me to better develop skills to 'sell research' to non-scientists who play a critical role in funding vision research."

-Daniel Chao, M.D., Ph.D. (University of California San Diego)

"While I consider myself fairly well-educated with day-to-day politics, the hands-on experience changed many of my preconceived notions of the manner with which Washington works. I should also mention that the EVS program has the potential to be a career-building tool for attendees. My attendance has impressed my department and it is making university-wide news."

-Michael Farkas, Ph.D. (SUNY Buffalo)



Luis Vazquez, M.D., Ph.D. (University of Miami/Bascom Palmer Eye Institute) with Cong. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)



Cong. Gary Palmer (R-AL) with Andrew Pucker, O.D., Ph.D. (University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry)



Phoebe Lin, M.D., Ph.D. (Oregon Health & Science University/Casey Eye Institute) with Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR)



Cong. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) with Osamah Saeedi, M.D. (University of Maryland School of Medicine)



Senator Robert Casey (D-PA) and Morgan Fedorchak, Ph.D. (University of Pittsburgh)



From left: Brian Hofland, Ph.D., Research to Prevent Blindness, Heather Leisy, M.D. (New York University), Morgan Brand, office of Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Michael Farkas, Ph.D. (SUNY Buffalo)



Lisa Ostrin, O.D., Ph.D., left, and Nimesh Patel, O.D., Ph.D., right, both from the University of Houston School of Optometry, with Courtney Asbill, office of Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)



From left: Dolly Ann Padovani-Claudio, M.D., Ph.D. and Anthony Daniels, M.D., both from Vanderbilt University, with Vic Goetz, office of Cong. Jim Cooper (D-TN)



From left: Kathleen Laird, office of Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) with Yao Liu, M.D. (University of Wisconsin-Madison) and Iris Kassem, M.D., Ph.D. and Dan Lipinski, Ph.D., both from the Medical College of Wisconsin