



Pre-Forum Advocacy Training

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

2:00 – 3:00 ET	<p>Advocacy Training</p> <p>Health and Medicine Counsel will lead a virtual advocacy training to prepare for the Hill visits that will take place on July 15. (Hill visits are optional) NAO will provide registration and Zoom link details.</p>
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NAO 2026 Leadership Forum AGENDA*

Tuesday, July 14, 2026

7:00 – 8:00	BREAKFAST and Networking
8:00 – 8:15	Welcome and Opening Remarks
8:15 – 8:30	<p>Update on Current Funding and Policy Context</p> <p>Health and Medicine Counsel</p>
8:30 – 10:00	<p>Leading in Uncertain Times</p> <p>Lowell Aplebaum, EdD, FASAE, CAE, CPF, will lead an interactive leadership and skill-building session for AHEC leaders focused on leading in uncertain times, scenario planning and risk tolerance, and strengthening emotional intelligence to navigate change effectively.</p>
10:00 – 10:15	BREAK
10:15 – 10:30	<p>Rural Health Transformation Program</p> <p>Updates and insights on the RHTP.</p>
10:30 – 11:00	<p>Rural Healthcare Policy</p> <p>Carrie Cochran-McClain, National Rural Health Association Chief Policy Officer will present the rural health policy context.</p>
11:00 – 11:30	<p>Update from HRSA</p> <p>Tammy Mayo-Blake, Branch Chief, Bureau of Health Workforce, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration</p>
11:30 – 12:30	LUNCH and Networking
12:30 – 2:00	<p>From Experience to Influence: Storytelling for Advocacy and Impact</p> <p>Story District will guide AHEC leaders in using storytelling to complement data-driven communication, helping participants develop and practice a personal narrative and refine a one-minute story they can use in real-world advocacy and leadership settings, including conversations on Capitol Hill.</p>
2:00 – 3:15	<p>AHEC Advocacy Success Stories and Advocacy Planning</p> <p>This interactive panel will highlight successful advocacy strategies from AHECs across the country, followed by a brief introduction to an advocacy planning template and an opportunity for participants to begin developing their own advocacy plans.</p>
3:15 – 3:30	AHEC Advocacy Success Awards



3:30 – 3:45	BREAK
3:45 – 4:00	Coalition for Health Funding Brief review of the federal budget and appropriations process.
4:00 – 5:00	The AHEC Pitch and Hill Visit Prep Session A demonstration of an effective Hill visit meeting will be followed by a review of key considerations for advocacy. Attendees will be organized into state or region-based teams to prepare for July 15 Hill visits. Health and Medicine Council will be available to provide technical assistance and support.
Wednesday, July 15, 2026	
7:00 – 8:00	BREAKFAST and Networking
8:00 – 8:10	Opening Remarks
8:10 - 8:40	Legislative Awards and Speakers
8:40 – 9:15	Strategies for Securing and Growing State Funding Mary Mitchell and AHEC representatives will share practical strategies for securing, sustaining, and growing state funding to support AHEC programs and grow impact.
9:15 – 9:45	TBD
9:45 – 9:55	Reminders and Logistical Updates for Hill Visits Health and Medicine Council
9:55 – 10:00	Concluding Remarks
10:00	SNACKS
10:30 – 5:00	Hill Visits Those choosing to participate in Hill visits will meet with congressional representatives on AHEC priorities in state or regional based teams. Health and Medicine Council will organize and schedule the meetings and provide this to participants in advance.

**Agenda subject to change*