



# METAVIVOR

Metastatic Breast Cancer Research, Support and Awareness

## How to Engage with Congress through Virtual Advocacy

February 2026



THE  
FEDERAL GROUP, INC.

# THE FEDERAL GROUP

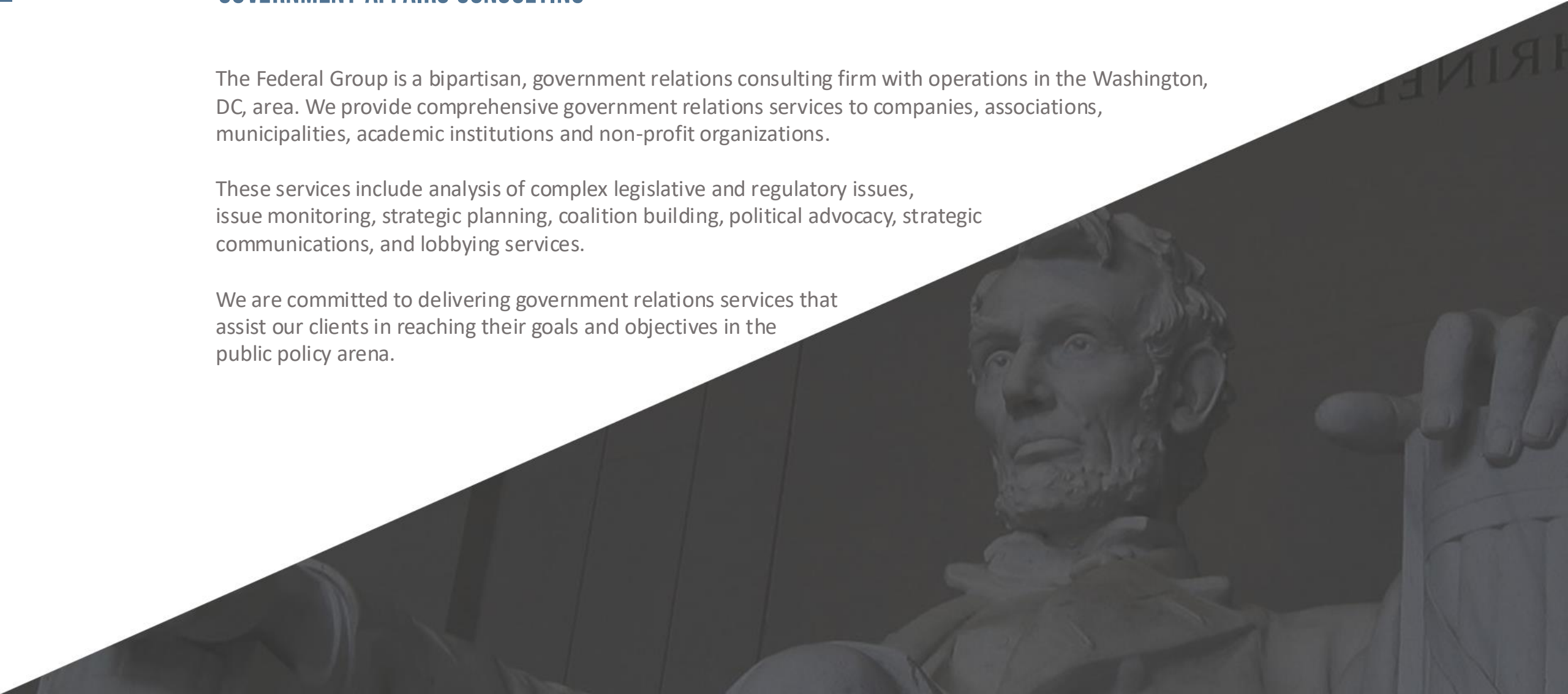
---

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS CONSULTING

The Federal Group is a bipartisan, government relations consulting firm with operations in the Washington, DC, area. We provide comprehensive government relations services to companies, associations, municipalities, academic institutions and non-profit organizations.

These services include analysis of complex legislative and regulatory issues, issue monitoring, strategic planning, coalition building, political advocacy, strategic communications, and lobbying services.

We are committed to delivering government relations services that assist our clients in reaching their goals and objectives in the public policy arena.



# MEET THE TEAM

---



## [Patrick Cooney - Founder and President](#)

Patrick founded The Federal Group, Inc. in 1999 with a focus on impacting health care policy. His experience working with Congress for more than 30-years provides clients unique insight into the federal health policy landscape and unparalleled access to decision makers.



## [Taylor Thomas - Director of Government Relations](#)

Taylor Thomas is a seasoned professional with a diverse background in health care. She has experience representing clients across a range of healthcare issue areas, including aging, disability, and rare disease. Prior to joining The Federal Group, she served as a Senior Researcher in the Department of Health Policy and Management at The George Washington University and as a Senior Project Manager at MagView, a mammography information system software company.



## [Michelle Artz, Vice President](#)

Michelle brings a wealth of diverse experience in government affairs and advocacy. Prior to joining the firm, she served as the Director of Government Affairs for the American Nurses Association (ANA). She also spent two and a half years working in Alliance Development at the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association (PhRMA).

# GROUNDSWELL SUMMIT

---

## METAvivor Advocacy Training Agenda:

- Preparing for the Virtual Meeting
- How to Schedule a Virtual Hill Meeting
- Troubleshooting Tech Issues
- How to Advocate with Group Through Virtual Platform
- What to Expect During Virtual Hill Meeting
- You Are the Expert
- Post Visit Follow-Up
- Legislative and Regulatory Priorities/ Talking Points
- Contact Us

## PREPARING FOR YOUR VIRTUAL MEETING

---

When preparing for your virtual Hill meeting, it is important that you:

- Review the talking points in advance. Know what you are asking for.
- Practice your personal story (short & impactful)
- Meet with others from your state/group prior to virtual Hill meetings to discuss flow for meetings
- Dress professionally
- Make sure your device(s) you are joining the meeting with are fully charged
- Join meeting invite early to make sure your technology is working.
  - Test your camera, mic, internet

## HOW TO SCHEDULE A VIRTUAL HILL MEETING

---

- Information we will provide:
  - Congressional Member's staffer email addresses
  - Email template for requesting a meeting
- Be flexible with dates/times
- Expect to meet with staff and not the Member (this is normal and powerful)
- Staffers typically expect you to send over a meeting invite with the virtual link (Zoom, Teams, Google Meet...)
  - Please let us know if you have any issues with this or need assistance. We are here to help!

## TROUBLESHOOTING TECH ISSUES

---

- Join virtual meeting 5-10 minutes early
- Have a **backup device** if possible
- If someone from your group drops off due to tech issue:
  - Keep meeting moving
  - If they rejoin, welcome them back
- If video fails or the connection is glitchy:
  - Audio-only is okay
- If platform crashes:
  - Follow up by email to staffer immediately

***Tech hiccups happen—don't let them derail your message.***

## HOW TO ADVOCATE WITH GROUP THROUGH VIRTUAL PLATFORM

---

- Everyone should introduce themselves briefly (name and where you are from – if you have a connection to the state or district, mention it)
- Have your camera on, but mute your sound until it is your turn to talk.
- Share personal stories that connect to the policy "asks"
  - If possible, have 1 story for each "ask". Offices want to know how supporting these policy asks will help patients with MBC
- Stay respectful, concise, and focused on your key "asks".
- Leave 5 minutes at the end of the meeting to ask the staffer if they have any questions, and restate the policy ask

**We have created a script for the talking points to help guide your discussions.**



# WHAT TO EXPECT DURING VIRTUAL MEETING



- Meetings are most often with staff, not the member. Note the staffer's name(s) and role in the office for follow up.
- Meetings usually last 15-30 minutes. If staff join late; be ready to shorten your story or stick to a couple of key points.
- A respectful and concise conversation about the "asks".
  - Advocates sharing stories to illustrate policy issues.
  - Staffers asking clarifying questions. (It's ok to say "I don't know and will get METAvivor's lobbyist to follow up.")
- End with a clear ask and share your contact info for follow up.

# YOU ARE THE EXPERT

---



- Most members of Congress and staff have little insight into what it means to have metastatic breast cancer.
- Policymakers are eager to hear your story. They want to know what access to treatments has meant to you and your family, and what new research breakthroughs could mean to you and those battling MBC in the future?
- They *need* your voice as they make decisions that that impact health care quality and access, vital data collection, and the focus and trajectory of research .
- They may be the elected officials, but YOU are the expert.

## YOUR STORY, WITH OUR SUPPORT

---

When participating in GroundSwell, all you need to bring with you is your story!

METAvivor board members and the Federal Group are here to support you every step of the way with:

- Reviewing the issues and "asks",
- Talking points,
- Training to help you focus and practice your message,
- Briefing on what to expect when you meet

**We are here to support you every step of the way.**

## POST-VISIT FOLLOW-UP

---

- **Thank you email:**
  - We have prepared an email template for you to use—personalize it with your story
  - Send within 24 hrs of meeting, if possible
- **Meeting follow-up form:**
  - Fill out the form after each meeting – We will provide link to the follow-up form
  - Helps METAvivor track responses and determine the best follow-up with offices
- **Keep relationships alive:** GroundSwell is just one part of year-round advocacy!

# GROUNDSWELL 2026

---

FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 6

## GROUNDSWELL 2026 ASKS

---

- **Cosponsor the Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act (H.R. 2048/S.3442)** to eliminate harmful delays in access to Medicare and SSDI.
- **HOUSE SPECIFIC: Cosponsor the Cancer Drug Parity Act of 2025 (H.R. 4101)** to ensure affordable access to oral cancer treatments.
- **SENATE SPECIFIC: Supporting the reintroduction of the Cancer Drug Parity Act in the Senate** to ensure affordable access to oral cancer treatments.

## GROUNDSWELL 2026 ASKS

---

- **Support the modernization of cancer surveillance systems like SEER** to ensure that all MBC cases are counted and to help guide funding for research and treatments for MBC.
- Increase funding for metastatic breast cancer research:
  - At least \$51 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
  - Allocate \$8 billion for the National Cancer Institute
  - \$1.5 billion for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H)
  - Restore \$150 million in funding for the Department of Defense Peer-Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program, and continuing to include “metastatic cancers” as a condition eligible for study through the Peer-Reviewed Cancer Research Program

## CONTACT US

---

For any questions and issues that may come up during your planning for or meetings during GroundSwell, please contact us at:

### **The Federal Group**

Michelle Artz: [michelle@federalgrp.com](mailto:michelle@federalgrp.com) | (202) 641 - 4321

Taylor Thomas: [taylor@federalgrp.com](mailto:taylor@federalgrp.com) | (240) 272 -1562

### **METAvivor**

Alpha Lillstrom Cheng: [alpha@metavivor.org](mailto:alpha@metavivor.org)

Crystal Moore: [cmoore@metavivor.org](mailto:cmoore@metavivor.org)

Xena Zupan: [xzupan@metavivor.org](mailto:xzupan@metavivor.org)



# QUESTIONS

---

