On October 20, members of the Board of Trustees of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) held a Capitol Hill Lobby Day. With the elections looming, the 40-plus visits to Members on both sides of the aisle enabled these researchers to educate their Senators and Representatives from work/home districts about the importance and broad implications of NEI-funded vision research being conducted locally. Participants also visited House Appropriators and Energy and Commerce Committee Members from neighboring districts. As with NAEVR Board President Dr. Stephen Ryan’s October 10-11 Congressional visits (see front page), NAEVR placed an emphasis on meetings with Senate HELP Committee Members regarding the NIH reauthorization issue, now that the House has passed a bill.

ARVO Trustees Educate Key Congressional Offices About Their Vision Research

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Left to right: Dr. Robert Frank [Wayne State University] and Dr. Barry Winkler [Oakland University], whose Detroit Tigers cap drew attention from staff and tourists from Michigan. Commented Dr. Winkler, “I was delighted to hear from offices about the credibility of NAEVR’s voice regarding the value of vision research and the importance of appropriate NIH reauthorization.”

Left to right: Dr. Nicholas Delamere (University of Arizona) was joined by Incoming ARVO President Dr. Martine Jager (Leiden University/The Netherlands) in a visit with the office of Sen. John McCain (R-AZ). Said Dr. Delamere, “Having been recently recruited to Arizona, I apprised staff of the NEI grant dollars and associated jobs that I have brought to the state.”

Left to right: New ARVO Trustee and first-time advocate Dr. David Hunter (Children’s Hospital Boston/Harvard University) meets with Dr. Derek Scholes of the Senate HELP staff of Ranking Member Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA). “Since Dr. Scholes is a Science Policy Fellow assigned to this office from the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), I focused my comments on the gene-based studies being conducted in vision research,” said Dr. Hunter.

Left to right: New ARVO Trustee and first-time advocate Dr. Todd Margolis (University of California at San Francisco) meets with Dr. Wendell Primus, Senior Policy Advisor to House Minority Leader Cong. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). “Since Mr. Primus is an economist by training, we primarily discussed the cost-effectiveness of prevention, and I was able to cite NEI’s recent announcement of its second phase of the AREDS study as an applicable vision example,” said Dr. Margolis.

Left to right: New ARVO Trustee and first-time advocate Dr. Mark Petras [Washington University] relates his visits to NAEVR Legislative Counsel John Porter. “I emphasized the importance of NEI’s trans-Institute research, especially the Diabetic Retinopathy Clinical Research Network,” noted Dr. Petras.