

Engaging Trustees in Advocacy

Successful advocacy is about more than establishing relationships with legislators. The hospital must maintain strong and vibrant community relationships that build community understanding and loyalty to the hospital.

TIP: Board members play a vital role in securing strong public perceptions of the hospital and raising its profile as a premier community financial, health care and social services asset.

As a part of hospitals' grassroots advocacy efforts, every community has a broad range of key constituencies or stakeholders who should be communicated with and influenced by the hospital. These are called your spheres of influence and may include:

- ✓ Community spokespersons or health advocates
- ✓ Purchasers of health care
- ✓ Insurers and other payers
- ✓ Patients and families
- ✓ Legislative and regulatory bodies
- ✓ The news media
- ✓ Civic groups, agencies and organizations
- ✓ Religious leaders
- ✓ Business owners and
- ✓ Educational institutions

TIP: The hospital board is the ideal conduit between the hospital and these community groups.

Key Trustee Roles in Legislative & Community Advocacy:

- ✓ **Advocate:** Taking the hospital's message to legislators through lobbying or delivering testimony at hearings, representing the community's interests in board decision-making.
- ✓ **Educator:** Speaking on issues facing the hospital at schools or civic groups; appearing on local television or radio shows to discuss health care, and highlighting what the organization is doing to contribute to the community's well-being.
- ✓ **Conduit:** Participating in public forums to discuss issues facing the hospital, share what the hospital is doing in the community, and learn about community opinions or health care needs.
- ✓ **Ambassador:** Representing the hospital at important community social gatherings.
- ✓ **Host:** Presiding over visits of legislators, invested community members, or key business leaders to the hospital to help them learn about available services, witness challenges, and hear about their interests or needs.