

Grassroots Advocacy Best Practices
Program: **Community Leaders Luncheon (CLL)**



Health System: Cape Fear Valley Medical Center

Speaker: Mike Nagowski, President & CEO, Cape Fear Valley Medical Center

Brief description: CLL is an invitation-only event for community leaders, activists, and key influencers to have a candid conversation with their local hospital President to ask their most pressing questions about their local healthcare system. The event is organized by the hospital's Foundation, but services as a pipeline for various hospital initiatives, including identifying potential hospital advocates and champions.

Venue & logistics: The event is typically a luncheon presentation by the CEO. Staff from the Foundation manage the event logistics, invitations, RSVPs, agenda, and other event details. An outline of topics is presented to all attendees in advance. Past topics have included healthcare reform, behavioral health, and challenges in the emergency room. While attendees eat, the CEO offers a brief presentation then opens the floor to discussion. No subject is "off the table" and hot button topics are encouraged.

What is the goal?: The goal is to educate and inform the community about the complexities of healthcare, the changing landscape, and the local issues and events at the hospital that impact that care. Through this education, they hope to create hospital champions who come away from the event with a better understanding of the state of healthcare in their community, their region and beyond.

Who is invited?: They are continually on the look out for appropriate stakeholders, community leaders and influencers. Often, these individuals are identified from questions they may ask Board members or other hospital leaders while in the community. An invitation list is always being populated and revisited.

How are they invited?: Printed invitations are sent, in some cases, personally delivered, or e-mailed. Additionally, follow-up phone calls are made by hospital staff to confirm attendance.

Who are the speakers?: The CEO and Foundation representatives are principle speakers; however, the goal is a broad-based discussion among all attendees.

What are the greatest benefits/successes that you have seen from these efforts? More supporters, more advocates, new questions/concerns brought to light, good will in the community, and, predominantly a change in perspective.

Would you encourage other hospitals to consider something similar?: It is not easy to change the perception of an entire community and region, but influencers do make an impact on others. Reaching 15-18 key stakeholders in the community each quarter has paid dividends in changing perspectives. They also send follow-up correspondence and updates each quarter to anyone who has ever attended one of the CLL events. This gives past attendees the impression of getting "inside information" about the hospital, directly from the CEO every few months and keeps them connected and informed.

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