

How to Build a Relationship with Your Legislator

Building relationships with elected officials is an ongoing process. Get to know them before a crisis arises in which you may need their help. To achieve name and face recognition, you will have to make regular contacts.

Build a relationship with your elected officials by doing the following:

- Congratulate them after their election or reelection by letter and/or a visit, if visiting in person is possible.
- Call, write, or visit even when you don't need something specific. As often as possible, call just to say hello, thanks or to update them with good news.
- Visit in person if possible, or touch base via zoom or phone, with your legislators when they are at home.
- Get involved in the political process. Work on campaigns of legislators that share your views.
- Learn how to track bills, budgets, and committee proceedings (visit <https://www.ncha.org/bill-tracker/> for a list of bills being tracked by NCHA)

Seek opportunities for informal time with legislators where interaction is more personal

- Make social contact at events like dinners, plays, sporting events and concerts.
- Attend meetings held by your legislators, or meetings where they will speak, and address questions to them.
- Invite your legislators to speak to your hospital leaderships on an issue of value to the hospital.
- Host an event like a party, meet and greet, or breakfast where your hospital employees can meet legislators. Think creatively how you can have these events during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Present an award to your legislator for some deserved services in the healthcare field.

Build the network

Assign leadership at your hospital to a legislator to build a relationship. Create a coordinated outreach calendar with the goal that each legislator has 3 interactions per quarter (12 annually) with assigned hospital advocate. Report updates on these interactions at hospital Board meetings, if appropriate, for accountability. Having a personal connection to legislators will benefit your hospital in the long run.

Track interactions

Ask leadership to report back to you with the results of their conversations. These reports can include:

- Date of interaction
- Who was involved in the interaction
- Planned or organic?
- Topics covered
- Legislator reaction
- Legislator questions
- Follow-up needed?
- General feel of conversation

Key Contacts Program

Find the people in your community who know your legislators, regardless of their connection to the hospital. Build relationships with THEM. Include them on invite lists to key hospital events where your legislators may be attending. Reach out to them when a key issues arises where you need them to leverage their relationship with the legislator and speak to them on behalf of the hospital.

Need Assistance?

For grassroots and advocacy assistance, contact:

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