

**Q&A: *Being an Empowered Advocate: The Role of the Clinician in Changing Policy***

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**How can I participate in the "Advocate for a Day" program?**

There are several opportunities at the local, state and federal levels to engage in advocacy efforts. The "Advocate for a Day" is an example of the steps to follow when meeting with any elected official.

- Be on time
- Be adaptable
- Be concise
- Provide a summary of facts and your "ask"
- Send a thank you

**How can a clinician who is a master of social work (MSW) get involved in advocacy or lobbying activities?**

The first step is to get engaged with one of your professional organizations both nationally and locally. Organizations often support advocacy efforts and support their members with these efforts.

**Can you discuss how lobbying is different from advocacy?**

Advocacy is a broad term covering a range of activities that seek to influence policies or bring about change, while lobbying is any activity that seeks to impact policies by influencing specific legislation.

**Have you been/should we be concerned about conflicts of interest or upsetting our employer through our volunteer activities?**

It is important to review your company's conflict of interest policies and discuss any plans you have with your manager prior to engaging in volunteer and/or advocacy efforts.

**Do you recommend any nursing-specific newsletters?**

Depending on the nurse's specialty or interests, it is best to sign up for newsletters that are affiliated with their state or national professional organization. Nurses should also consider a wider health care policy lens by considering such content developed by the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), [Advisory Board](#) or [National Academy of Medicine](#).

**What is the difference between a grandfathered plan and a grandmothered plan?**

A grandfathered plan is a pre-Affordable Care Act (ACA) plan that has not had its original plan rates changed, and a grandmothered plan is a pre-ACA plan where the rates have been changed.

**Could you provide the author and the name of the book about life's purpose that was mentioned?**

The speaker referenced [Working on Purpose](#) and [The Power of Purpose](#) by Richard Leider.

**What is the best way for nurses with little political experience to gain the confidence needed to get more involved?**

We recommend joining one of your professional organizations and starting small. Attend town meetings/town halls that your legislators host; listen and learn from others. Meet with your legislator and start a conversation about your work as a clinician and what you see happening in health care.

**What careers are there in health care advocacy?**

You can be a health care advocate in many capacities and it does not have to be through a career. The main career as a health care advocate is typically as a registered lobbyist. Policy work, which is different than advocacy work, is another route to engage in changing health care. The two career paths can be distinct, but in many cases, they can overlap. Working in health care policy, you can be an analyst for a think tank, federal agencies or professional associations.

**What can we do to make sure the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) goes through as a clean bill?**

This is an opportunity to meet with your legislators and share your experience and your stories to express your opinion.

**Which are the best bipartisan groups to use to stay current on health care legislation?**

It is difficult to represent specific groups; however, this is an opportunity to research your professional organizations and learn more about their views.

**With a full-time job and family life, can you share ways you found to make time to volunteer?**

The recommendation is to start small; even one volunteer hour per month with an organization you are passionate about.

**There are many demands on lawmakers' time and attention. What are some efficient strategies to make oneself (or one's letters) more memorable or attention getting?**

Telling specific patient stories are impactful. Phone calls and emails are helpful and face to face meetings can be very powerful in developing a relationship. Generally, it is not about one call or one email; it is about building a relationship.

**What are some bipartisan resources and/or words that I can use when responding to comments/complaints on social media?**

It is important to focus on the issues more than political party lines and gather your information from multiple sites so you can be familiar with multiple points of view. For example, [Politifact](#) boasts that it contains only pure facts. [National Public Radio](#) (NPR) will discuss both sides of an issue.

**In terms of blending work and personal life, how do you walk the line when personal positions on an issue may conflict with one of more of the organizations you work for or with?**

This may depend on your specific role in an organization, and it is important to express your opinions as your own not that of your organization. Some goals may be to focus comments on areas of agreement and commonality. In areas where opinions diverge, approach different views as an opportunity to truly understand both sides on a deeper level.

**If you cannot go to the legislator, is it better to call, email or write via snail mail?**

The recommendation is to call or email.

**If our passion is health care reform and helping people understand the AHCA, would it be better to try to get involved with state rather than local representatives?**

Opportunities to get involved include both federal and state representatives and senators depending on if the issue is federal (such as Medicare) or state (such as Medicaid). The AHCA initial advocacy would be at the federal level.

**I would like to find out how and where to speak/influence decisions about medication costs, especially for seniors.**

Get involved in your national or state organization. They can give you specific bills to which you can respond as you reach out to lawmakers.

If you have questions regarding this document or the content herein, please contact: [moreinfo@optumhealtheducation.com](mailto:moreinfo@optumhealtheducation.com).