



The Board Role in Health Center Advocacy

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is acting to support a belief, a policy, or a policy recommendation, or educating on an issue.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of advocating for the health center mission and patients. Many forms of advocacy are allowable for a 501(c)(3) organization, which is the tax status of most health centers, such as:

- Meeting with, calling, emailing, and general communications to legislators or decision-makers to educate them about your health center or the impact of issues on the health center
- Supporting the enactment or defeat of pending or proposed federal, state, or local legislation
- Writing op-eds
- Engaging in social media

What is the Board's Role in Advocacy?

Patient-majority, community-based health center boards can play a critical role in advocacy by:

- **Supporting a “culture of advocacy” at the health center** – Boards can set the tone to support advocacy in various ways, including:
 - Adopting a board resolution that outlines the importance of advocacy to the health center and its mission
 - Prioritizing advocacy in the center’s strategic plan and organizational budget
 - Forming an Advocacy Committee to guide the board’s involvement with advocacy
- **Partnering with the CEO and their staff on advocacy efforts** – Based on goals in the center’s strategic plan, the board can partner with the CEO and their staff on advocacy efforts that leverage board member connections and voice, including:
 - Building relationships – As community members, board members often have deep connections in the community (e.g., within faith communities, business groups, etc.) that can support the center’s advocacy goals.
 - Sharing stories – Many board members have powerful personal stories to share about the impact of health centers on their lives and in their communities which are important for advocacy. Depending on the overall health center advocacy strategy, board members may, for example:
 - Participate in legislative visits
 - Send emails
 - Write op-eds in coordination with staff

Email the NACHC Grassroots Advocacy team at grassroots@nachc.org for more information.