

# ADVOCACY 101

Merriam Webster defines advocacy (ad-vo-ca-cy) as:  
“The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal.”

*Advocacy can take several forms. Whether you're asking members of Congress to stop insurance companies from denying coverage for critical medical treatments, educating the public about a condition, or raising awareness to increase research funding, ensuring your voice is heard is a crucial part of protecting patient rights everywhere.*

Sharing your story and using your voice is a key component of advocacy.

By advocating for yourself and others with chronic conditions, you can help address stigma, while creating social and political change for generations to come. Luckily, anyone can take part in building a more inclusive and equitable world, but it can be tough to know where to start and how to advocate. This toolkit is the answer to that challenge. Join us as we look at the different ways you can take a stand and create a better health care experience for all.

## Five Types of Advocacy



### DIGITAL ADVOCACY

Digital advocacy is also called online activism. It includes attending online classes and discussions, posting content on social media, blogging, sharing your story with local news outlets and everything in between. Digital advocacy is highly accessible and a great way to make a big impact from behind a screen!



### POLICY ADVOCACY

The democratic process is nothing without the voices of the people. Meeting with legislators, writing letters and speaking publicly are effective ways for advocates to ensure that law and policy decisions are based on input from those affected most.



### MEDICAL ADVOCACY

We all must be advocates both in the doctor's office and with insurance companies. Advocating for yourself is key in accessing the appropriate treatment and medical coverage needed to manage your chronic condition.



### NEWS MEDIA ADVOCACY

Sharing your story can not only empower yourself and others, but also shame bad actors or highlight practices that prevent patients from accessing care. News media can also be a great way to demonstrate the importance of a topic to elected officials.



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Advocacy doesn't have to involve Facebook pages, legislators or doctors. You can network and share your story by organizing and participating in events in your own town.

# Why Should You Be an Advocate?

Advocacy can sometimes be a lot of work, especially when meeting with legislators, creating a social media presence or organizing a rally. The work of an advocate is never truly done, begging the question: *Why advocate?* For the chronic disease community, there are many reasons why advocating is well worth the time and effort.

*Here are just a few:*

## ✓ **Your story matters**

**As a chronic disease patient, you have a unique story to tell that can raise awareness, elicit change, educate the public and empower others to do the same.**

When advocates speak out together and share their experiences, issues become real to policymakers and the broader community, helping to prompt meaningful action.

## ✓ **Change is possible**

**Advocates are the drivers of change in our health care system.** By advocating for ourselves and others, we can expand access to care, end discriminatory insurance practices and shatter chronic disease stereotypes.

## ✓ **Your voice grows the movement**

**Participating in advocacy efforts gives you a unique opportunity to touch the lives of others.** Through advocacy, you can grow your network while inspiring others to stand up and speak out about their own chronic disease journey, creating a ripple effect.

## ✓ **We must stand together for chronic rights**

**We see the best results when we stand together in solidarity.** Knowing your rights and advocating for your chronic condition can create major change in our society. As a community, we can share our experiences and fight for each other, building a better health care system for generations to come.

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