



# Advocacy 101

## A GUIDE TO GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

Members of Congress want to hear your opinion. As the leader of a medical group practice, it's critical that lawmakers hear from you about how the legislation they craft and enact impacts those on the frontlines of healthcare delivery. Lawmakers may be familiar with certain healthcare issues but depend on subject matter experts like you to explain how their decisions in Washington affect the lives of people and businesses back home.

MGMA prepared this *Guide to Grassroots Advocacy* to help medical group practice leaders cultivate relationships on Capitol Hill. Within the guide, you'll find:

- Tips on effective communication with Congress;
- Information on how to coordinate a congressional site visit to your practice;
- Recommendations for coordinating visits to Capitol Hill or a district office;
- What resources MGMA has available to support you.

### Make Your Voice Heard

Grassroots advocacy can be one of the most influential political advocacy tools that organizations have. The goal of grassroots initiatives is to engage the public to bring issues to the attention of lawmakers and government officials. Traditional lobbying, which brings arguments for or against a policy directly to lawmakers, remains an effective tool, but grassroots advocacy is an on-the-ground connection between members of Congress and voters.



Remember to showcase your advocacy work on social media platforms! Use the hashtag **#MGMAAdvocacy**.

### Communicating with Congress

As you look through this guide and consider different ways to engage your representatives, MGMA offers the following recommendations for effective engagement:

- ☑ Find your elected representatives, including their Capitol Hill and district office contact information using MGMA's Contact Congress [look-up tool](#).
- ☑ Familiarize yourself with your representatives' general positions on healthcare topics.
- ☑ Remember that meetings with a representative's staff can be just as valuable for information-sharing and relationship-building with the office. On healthcare issues, you would want to speak to the health legislative assistant (LA).
- ☑ When discussing a particular issue, connect its impacts to people and explain how the issue impacts the community. Use personal stories to support the basis for your argument; sharing these perspectives helps to humanize the issue.



- ☑ Avoid jargon and complex medical terms. You do not want to overwhelm the representative, but you do want to leave them with a better understanding of your concerns. A “Congressional Leave-Behind” is the perfect way to provide representatives and their staff with follow-up information on the issue.
- ☑ Offer yourself as a resource to provide expertise and perspective on healthcare issues that matter to your representative. Building a two-way relationship can establish a meaningful and valuable rapport.
- ☑ Your ultimate goal should be to build a lasting relationship with your lawmaker. Be courteous, polite, and prepared. **Keep financial or political support out of the conversation.**

## MGMA Resources

- [Contact Congress Portal](#) - Find your representatives.
- [MGMA.com/regrelief](#) – Find additional resources and information about MGMA’s recommendations on how to relieve administrative burdens.
- [govaff@mgma.org](mailto:govaff@mgma.org) – Provide Government Affairs contextual feedback to utilize in our ongoing advocacy efforts and help other MGMA members benefit from your experience! You can also call us directly at 202-293-3450.
- [GovChat Member Community](#) – Sign in to the MGMA website and utilize the GovChat Member Community! It’s the online home for members to discuss all the latest policy and regulatory issues impacting group practices.