

# ***Connect With Your Legislator***

## ***...Some Ideas on How to Lay the Groundwork for Your Ongoing Effort to Explain How Your Community Needs You***

Your legislators may have toured your hospital or met with you individually; in which case, they may know your leadership personally. If not, here are a few thoughts on how best to connect.

- ✓ Request meetings in their district offices.
- ✓ Seek the counsel of your board and your “community outreach” team.
- ✓ Recruit community leaders, both elected and unelected, who can speak to the importance of your hospital.
- ✓ Schedule ongoing meetings with their staffs to keep them informed of what your hospital is doing for the community.

Congress is in session now ... Start planning your contacts now!

## ***...Some Ideas on Message***

Provide your legislators with your hospital’s own report or refer to the following checklist to craft a brief review of how your hospital is meeting the needs of this community.

Remember to emphasize...Your Patients...Your Community...Your Mission.

## ***...Critical Items to Include***

### ***The population you serve***

A summary of the hospital’s service area, types of populations served and unique community challenges (i.e., high unemployment, numbers of uninsured, economic and social challenges, etc.).

### ***Your response***

Free or subsidized programs offered to the community (list all programs you sponsor or collaborate with others to offer, such as health education, access and prevention initiatives).

### ***Your community partners***

A list of local organizations (e.g., civic groups, businesses, schools) with whom you collaborate.

### ***Your commitment to the poor***

A description of numbers of people served from whom no payment was expected; include a brief summary of your existing charity care policy and recent uncompensated care numbers.

### **Your contribution to health**

A summary of the ways in which you further enrich the health of the community you serve. For example:

*In addition to providing uncompensated care and a variety of community programs, we contribute to our region's health by ...*

Include training for physicians, nurses and other staff; service on regional health partnership boards; advocacy activities for healthy local policies; etc.

### **The pressures upon you**

A description of the escalating pressure your organization is facing. For example:

*We're committed to providing our community the care it needs ... when the federal/state Medicaid program reimburses our hospital XX pennies on each dollar we spend to treat a Medicaid patient, it forces resources to be taken away from other needed areas like disaster readiness and information technology improvements.*

Provide recent Medicaid numbers.

### **Your Community...Your Mission**

A concluding summary of resources, services and staff dedicated to programs benefiting the community, specifically those with little or no assistance.

### **... Additional AHA Resources**

Charity Care and Billing:

[http://www.aha.org/aha/key\\_issues/bcp/index.html](http://www.aha.org/aha/key_issues/bcp/index.html)

Community Health:

<http://www.communityhlth.org/communityhlth/resources/communitybenefit.html>