



Healthcare Research Policy & Advocacy Process Toolkit

Prepared by the Rutgers-NYU Center for Asian Health Promotion and Excellence
Community Advisory Board

2026

AN INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH POLICY AND ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

CENTER OF ASIAN HEALTH PROMOTION AND EXCELLENCE OFFERS

- A Toolkit for Healthcare Professionals and Community Representatives
- Guide to ,” Making Your Voice Heard”.
- How to become a proficient advocate for the health policy?
- How to contact your legislators and get support.
- How to propose idea that can lead to a bill or a law.

HEALTH POLICY AND RESEARCH IN HEALTHCARE

- Government-funded biomedical research has historically boosted economic growth, strengthened national security, and kept countries at the forefront of global innovation.
- Health policy research helps governments and institutions understand what works, what doesn't, and how to deliver care more effectively.
- Raising Health Policy awareness including monitoring and evaluation is next stage of the policy advocacy process, in which policy research can have a significant impact on policy making process.
- Advocating for evidence-based Health Policy can have significant impact on research funding for departments. It is important to understand the connection.

THE POWER OF ADVOCACY TO DRIVE HEALTHCARE POLICY INITIATIVES



WHAT IS HEALTH POLICY?

- Definition: **Health policy** (*Refers to the decisions, plans, and actions undertaken to achieve specific healthcare goals within a society*).
- A principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, political party, business or individual.
- Examples:
 - Policies that impact community health
 - Regulations on prescription drugs.
 - Funding for public health programs.
 - Laws regarding healthcare insurance coverage.
 - Policies on environmental impacting health and healthcare.
 - Mandatory vaccination schedule recommendation and implementation.



WHY DOES HEALTHCARE POLICY MATTER?

HEALTHCARE POLICY IMPACTS EVERYONE, FROM INDIVIDUALS TO ENTIRE COMMUNITIES.

- It influences:
 - **Access to care:** How and where community members can receive medical services.
 - **Healthcare Cost:** The price of treatment, prescriptions, and insurance.
 - **Quality of care provided:** The standards and safety of medical services.
 - **Public health:** How we prevent and respond to diseases and health crises.
 - **Health Research:** Choosing which research can get more support and funding.

WHO MAKES HEALTH & HEALTHCARE POLICIES ?



Federal Level

- Congress (Legislative Branch)
- The President and Federal Agencies (Executive Branch)
- The Supreme Court (Judicial Branch)



State Level

- State Legislatures (Legislative branch)
- The Governor and state health departments (Executive Branch)
- The Supreme Court (Judicial Branch)



Local Level

- City Councils and County Commissions
- Local health departments
- County Health Departments

POWER OF OUR VOICE

**ELECTED OFFICIALS REPRESENT THEIR CONSTITUENTS—
THAT'S US AND OUR COMMUNITY!**

- A personal story and perspective can be more powerful than any statistic in influencing elected officials.
- Legislators and their staff track constituent contacts. A high volume of calls, emails, or letters on a single topic signals that it's a priority for voters.
- Everyone must understand how to contact their legislators and how to have their voice heard.



DOING YOUR HOMEWORK

- **Identify Your Legislators:** Find your U.S. Senators, U.S. House of Representative, and state legislators.
- **Review the state website of the legislature.** -(Senators and General assembly Members)
- **Research the Issue:**
 - Understand the specific bill or policy you are trying to addressing.
 - Know the bill number (e.g., H.R. 1234 or S.B. 567).
 - Research your legislator's previous voting record or public statements on the issue.

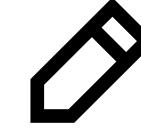


HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR

- **Email or Letter:** Great for providing a well-thought-out detailed argument.
- **Phone Call:** Quick, effective, and shows urgency. Staffers log every call, and a high-volume calls get noticed.
- **In-Person Meeting:** The most impactful method to advocate; but requires prior scheduling and preparation.
- Participate in the **State house visit**
- **Capitol Hill day**
 - Federal –in Washington-DC organized by various organizations.
 - Any organization can plan a **HILL DAY** to meet with the legislators who can support the bill or cause. The appointments can be made in advance to meet all the legislators on SAME day.



WRITING A LETTER TO THE LEGISLATOR



Opening

- Identify yourself as a constituent.
- State the purpose of your communication immediately.

Body

- Share your personal story and explain why the issue matters to you and your community.
- Provide factual information and data to support your position.

Closing

- Make a clear "ask" (e.g., "I urge you to co-sponsor this bill" or "Please vote 'no' on this legislation").
- Politely ask for their position on the issue.
- Thank them for their time.
- Include your full name and address.

MAKING A PHONE CALL



- **Prepare a Short Script:** What is the reason for your call
- Specific item-one at a time. (You'll likely speak to a staffer.)
- Write down your key points and what do you expect the legislator to do.
- **Be Polite and Respectful:** The staffer's job is to listen and report your concerns.
- **Key points for your call:**
 - "Hello, my name is [Your Name], and I am a constituent from [Your City/Zip Code]."
 - "I'm calling to ask Senator/Representative [Legislator's Last Name] to [state your clear ask]."
 - "This issue is important to me because
 - [briefly share your personal story]."
- **Finally, thank the staffer** for their time.

IN PERSON MEETING

- **Request the Meeting:** Call the local or D.C. office and request to schedule a meeting with the health legislative aide.
- You can also e-mail request for an in- person meeting through state legislator's website.
- **Preparation:**
 - Prepare a written document and make a one-page leave-behind document containing key points.
 - Be prepared to answer any questions that the staff might ask.
 - Be respectful and professional, even if you disagree.
- **During the Meeting:**
 - Start by thanking them for their time.
 - State the issue clearly, propose an idea or suggestion.
 - Share your personal story and explain the importance of the issue.
 - Make a clear, concise ask.

FOLLOW UP - STAYING ENGAGED

- **Send a Thank-You Note:** Follow up with a brief email thanking the legislator or staffer for their time and restating your key points.
- **Monitor the Legislation:** Keep track of the bill's progress.
- **Stay Informed:** Follow local and national news and subscribe to legislative updates.
- **Encourage Others:** More voices make the bigger impact!

HOW DOES AN IDEA BECOME A BILL, AND THEN A LAW?

Deep dive into how the simple ideas lead to a bill which can become a law.

IDEA AND DRAFTING

- The community member can start with a proposal, and the legislator may choose to support the idea.
- The process starts with an **idea**, which can come from a member of Congress, a constituent, a special interest group, or a government agency.
- A member of Congress then sponsors the idea and has it formally written into a bill.
- The bill is then given a number (e.g., H.R. 1 for House of Representatives bills or S. 1 for Senate bills) and introduced in either the House or the Senate

COMMITTEE ACTION

- Once the idea/bill is introduced by the legislator, the bill is referred to a committee relevant to its subject matter, such as the Committee on the Judiciary or the Committee on Foreign Affairs.
- Health related bills are referred primarily to the HEALTH Committee.
- The committee carefully examines the bill, holds hearings to gather testimony from experts and the public, and may make changes (amendments) in a process called "markup." The committee then votes on whether to recommend the bill for a vote by the full chamber. If the committee doesn't act on a bill, it "dies" in committee.
- It's very important to continue to talk to legislators to support the bill so that it does not DIE.

FLOOR TO ACTION

- If the bill is reported out of committee (such as health committee), it's placed on a calendar to be considered by the entire chamber (the "floor"). Sometimes it is called second reading.
- In both the House and the Senate, members debate the bill and can propose further amendments.
- The rules for debate vary between the two chambers. After debate, a vote is held. A simple majority is required for the bill to pass.

REFERRAL TO ANOTHER CHAMBER

- If the bill passes one chamber, it is sent to the other.
- For example, if it passed the **House**, it goes to the **Senate**, where it goes through the same committee and floor action process.
- The second chamber can approve the bill as is, amend it, or reject it.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE AND FINAL APPROVAL

- If the second chamber amends the bill, and the two versions are different, a **conference committee** is formed.
- This temporary committee, made up of members from both the House and the Senate, works to resolve the differences and create a single, unified bill.
- **Both chambers** must then vote on and approve this final, compromised version.

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

ONCE THE IDENTICAL BILL HAS BEEN PASSED BY BOTH THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE, IT IS SENT TO THE PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT HAS A FEW OPTIONS:

- **Sign the bill:** This officially makes it a **law**.
- **Veto the bill:** The president can refuse to sign the bill and send it back to Congress with an explanation of their objections. Congress can then attempt to override the veto with a two-thirds majority vote in both the House and Senate.
- **Take no action:** If the president does nothing for 10 days (excluding Sundays) while Congress is in session, the bill automatically becomes a law. If Congress adjourns before the 10 days are up, the bill is automatically vetoed in what's known as a **pocket veto**.

FINAL TIPS & TAKEAWAYS

- **Call to Action** –especially if the initiative is through an organization
- Determine what is the **KEY issue** for CAHPE members?
- Why **funding for research** is important for community health?
- **Everyone's Voice Matters. Start today.**
- **Find Your Legislators:** Visit the website such as <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/> for New Jersey and <https://nyassembly.gov/leg/> for New York State
- **Make the Call** –if you need help , discuss with a group who supports the same cause.
- **Write the Email.** – get help from good writers in your network
- **Get Involved** – Awareness is the first step of involvement
- **Together, we can create a healthier community for all through ADVOCACY**

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THANK YOU

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