

Community involvement and outreach

Becoming involved in your community often leads to opportunities to engage in the public forum. Some invitations will find you, by virtue of your profession and your affiliation with medical associations and health care organizations in your region. You also may choose to be more proactive about pursuing public-facing roles. As you evaluate possible public roles in the community, consider how each role could help you achieve your personal communications goals and where to focus your energy.

As part of your Public Forum Participation Strategy, you may want to consider some of the following actions:

- Make yourself available to community relations professionals at the hospital, medical practice or other organizations with which you are affiliated. This could result in public speaking opportunities and involvement in health education and awareness programs for the community.
- Create and maintain relationships with local, statewide or national organizations with missions and visions that are aligned with your personal and professional goals and passions.
- Work to build strong relationships with respected community leaders and elected officials who lead agencies and organizations that are important to the cause(s) you champion and the organization(s) where you are building a public identity.
- Identify nonprofit organizations that would value your expertise and voice as they work to improve the health and wellness of the community. Meet with executives or board members of those nonprofits to determine how you might become involved.
- Serve on advisory boards and community boards that offer you a public role or platform to express your health care policy positions. These could be government-appointed boards, elected positions, or advisory groups affiliated with nonprofits or foundations.
- Distinguish yourself – and the organization you represent – as an engaged community partner by contributing creativity, energy and your unique perspective.
- If you want to get involved with advocacy related to a specific public policy or health care issue, identify the most well-respected and well-run advocacy group(s). Join that group and determine the best ways to move into a public-facing role with that organization.
- When you receive invitations for speaking engagements, evaluate whether the opportunity aligns with your personal communications goals. As you develop your public presentation, identify how to convey your key messages along with the subject you are presenting.