



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the mission of Advocates for Community Health (ACH)?

To meaningfully impact federal public policy by harnessing the effectiveness and structure of forward leaning community health centers and systems to advance the delivery of health care to underserved populations and cultivate new opportunities to achieve health equity in support of patients and communities in need.

What specific goals does ACH have in the short and long term? How will ACH support my health center?

Advocates for Community Health (ACH) has four topline goals:

1. Be the advocacy leader and recognized authority for forward thinking health centers by advocating robustly at the federal level for their needs and priorities.
2. Recruit and cultivate a membership that is forward thinking and driving innovation.
3. Advance a broad scope of initiatives and systems that support the next generation of health centers.
4. Build an organization that meets its members agreed upon needs and generates high levels of member satisfaction.

In the short term, ACH will concentrate on building a top-notch advocacy team to ensure forward thinking health centers have a seat at the important federal policy making tables. We will work closely with our members to shape a focused advocacy agenda that ensures our collective interests are being aggressively represented.

What specific policies will you be advocating for?

As we ramp up in our first year, we will be working closely with our members to develop a robust, consensus-based, long-term agenda, but in the short-run our focus will be on our members' immediate needs including things such as:

1. Value-based payment
2. Advocate for justice, diversity, equity and inclusion across the health care system
3. 340B
4. Influencing the new Administration on immediate priorities such as vaccination plans and COVID relief.
5. Advocate for policy and funding that takes into consideration the size and scope of the health center.

What makes Advocates for Community Health different than others (e.g., NACHC, NHRA, PCAs, etc.)?

ACH will be laser focused on advancing well-defined and forward thinking federal policies to build the future of community health care in the United States. We will nimbly advocate for our members based on a clear vision and smart strategy that represents our collective best thinking on the highest priorities that will underpin the advancement of community health care in the 21st century. We will be mission-driven and member-focused with a deep commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Every association brings different focus, and we would expect our members to seek support and resources in whatever way they need it. We expect many of our members will belong to multiple state and national trade associations.

However, based on the existing gaps and unmet needs that exist across a network of health centers, the vision, strategy and work this organization will do should not be duplicative but rather complementary to the work of other organizations. We look forward to partnering with any and all organizations that share our goals.

What role can I/will I play in decision making as a member organization?

Organizational members will have the ability to serve on our board and committees and have a voice in helping to shape our policy agenda. Our innovation members will also have the ability to serve on our committees and have input into our policy agenda.

Early work will include an environmental assessment and annual membership surveys to ensure that members always have a meaningful voice in setting the direction for the advocacy work of the organization.

What are the benefits of being a member?

Members of ACH will get top notch advocacy representation in Washington, DC. This will include sophisticated strategy carried out by government relations professionals who will aggressively advocate on behalf of our members for our shared interests.

Members will also have access to, and joint membership with, the Association of the Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU) to leverage programs and services to support their organization needs.

What's the relationship with Association of the Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU)?

ACU is an established national membership organization providing programs and services to support a network of health centers and providers for the underserved. By partnering with the ACU we are able to provide enhanced benefits to our own members and leverage their successful legacy of advocating on behalf of health centers and systems as well as the individuals who work within them.



Why are there limitations on membership and how was the membership criteria determined?

In order to achieve the focused policy agenda that makes Advocates for Community Health unique, we are being very deliberate in recruiting members that represent and align with mission, policy pillars, and with the forward thinking, visionary approach of ACH as a whole.

The membership criteria reflect organization standards as well as areas of innovation and achievement that we believe support and represent the mission and policy pillars of ACH. We want to recognize and celebrate the innovations and operational excellence visible across the health center network, while also being mindful and deliberate to bring together a focused and aligned group of members.

If my Health Center doesn't meet membership criteria, can I still be involved? If so, how?

One way to be engaged and supportive is to become a member of the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU). Members of ACU will have the opportunity to provide input to ACU staff, committees and leadership which ACU can impart to ACH as members of the Board and leadership. In addition, we look forward to partnering with a diverse set of stakeholders that share common goals and priorities whether as an organization member or otherwise.

How will other state/national organizations be involved, if at all?

Without question, we are all stronger when we band together. To that end, we welcome and look forward to working with a diverse set of stakeholders that share common goals and priorities through both informal and more formal alliances.

What role can corporate partners play?

We look forward to working with corporate partners who are interested in supporting our agenda. Our plan is to develop strong relationships with corporations that share our values and align with our goals.

Do IRS rules allow my CHC join ACH?

501(c)(3)s, including CHCs, are permitted to join 501(c)(4) organizations. Members will need to report payment of membership dues to CHC on their Form 990s. Membership dues are reported as "Other Expenses" on the Statement of Functional Expenses. We cannot advise members on whether they are required to report any portion of the payment as a lobbying expense on Schedule C of the return. Our legal counsel is available to discuss the IRS guidance on this question, if you or your counsel would like further information.

ACH will engage in lobbying activity; therefore, it is not eligible to receive federal grants, loans or awards. For that reason, members should not use Section 330 or other any other federal funds to pay membership dues to ACH.

