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July 20, 2026

Dear ACH Members,

Welcome to ***How to Build a Health Center Champion Before They're Elected***, ACH's **National Health Center Week** advocacy series.

Over the next several weeks, we'll share actionable tips to help you build relationships with congressional candidates before Election Day. The strongest champions for health centers don't become advocates overnight. They become champions because someone took the time to educate them, invite them into the community, and demonstrate the impact health centers have on the lives of their constituents.

This election cycle comes at a pivotal moment. Congress will soon make critical decisions affecting long-term health center funding, the future of the 340B program and workforce investments. The relationships you build today can shape the policies that affect your patients and communities tomorrow.

Election season offers a unique opportunity to introduce candidates to your mission, strengthen relationships with incumbents, and build bipartisan support for health centers. Every candidate, regardless of political party, is a potential future policymaker and partner.

Week 1: Know Your Candidates

Whether someone is a longtime incumbent or running for office for the first time, don't assume they understand what a community health center is, how it's funded,

or the essential role it plays in your community. Before you ask someone to become a champion, take time to learn about them.

Take time this week to learn:

- [Who is running for Congress in your district.](#)
- **Their background** and policy priorities.
- **Their experience** with healthcare or public service.
- **Whether they've visited** a community health center or spoken publicly about primary care.
- **If they're an incumbent**, how they've voted on issues affecting community health centers.

Resources

Candidate Research Checklist

Candidate Questionnaire

District Office Contact Guide

Download ACH's NHCW Toolkit

This Week's Action

We encourage you to research every congressional candidate in your district. The more you understand their priorities and interests, the easier it will be to connect your health center's story to the issues they care about.

Stay tuned next week, when we'll share tips on inviting candidates to visit your health center and see your mission in action.

If I can help with anything, please don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you for all that you do!

Sincerely,

Molly Grady

Director of Policy & Government Affairs



Advocates for Community Health, 1575 I St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005

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July 27, 2026

Dear ACH Members,

Last week, you identified the congressional candidates running in your district. This week, it's time to take the next step in building a lasting relationship.

Welcome to **Week 2** of ***How to Build a Health Center Champion Before They're Elected.***

Invite Them to See Your Mission in Action

There is no substitute for seeing a community health center firsthand. A tour gives candidates the opportunity to meet the people behind the mission, from providers and care teams to patients whose lives have been changed because they had access to affordable, comprehensive care. It's also your chance to show what makes community health centers different.

Rather than talking about your impact, let candidates experience it.

Whether they spend 30 minutes or an hour with your team, they'll leave with a better understanding of the vital role community health centers play in keeping communities healthy.

What Makes a Great Visit?

Consider highlighting:

- Your integrated model of care, including medical, behavioral health, dental, and pharmacy services.

- How your health center addresses social drivers of health through services like transportation assistance, language access, nutrition support, and care coordination.
- The patients and communities you serve.
- The dedicated staff who make your mission possible.
- Innovative programs or partnerships unique to your organization.

Keep It Nonpartisan

As a nonprofit organization, your health center can educate candidates about your mission and the communities you serve, but it's [important to do so in a nonpartisan manner](#).

Allowed

- Invite candidates to tour your health center.
- Educate candidates about health centers and the policy issues affecting patient care.
- Facilitate conversations with staff, board members, and patients (with appropriate consent).

Not Allowed

- Endorse or oppose candidates.
- Coordinate activities with political campaigns.
- Provide preferential treatment to one candidate over another.

Best Practice

Invite **all congressional candidates** for the same office using the same process and offer each an equal opportunity to visit. Your goal is to educate future policymakers, not advocate for a political campaign.

Resources

To help you get started, [ACH's NHCW Grassroots Advocacy Toolkit](#) includes:

- Tour Invitation Template
- Sample Visit Agenda
- Media Outreach Tips
- Congressional Engagement Resources

This Week's Action

Invite every congressional candidate in your district to visit your health center.

Even if a candidate can't attend before Election Day, the invitation itself begins a relationship that can continue after the election. A future Member of Congress is far more likely to remember your organization if they've walked your halls, met your staff, and seen your mission in action.

Next week, we'll focus on making your message memorable by telling stories that connect your health center's impact to the issues candidates care about.

Thank you for helping educate tomorrow's leaders about the essential role community health centers play in improving the health of our nation's communities.

Sincerely,

Molly Grady

Director of Policy & Government Affairs



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August 3, 2026

Dear ACH Members,

Over the past two weeks, you've researched the candidates running in your district and started building relationships. Now it's time to bring your health center's mission to life during National Health Center Week.

Welcome to **Week 3** of ***How to Build a Health Center Champion Before They're Elected.***

Tell Your Story: Community Health Centers in Action

Candidates are building their understanding of healthcare and the platforms they support long before they're sworn into office. The conversations they have during the campaign often shape the positions they take once elected. Every meeting is an opportunity to influence how they think about primary care in your community.

A congressional candidate may meet thousands of people during a campaign, and while they may not remember every statistic they heard, they will remember the stories that connect real people to the policies that have a daily impact on the lives in their communities. They'll remember the child whose severe asthma was treated and controlled thanks to resources available from the 340B program, and they'll remember the commercial truck driver who regained his license after his previously untreated diabetes was managed thanks to the integrated care team at his community health center.

You all have stories and examples of how community health centers improve lives, strengthen families, and help entire communities thrive. Facts and statistics matter, but stories are what people remember. These experiences connect policy in Washington to the real-world impact of community health centers back home.

This Week's Resources

- [Myth vs. Fact Series: Modify to fit your health center](#)
- [Sample Social Media Posts](#)
- [Media Outreach Tips](#)
- [Inside America's Health Centers: Share the stories](#)

Download all Grassroots Advocacy Resources

This Week's Action

Share one patient or community success story. Whether it's in a meeting with a candidate, on social media, in your local newspaper, or during a health center tour, take this opportunity to tell the story of how your health center is changing lives in your community.

Next week, we'll focus on how to stay engaged throughout the campaign season and continue building relationships that last well beyond Election Day.

Thank you for helping tell the story of America's community health centers one patient, one family, and one community at a time.

Sincerely,

Molly Grady

Director of Policy & Government Affairs



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August 10, 2026

Dear ACH Members,

National Health Center Week and candidate visits provide an important starting point for ongoing conversations. During the past few weeks, you have worked to educate candidates, invite them into your health center and show them firsthand how health centers strengthen their communities. Now it's time to build on those connections and keep the conversation going.

Follow up with every candidate who visited or engaged with your health center. Thank them directly and publicly, and continue to connect the issues they hear about on the campaign trail to the patients, staff, and communities they hope to represent.

And if you haven't heard back yet, keep asking. Campaign schedules change constantly, and an unanswered invitation is not necessarily a "no." Send another invitation, offer several dates, and remind the campaign that a health center visit is an opportunity to hear directly from patients, providers, and community leaders about healthcare in the district.

While one visit rarely makes a champion, repeated conversations do. As you continue these conversations, remember to recap the policy priorities discussed, send follow-up resources and/or information, and let them know your health center is available as a resource when healthcare questions come up. Not every follow-up should be another ask, the goal is to become a familiar and trusted community voice for the campaign.

As you continue to have these conversations, keep the policy message simple and connect it directly to what candidates have seen and heard in your community. We suggest emphasizing:

- **Protect 340B and oppose the harmful rebate model.** Health centers use 340B savings to expand access to affordable medications and support services such as behavioral health, dental care, care coordination, transportation and other programs that meet community needs. [Protecting predictable, upfront 340B discounts, and opposing policies](#) that create cash-flow challenges or unnecessary administrative burdens, is essential to preserving patient care. The rebate model puts an unfair financial burden on health centers, the entities that can least afford it.
- **Support the Community Health Center Fund.** Stable, long-term funding allows health centers to plan, hire staff, expand services and continue providing care in communities across the country. [Congress must fund the Health Center Fund](#) with a strong baseline and regular increases when it expires on December 31, 2026.
- **Strengthen the health center workforce.** Investments in recruitment, training and retention are necessary to address persistent workforce shortages and ensure patients can access timely care. Please cosponsor the [Developing the Community Health Workforce Act](#), HR 8629 (House only) which will strengthen and expand the health center workforce.

This Week's Resources

- Policy one-pagers
- An op-ed template
- A social media toolkit
- A local media pitch template

Download all Grassroots Advocacy Resources

This Week's Action

Thank every candidate who has engaged with your health center, recognize their participation publicly and use the opportunity to reinforce the policies your health

center and patients need. Then send another round of invitations to candidates who have not yet visited.

After a candidate has visited, find a reason to engage with them again before election day. The goal is to turn the interaction into a relationship, so persistence matters. Every visit, follow-up, and public acknowledgment helps build stronger relationships—and stronger champions for community health centers.

Sincerely,

Molly Grady

Director of Policy & Government Affairs



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August 17, 2026

Dear ACH Members,

Over the past four weeks during this [How to Build a Health Center Champion Before They're Elected email series](#), we've shared ways to identify candidates, invite them into your health center, tell your story, and keep the conversation going. This week, it's time to bring more people into the effort.

Advocacy is not limited to government affairs professionals or senior leaders. Candidates and elected officials should hear from the people who experience your health center from different perspectives: the clinicians delivering care despite ongoing workforce shortages, the board members who understand the community's needs, the support staff helping patients navigate barriers to care, and the patients who know firsthand what access to a health center means.

This week, we are asking ACH members to think about how to build an advocacy bench by providing the tools and confidence to help tell your health center's story.

Small Actions Create Lasting Impact

Encourage your health center community to:

- Share personal stories about the difference your health center makes.
- Talk about the issues affecting patients and access to care.
- Participate in candidate forums and community events.
- Use social media to highlight your health center's impact.
- Invite elected officials to visit and see your mission in action.

Remember: Health is on the ballot, and every conversation is an opportunity to build a health center champion.

Celebrate Your Advocates

Advocacy can become a meaningful part of workplace culture when people see that their participation matters. Recognize the staff, board members and patients who speak up, attend events, and share their stories. Highlight their efforts internally or on social media—and invite others to get involved.

This Week's Resources

- [Questions for Candidate Forums](#)
- [Social Media Toolkit](#)

Download all Grassroots Advocacy Resources

This Week's Action: Recruit Five Advocates

Share these resources with your staff, board members and patients, and identify five people who can help tell your health center's story. Encourage each person to take one simple action this week, such as:

- Attend a candidate forum and ask a question.
- Share a story about your health center.
- Write an op-ed or letter to the editor.
- Amplify a health center post on social media.
- Contact a member of Congress about an issue affecting patients.

Advocacy is strongest when more people can authentically share their experiences and show how policy decisions affect the lives of patients and communities back home.

Sincerely,

Molly Grady

Director of Policy & Government Affairs



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August 24, 2026

Dear ACH Members,

Over the past six weeks, we have shared tools to help you identify candidates, invite them into your health centers, educate them about the issues affecting your communities and begin building the next generation of health center champions.

Now it is time to turn that engagement into long-term relationships.

Election Day may mark the end of a campaign, but it should not mark the end of the conversation. The connections you are building will now lay the groundwork for educating future policymakers, advancing community health center priorities and preparing for the next Congress.

As the final email in ACH's [How to Build a Health Center Champion Before They're Elected](#) email advocacy series, we'd like to remind you of a couple of key engagement opportunities.

Before Election Day

- Thank every candidate and campaign that engaged with your health center.
- Send a follow-up email reinforcing your willingness to serve as a trusted resource.
- Document what you learned, including the candidate's interests, questions, and commitments, and identify opportunities for continued engagement.

- Complete ACH's candidate survey for each campaign your health center met with to record candidates' positions on the Community Health Center Fund, 340B, Medicaid, workforce challenges, and access to care.
- Identify one appropriate next step for maintaining each relationship after the election.

After Election Day

- Congratulate successful candidates and introduce, or reintroduce, your health center as a local resource.
- Continue appropriate relationships with candidates who were not elected. They may remain influential community leaders, pursue other public service roles, or seek office in the future.
- Begin planning early opportunities to engage newly elected officials, including facility tours, staff briefings, and meetings with health center leaders and patients. These can take place before the new Congress is sworn in.

Resources for Week 6:

- [Candidate Engagement Survey](#).

Download all Grassroots Advocacy Resources

Whether a candidate wins or loses, continuing the relationship matters. By staying connected and continuing to educate policymakers, we can ensure that community health centers remain part of the conversation during campaigns, throughout the next Congress and beyond.

This week's call to action: Complete the [ACH Candidate Engagement Survey](#).

Please use the survey to share what you've learned about the candidates' understanding of and views on the Community Health Center Fund, 340B, Medicaid, workforce shortages, and access to care in the communities they hope to represent. We also encourage you to share your completed surveys with the ACH team. Your responses will help us identify follow-up opportunities and prepare for targeted engagement with the next Congress.

Thank you for participating in this series and for helping make community health a priority throughout the election cycle. Together, we are helping candidates understand the essential role that health centers play in their communities and building the relationships that can turn today's candidates into tomorrow's health center champions in Congress.

Sincerely,

Molly Grady

Director of Policy & Government Affairs



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