



## Leading Advocacy Day Legislative Meetings 2017

- As team lead, start by introducing the name of the health center you're representing and ensure that each person in your group introduces him/herself and how he/she is connected to the health center, i.e. patient, consumer board member, staff, etc.
- Have someone on the team talk about what a Federally Qualified Health Center is, regardless of whether the legislator or his/her staff claim to be familiar FQHCs.
  - For example, "FQHCs are located in medically underserved areas throughout New York State and provide high-quality, patient-centered, community-based primary care to anyone who needs care, regardless of ability to pay. They provide a range of services, including primary and preventive care, behavioral health services, dental care, and substance abuse services, in a culturally and linguistically appropriate setting."
- Give a packet to every legislative staff member at the meeting. The packets include all the technical information on this year's budget priorities. If you feel comfortable, you can review the priorities with the staff, but you do not necessarily need to. **The goal of the meeting is to tell the legislators why your health center is vitally important to your community.**
- Team members should explain why your health center is vital to the community. This year, it is particularly important to emphasize that your health center:
  - **Serves anyone who seeks care, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.** This includes uninsured patients, who may otherwise have difficulty accessing primary and preventive care and be forced into more costly health care scenarios.
  - **Provides high quality, comprehensive primary care services that reflect the community in which it's located.** The majority of health center board members are patients from the community. Highlight how your FQHC focuses on community need, including providing outreach and enrollment services, languages spoken at the health center, or other special programs or services that are unique to your health center.
  - Is the community's safety net primary care provider. **We provide coordinated care that prevents patients from needing more costly care, like emergency room visits and hospitalizations.**
- Make sure to close the meeting by stating:
  - It is critical that the **State invest in community-based providers, including FQHCs**, to ensure their continued ability to provide high-quality, comprehensive health care services to all who need it.