



### Leading Advocacy Day Legislative Meetings 2016

- As team lead, start by introducing the name of the health center you're representing and ensure each person in your group introduces themselves and how they are 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 say they already know.
  - 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 their 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 legislative packets 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 a vitally important member of the community.**
- Team members should explain why your health center is critical 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 preventative care services and be forced into more costly care.
  - **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 FQHCs receive their **full share of indigent care funding** and
  - that the **State provide investments into community-based providers, like FQHCs**, to ensure their continued ability to provide high quality, community-based and comprehensive healthcare services and to grow these necessary services.