



HIMSS Chapter Advocacy Toolkit

A Guide for Public Policy Advocacy

Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Chapter Advocate Responsibilities](#)
3. [Leadership and Regions](#)
4. [Convening](#)
5. [Recognition](#)
6. [Resources](#)
7. [Public Policy Events](#)
8. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Introduction

The HIMSS Chapter Advocacy Toolkit outlines:

- 1 The role HIMSS chapter advocate can play to further HIMSS public policy objectives; and
- 2 Activities and resources to support chapter advocacy activities.

For additional resources, view the Chapter Leader Resource Area (CLRA) [here](#). Note: When this document refers to “state”, “territory” and “province” is implied in addition.

Chapter Advocacy Roundtable Overview

With 58 HIMSS Chapters across North America including the United States, its territories, and Canada, HIMSS serves as the connection point for members and policymakers on key health information and technology priorities. The HIMSS Chapter Advocacy program provides an opportunity for HIMSS chapters to elect a chapter leader to expand HIMSS priorities through grassroots and grasstops engagement.

Collectively, HIMSS Chapter Advocates make up the HIMSS Chapter Advocacy Roundtable (CAR). Chapter Advocates serve as a strong coordinated voice and respected source of information about health information and technology. CAR members, through Researching, Educating, Power Building, and Monitoring, are able to influence state, territorial, provincial and local health information and technology policies. Over 100 HIMSS Chapter Advocates are engaged in planning and facilitating advocacy and public policy activities within their state, territory or region.

CAR Strategic Aims

The HIMSS Chapter Advocacy Roundtable (CAR) transforms health through information and technology by informing, empowering and mobilizing HIMSS Chapters to take advocacy action at the state and local level.

- 1 Connecting federal (national), state and local health IT efforts through active engagement of state officials
- 2 Support a learning health IT policy community by conducting monthly conference calls, regional networking and educational opportunities including webinars and conferences
- 3 Leverage opportunities to further health IT policy objectives by identifying one or more chapter advocates, increasing participation in U.S. National Health IT Week and the HIMSS Global Conference

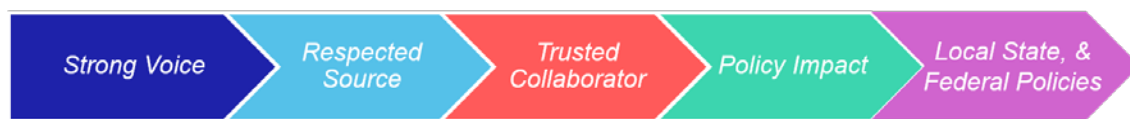
What does it mean to be a Chapter Advocate?

Chapters should become familiar with both chapter and global HIMSS organizational values and principles and link them to policy directions and state advocacy work that:

- Reaches consensus on shared values and principles that leads to consensus on specific advocacy issues;
- Ensures support for advocacy through approval by larger audiences, such as the chapter board or membership;
- Creates a 'check' for long-term advocacy plans – does this advocacy issue reflect our values and principals?; and
- Builds strong coalitions and engages a wide audience that share values and principles.

HIMSS Chapters may select one or more Chapter Leaders or advocacy committee members (typically the "Advocacy Chair") to lead chapter advocacy efforts.

Tenants of Chapter Advocacy include a Strong Voice, leading to your chapter becoming a Respected Source of information and a Trusted Collaborator. This aims to influence policy at the local, state, provincial and national levels.





What is in your advocacy toolbox?

Effective advocacy involves a number of activities that support an organization's goals. HIMSS encourages CAR members to understand HIMSS's Public Policy Principles and to employ the following strategies:

- **Research:** Include nonpartisan analysis, study, or research, as well as other information through community conversations and focus groups. **ducate:** Include one-on-one conversations, Chapter Advocacy Days, community meetings and media messaging.
- **Power-Build:** Organize groups to leverage individual or collective influence around an issue, including letter-writing campaigns, building coalitions, and building relationships with elected officials or other community leaders.
- **Monitor:** Monitoring institutions, policies, and practices and publicizing results.

HIMSS's Public Policy Principles

Supporting Care Transformation Quality, Safety and Outcomes Clinical & Administrative Efficiency Interoperability, Health Information Exchange & Infrastructure Innovation & Research Information Privacy and Security Patient Activation and Engagement 	Expanding Access to High Quality Care Connected Health Equity 
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Increasing Economic Opportunity Workforce development Economic growth		Making Communities Healthier Population Management Public Health	
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Collaboration and Building relationships

A significant part of your role as Chapter Advocate is to build relationships. These relationships may include government and non-profit representatives as well as your fellow chapter leaders and members. There is great power in collaborating with other organizations who share a similar vision. Many of your relationships with these organizations could help bolster visibility of shared issues with key decision-makers. Often, chapter leaders and members may be employed by or have relationships with these potential partners. Please submit a [collaboration request](#) if you plan to enter into a formal collaboration.

Chapter Leaders	Government Officials	Non-profit Organizations
Your own membership Peers	State Health IT Coordinators Governor's Office / Taskforce State and Local Health Departments State Legislative Health Committee/Taskforce Mayor's Office/Taskforce	State and local associations Membership organizations which may have similar policy priorities (ex. AHIMA, AMA, APHA) State/Regional Health Information Exchange Universities and Colleges

Chapter Advocate Responsibilities

- Create an advocacy action plan and regularly update Chapter Leaders and HIMSS staff on progress, successes, and challenges
- Participate in regular [CAR calls](#) to share updates, stories, questions, and learn from your peers
- Participate in the [Chapter Advocacy Recognition Program](#) and corresponding advocacy challenges
- Participate in advocacy workshops at [Chapter Leader Exchange](#) and [HIMSS Global Health Conference](#)
- Maintain relationships with and educate key stakeholders about HIMSS's priorities
- Coordinate at least one advocacy and public policy-related Chapter activity per year

Additional ways to get involved

- Plan an Advocacy Day with visits to legislators during their session. See [Advocacy Day Toolkit](#) for guidance.
- Thread advocacy and public policy through all chapter events
- Monitor legislation on issues important to your chapter.
- Serve as a quick summary source for members on federal and state policy information.
- Participate in HIMSS's virtual marches
- Connect to your legislators through the HIMSS [Legislative Action Center](#)
- Advocate for officials to leverage HIMSS's public policy principles and priorities in the development of state plans or legislation

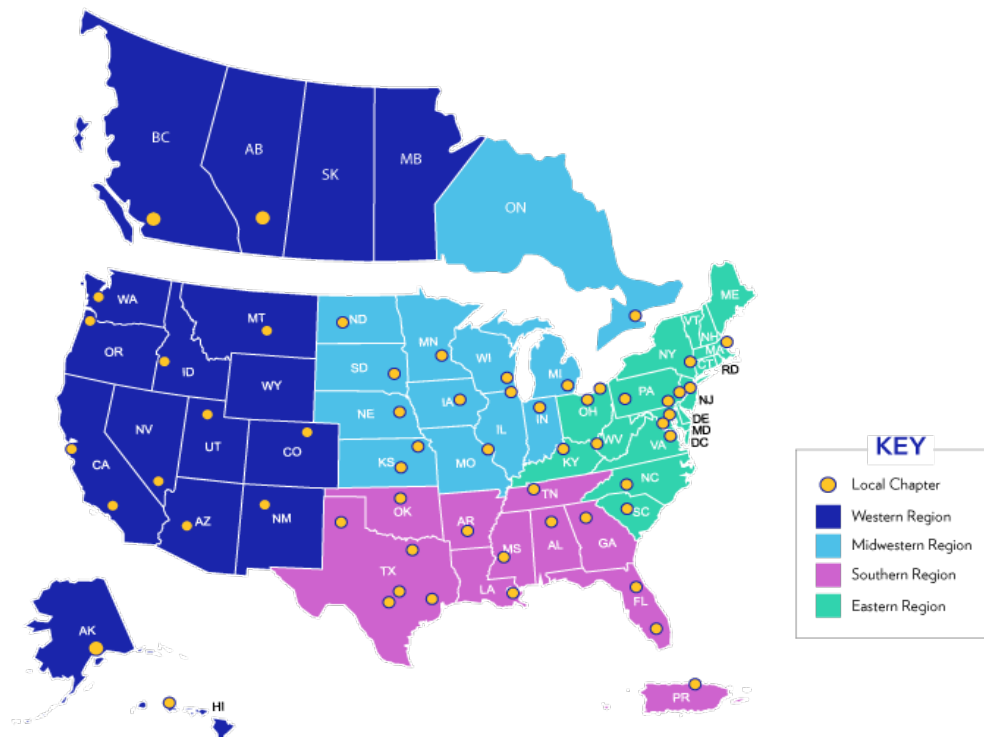
- Recognize officials for their efforts during a Chapter Advocacy Day and submit a nomination on their behalf for the U.S. state Official of the Year Award
- Spread awareness about HIMSS through submitting a news/blog, your chapter's website, and social media
- Collaborate with partners
- Engage students through partnerships with local colleges/universities
- Develop advocacy workshops and trainings
- Invite state officials and their staff on HIMSS Davies Award and EMRAM Stage 7-recognized facility tours
- Leverage chapter membership and bordering chapters to improve outreach to officials
- Request a proclamation (governor's office) or resolution (legislators) recognizing Chapter Advocacy Day or U.S. National Health IT Week

CAR Activities & Events

Event	Timeframe
<i>Fiscal Year Begins</i>	<i>July 1</i>
<i>Year End Recognition</i>	<i>Submission due at end of fiscal year (July 1)</i>
<i>Monthly CAR Calls</i>	<i>Third Friday every month at 12 pm Eastern Time</i>
<i>Chapter Advocate & State Official of the Year Call for Nominations</i>	<i>July – September</i>
<i>Chapter Leader Exchange</i>	<i>September</i>
<i>Chapter Leader Workshop at HIMSS Global Health Conference & Exhibition</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Fiscal Year Ends</i>	<i>June 30</i>

Leadership and Regions

The CAR is divided into four regions: Western, Midwestern, Southern, and Eastern (indicated in the map below). The CAR Leaders advise HIMSS staff on strategic direction for the CAR and act as peer mentors for Chapter Advocates. The Chair leads the CAR monthly calls. We encourage you to reach out to these individuals for peer support.



Eastern	Midwestern	Southern	Western
Delaware Valley	Greater Illinois	Alabama	Arizona
Maryland	Greater Kansas City	Arkansas	California - Northern
National Capital Area	Indiana	Florida - Central & North	California - Southern
New England	Iowa	Florida - South	Colorado
New Jersey	Kansas	Georgia	Hawaii - Alaska
New York	Kentucky Bluegrass	Louisiana	Idaho
North Carolina	Michigan	Mississippi	Montana
Ohio - Central & Southern	Midwest Gateway	Oklahoma	Nevada
Ohio - Northern	Minnesota	Puerto Rico	New Mexico
Pennsylvania - Central	Nebraska	Tennessee	Oregon
Pennsylvania - Western	North Dakota	Texas - Austin	Utah
South Carolina	South Dakota	Texas - Dallas / Ft. Worth	Washington State
Virginia	Wisconsin	Texas - Houston	Canadian Prairies
West Virginia	Ontario (Canada)	Texas - Lubbock	British Columbia
		Texas - San Antonio	

Convening

CAR Calls take place the third Friday of every month (Except December and the month of HIMSS Global Health Conference) at 12:00pm Eastern time. Calls recordings and slides are posted on the [Chapter Leader Resource Area](#).

- Updates from the HIMSS Government Relations team
- Open discussion for chapter advocacy information sharing.

Workshops

- Chapter Leader Exchange: Annual training and networking meeting for chapter advocates and leaders. Breakout advocacy training included.
- Global Health Conference pre-conference workshop: Training and networking meeting
- CAR Orientation and Training Webinars (Virtual)



Recognition

HIMSS recognizes chapter advocates for their efforts through a Year-end recognition and short-term advocacy challenges throughout the year.

The CAR Recognition Program consists of two awards:

Year-End Chapter Advocacy Award



At the end of each fiscal year, Chapter Advocates may apply on behalf of their chapter for a Level of Advocacy Recognition. A HIMSS Chapter Level of Advocacy Insignia of honor is presented to the Chapter as a direct result of their Chapter Advocate’s leadership and commitment to advocacy in health information and technology. Submissions are due at the end of each HIMSS Fiscal Year. HIMSS Fiscal Year (June 30th).

The levels include: Presidential, Ambassador, and Advocate. Reaching a level is dependent on appointing or electing chapter advocates, participation in CAR calls, and completing a certain number of advocacy activities. Examples of advocacy activities are listed above in the CAR Overview section.

For additional details, please refer to the HIMSS Chapter Advocacy Roundtable Recognition Submission form.

Chapter Advocate of the Year Award

The Chapter Advocate of The Year is presented to a Chapter Advocate who demonstrates exceptional leadership advocating for health information and technology. The recipient of this award is recognized during HIMSS Global Health Conference.

Eligibility: HIMSS Chapter Members who are officially recognized by their Chapter as a Chapter Advocate during the current fiscal year are eligible. Those not eligible include former recipients of the Chapter Advocate of the Year award and current CAR Chair and Vice Chairs.

U.S. State Official of the Year Award

HIMSS honors a U.S. state official, a U.S. federal official, and a member of Congress during U.S. National Health IT Week for their commitment to transforming health through information and technology. We encourage nominations for U.S. state officials from Chapter Advocates.

Resources

The following are resources HIMSS offers to Chapter Advocates to plan and execute advocacy activities:

- Chapter Leader Resource Area (CLRA): An internal site geared for Chapter Leaders and Advocates with guides and resources. Once logged in, click on the 'Get Involved' dropdown, then click on 'Chapter Advocacy'.
- Besides this toolkit, additional resources on the CLRA include:
 - Advocacy Day Toolkit
 - Policy briefs and analyses
 - Chair and Vice Chairs' contact information
 - Call recordings and slides
 - ... and more!
- Legislative Action Center: A tool launched for HIMSS members to research, educate and take action at the federal and state level. Identify your state's elected official at the click of a button.
- HIMSS Public Policy Principles: HIMSS, along with the HIMSS Public Policy Committee sets board-approved public policy principles, which guides HIMSS's public policy initiatives.
- Peer mentors. Contact the CAR Chair or Vice Chair, or HIMSS staff to seek out experienced advocates for mentorship
- Public policy news and resources

Public Policy Events

U.S. National Health IT Week (NHIT Week) is a nationwide action-oriented week focused on catalyzing actionable change within the U.S. health system through the application of information and technology.

This includes partner-driven activities and events led by the efforts of national health stakeholders. Participants range from the Administration, congressional, federal and state agencies, providers, non-profit organizations and more.

Enhance your participation and gain visibility via events, communications, advocacy, sharing [#IHeartHIT Stories](#), and more. Contact info@healthitweek.org for more information. Learn more at www.healthitweek.org.

[HIMSS Global Health Conference & Exhibition](#) is the leading health information and technology conference, bringing together 45,000+ professionals from 90+ countries for the education, innovation and collaboration they need to transform health through information and technology – all at one time, all in one place. Choose from 300+ education sessions, 1,300+ vendors, hundreds of special programs and endless networking events.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is public policy?

Public policy is a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives. Public policy can determine access, funding and eligibility for programs and services, such as Medicaid, 21st Century Cures Act, and state telehealth laws.



How are public policies created?

Public policy can come from any governmental body, such as Congress, state legislatures, city councils, county commissions, the President or Prime Minister, or governors – to name a few.

What is public policy advocacy?

Public policy advocacy is any actions taken to influence government policy.

What is grassroots advocacy?

Grassroots advocacy is outreach to elected or appointed officials to influence public policy.

What is grassroots advocacy?

Grassroots advocacy is outreach and relationship building with thought leaders and folks who have connections to officials. Examples are non-profit organizations and their chapters such as the American Public Health Association.



Where can I find additional resources on chapter advocacy?

The go-to tool for all things advocacy is the [CLRA](#). Some of the resources you will find are:

- Advocacy planning and tips

- Public and Private stakeholders to engage
- HIMSS mission and public policy priorities
- Contact information for CAR Leaders, who are open to mentoring

How can I connect to other Chapter Advocates?

We invite you to connect with your Vice Chair assigned to your region or HIMSS staff.

What are a few advocacy tips and best practices?

Advocacy in its simplest form is all about connecting with others. We want to equip you with the knowledge and empower you to become a trusted figure for policymakers to rely on. Keep the following tips in mind:

- Set a plan and evaluate progress
- Be succinct and avoid jargon.
- Form an advocacy committee, particularly to plan Advocacy Day
- Collaborate and expand your network
- Speak up! It can be a phone call or email to your legislator's office, a letter to the editor, offering comment at a county commission meeting, or holding an educational event at the Capitol building
- Review your State's Health IT Strategic Plan or Roadmap, if it exists
- Learn from and share with your peers
- Present lessons learned/model practices during CAR calls
- Create opportunities to meet face-to-face during HIMSS events to demonstrate or discuss model practices
- Provide and ask for resources, tools, information, and inspiration