Advocacy for Division Directors

**Advocacy means speaking out on behalf of your patients and your profession.** Advocacy assumes that there is an opportunity for change or improvement, and it is one way to drive or effect that change. In the context of your work as a Division Director there are mechanisms to effect change that are unique to your position. In addition to the mechanisms offered through the ACR, AMA, AF and other organizations, there are opportunities that you can direct within your own division at multiple levels:

- Fellow education and involvement in advocacy
- Faculty Development in advocacy
- Divisional programming and planning
- Lead by Example

**Fellow education and involvement in advocacy**
Fellowship is a protected time to be exposed to a variety of different professional activities. Advocacy can be considered to be part of ACGME competencies for interpersonal communication, professionalism, and systems-based practice. Potential activities to discuss with the Program Director that can be considered “added value” to the fellowship experience:

- Incorporate “policy grand rounds” into divisional educational/research seminar series
- Support divisional fellow(s) to attend local, state and DC Capitol Hill fly-in efforts
- Support attendance of ACR Advocacy 101 in Washington DC
- Support communication with state and federal officials about health policy
- Encourage patient centered discussions regarding legislative impact

**Faculty development in advocacy**
Advocacy is not necessarily a segregated activity. Many Universities encourage service to the profession, the institution and the community. Faculty often belong to a variety of professional societies that can be made aware of common problems faced by patients with chronic and disabling illnesses a such as access to medications and healthcare.

- As part of University community service commitment
  - Promote membership and active participation in local and state rheumatology organizations
  - Work with patient- and disease-specific groups to both learn about the day-to-day challenges of patients and to leverage the interactions to promote policies that benefit health
Promote University-wide cross-specialty and cross-disease collaborations

Participating in pediatric or internal medicine multi-specialty organizations to promote rheumatology interest

Promote and participate in local and federal advocacy efforts:
- Meet with legislators and staff in local home offices,
- Contact legislators regularly through Voter Voice info.votervoice.net
- Develop relationships with your elected officials, their staff and appropriate agency personnel
- Make personal contributions to their legislators
- Invite legislators and their staff to visit your clinics to learn about what their constituents need
- Participate in election campaigns of legislators who champion patient-friendly health policies and/or invest in RheumPAC

Divisional programming and planning

- Support rheumatology faculty to present in scientific meetings or seminars that cross disciplines
- Development with other ACR stakeholders (GAC, RheumPac, ARHP, COTW) of advocacy educational tools for academic faculty; integrate with similar efforts for practitioners and other supporters of Rheumatology
- Promoting and facilitating divisional faculty members to participate in ACR advocacy or other organizational efforts
- Hold a “Teach Your Legislators” day by inviting local, state and national elected/appointed government officials to visit and learn what is being done by academic and local rheumatologists as well as patient groups
- Promote participation in relevant government organizations such as the state medical board and health insurance exchange, and regular communication with the insurance commissioner’s office
- Inviting ACR members active in advocacy efforts to participate in divisional educational activities
- Promoting child health initiatives in juvenile arthritis and pediatric rheumatic diseases through the ACR and private foundations including the Arthritis and Lupus Foundations

Lead by example

Depending on your schedule and availability, you might find that it is easier to participate in one type of advocacy over another. Individual advocacy is the direct care and resources that you provide to your patients and to your faculty every day. Common activities could include calling an insurance company, another provider, or a social service agency on behalf of an individual patient. Other opportunities to get involved in different levels of advocacy will emerge. Depending on your interests, time and comfort level, you might find it preferable to work with others on your faculty, in your local community or your state and federal elected and appointed officials. Small daily choices can set the tone and culture of your division and make a difference on behalf of your patients and your profession.

Examples of individual advocacy include:
- Vote [if eligible] in local, state and national elections
- Personal leadership development in local and national advocacy efforts
- Attend advocacy sessions at the annual ACR meeting
- Personal financial support of RheumPac
  www.rheumatology.org/Advocacy/RheumPAC
- Participate in DC Capitol Hill fly-in lobbying day
- Follow ACR on Facebook and Twitter: @ACRheum
- Join the ACR advocacy list serve at
  www.rheumatology.org/Learning-Center/Professional-Communities
- Send an email to federal officials through ACR’s Legislative Action Center
- Become an ACR Key Contact for your elected officials
- Join or renew membership in the AMA. ACR must have 1000 members every five years (current deadline is Sept 2017) to maintain a seat in the AMA House of Delegates. This allows ACR to submit resolutions and leverage our message.

**Web based resources**

State Legislatures Web Sites from the National Conference of State Legislatures
FindLaw: State Resources—www.findlaw.com/
Associations of State and Local Government Officials
National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC)—www.naic.org
List of 2017 State Insurance Commissioners:
www.naic.org/documents/members_membershiplist.pdf
National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)—www.ncsl.org
National Governors Association (NGA)—www.nga.org
National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO)—www.nasbo.org
National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP)—www.nashp.org
National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG)—www.naag.org
National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO)—www.naccho.org
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD)—www.chronicdisease.org
The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)—www.astho.org
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)—www.amchp.org
State Legislative Leaders Foundation—www.sllf.org/
State & Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association (STIPDA)—www.safestates.org/
The Council of State Governments—www.csg.org

**Health Care Data Resources**

CDC: Immunization Information—www.cdc.gov/vaccines
CDC: National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)—www.cdc.gov/nchs
George Washington University Department of Health Policy—www.gwu.edu/
Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured—www.kff.org/about/kcmu.cfm
StatePublicHealth.org—Demographics, Data, Analysis—www.statepublichealth.org

**Pediatric Resources**

American Academy of Pediatrics—
Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts Online—www.statehealthfacts.org
KIDS COUNT Data Center—www.kidscount.org/datacenter
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Child Health Toolbox—
Childhood Arthritis & Rheumatology Research Alliance—www.carragroup.org/