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# Advocacy and networking

## Why it is so important?

**Prof. Josep Brugada**  
**EHRA Past President**



# Advocacy

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- **Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group which aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions**

# Advocacy

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- **Many medical authors and organizations have called for physician advocacy as a core component of medical professionalism.**
- **Despite widespread acceptance of advocacy as a professional obligation, the concept remains problematic within the profession of medicine because it remains undefined in concept, scope, and practice**

# *Advocacy by physicians*

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- **Action by a physician to promote those social, economic, educational, and political changes that ameliorate the suffering and threats to human health and well-being that he or she identifies through his or her professional work and expertise.**

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Children of parents who smoke, get to heaven earlier.

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# Physician Advocacy

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- **Advocacy is an important component of the doctor-patient relationship and physicians should individually and collectively advocate with their patients.**
- **Advocacy involves the responsible use of expertise and influence to advance patients health care interest**

- **Transnational advocacy networking on:**
  - human rights
  - environmental issues
  - violence against women

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BEFORE IT CHANGES YOU.**



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# Health Advocacy

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- **Health advocacy: supports and promotes patients' health care rights as well as enhance community health and policy initiatives that focus on the availability, safety and quality of care**

# Advocacy

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- **Advocacy through organizations (ESC, EHRA)**
- **Advocacy in the community (non-profit, schools, libràries, etc.)**
- **Legislative advocacy (to help change laws, regulations, policies)**
- **Individual advocacy (patients and families regarding medical decission making or access to ressources)**

# Why advocacy is so important?

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- **Advocacy in all its forms seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, are able to:**
  - Have their voice heard on issues that are important to them
  - Defend and safeguard their rights
  - Have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives

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Poverty  
shouldn't be a life sentence



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# Why advocacy is so important?

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- Advocacy can change community attitudes and misconceptions;
- It can assist people to gain access to resources, funding and information;
- Advocacy can help make service providers and organizations accountable ensuring there is transparency in their actions and decisions;
- Advocacy makes sure that there is recognition of the rights of people;
- It can also promote positive change to the structure and policy of organizations.

# Advocacy

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- **The medical community itself could do much more to foster advocacy as an expression of professionalism.**
  - Attorneys have long recognized the importance of pro bono work.
  - Many law firms allow their members to devote hours to community service as part of their practice.
- **Medical practices could do the same, encouraging their physicians to offer their services as volunteers in the community for a few hours each month.**

- **Championing universal health care coverage**
- **Advocating for adequate, accurate and transparent provider networks**
- **Stopping insurers from canceling coverage for patients after they become seriously ill, a practice known as rescissions**
- **Defending our injunction against Medi-Cal provider cuts, saving doctors more than \$100 million**
- **Improving the physician licensing process at the Medical Board of California**
- **Aggressively advocate against Medicare cuts that harm seniors access to doctors**



- **Advocacy: take action**
- **The CMA is a leader in advocating policies that support a healthy population and a vibrant medical profession.**





# MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

Every physician matters, each patient counts.

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- **Advocacy is a central component of the Massachusetts Medical Society's mission. We advocate on behalf of patients for a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them to provide the best care possible.**

- **The California Medical Association (CMA) is distinguished by its success in legislative, legal, and regulatory advocacy on behalf of the physicians and patients of California.**
  - Ensuring access to quality medical care
  - Strengthening public health
  - Promoting health education and advancing careers in health
  - Protecting the physician-patient relationship
  - Working to protect patients
  - Preserving economic stability
  - Advancing new technologies





- The Heart Rhythm Society is the international leader in science, education and advocacy for cardiac arrhythmia professionals and patients – representing professionals in over 70 countries worldwide.
- HRS membership provides timely and relevant information, professional education and networking opportunities for all professionals involved in the research and treatment of heart rhythm disorders

# Advocacy vs lobbying

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- **Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group which aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions**
- **Lobbying (often by lobby groups) is a form of advocacy where a direct approach is made to legislators on an issue which plays a significant role in modern politics**

# Educate and promote action by policy makers and legislators

- **Advocacy in Action**
- **Dynamic Health Care Guide for Congress and Media**
  - ACP's Dynamic Health Care Guide is a concise resource for members of Congress and their staff that lays out the six most important issues affecting internists and their patients. The guide distills complex health care issues into easily understood summaries of the background, status, and ACP's views on the topic.
- **Presidents of Five Medical Organizations Representing 500,000 Physicians and Medical Students Meet with U.S. Senators With One Message: Protect Patients' Access to Health Care**



*Josep Brugada*

- **National Advocacy**
- **Learn what the AMA is doing to better the nation's health and empower physicians.**
- **Together we are working to reduce regulatory burdens and promote health care delivery models that support physicians in doing what's most important to them—providing high-quality care to their patients.**



- **The Heart Rhythm Society maintains a strong voice in Washington, DC; its advocacy efforts focus on issues of critical importance to the heart rhythm specialist, scientist and allied health personnel. The Society sets standards for heart rhythm care and ensures appropriate reimbursement for electrophysiology services.**

# ***EHRA mission***

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**“to improve the quality of life of the population by reducing the impact of cardiac rhythm disturbances and reduce sudden cardiac death”**



- **The ESC is engaged in a constant dialogue with health stakeholders in Europe, including EU and national policymakers, European advocacy groups, and other professional medical associations.**
- **Securing a european policy and regulatory environment favourable to cardiovascular health**



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# **ESC Advocacy Committee**

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The overall purpose of the Advocacy Committee is to provide a platform to define priorities and design and implement advocacy activities to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in line with the ESC Strategic Plan.

**Chair: Peter Kearney**

**Members: Alan Fraser, Hector Bueno, Robert Byrne, Enrico Caiani, Martin Cowie, Rudolf de Boer, Stefan James, Josef Kautzner, Nikos Maniadakis, Joep Perk, Axel Pries, Lars Rydén, Panos Vardas, Frans Van de Werf**

# ESC European partnerships

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- **ESC is a co-founder of several high profile European Partnerships that support the same mission to improve public health and patient care.**
  - **Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe (BioMed Alliance)**, a unique initiative representing 20 leading research-oriented medical societies that include more than 400.000 researchers across Europe. The BioMed Alliance aims at promoting the best interests and values of research across all medical disciplines in Europe, in those general areas where common interest is identified.
  - **European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA)**, a coalition of eleven European health associations sharing the same interests in combating chronic diseases through European public health policies.
  - **MEP Heart Group** (Members of the European Parliament Heart Group) is a discussion forum aimed at promoting measures that will help reduce the burden of CVD in the European Union and raise CVD as a priority on the EU political agenda.

- **Several ingredients make for effective advocacy:**
  - The rightness of the cause
  - The power of the advocates
  - The thoroughness with which the advocates researched the issues
  - The climate of opinion about the issue in the community
  - Their skill in using the advocacy tools available (including the media)
  - The selection of effective strategies and tactics

- **Advocacy is active promotion of a cause or principle**
- **Advocacy involves actions that lead to a selected goal**
- **Advocacy is one of many possible strategies, or ways to approach a problem**
- **Advocacy can be used as part of a community initiative,**
- **Advocacy does not necessarily involve confrontation or conflict**

# Examples of advocacy campaigns

