

Quick Guide to Cancer Media Advocacy

Advocacy is an important tool to support the cancer community. One way to engage in cancer advocacy efforts, is to use media advocacy. There are many different types of advocacy, which you can learn more about from our Quick Guide to the Spectrum of Advocacy: [TriageCancer.org/QuickGuide-Advocacy](https://www.triagecancer.org/QuickGuide-Advocacy).

What is Cancer Media Advocacy?

Cancer media advocacy uses media platforms to get the word out about an issue that has an impact on the cancer community. Examples of media platforms at the local, state, and national levels that you can contact to engage in media advocacy efforts, include:

- Newspapers & Magazines (hard copy or online)
 - Writing non-opinion articles about topics that impact the cancer community
 - Writing opinion editorials - an op-ed article is an essay that includes the writer's opinion and the writer is not employed by the newspaper or magazine. Tips: www.theopedproject.org/oped-basics
 - Writing letters to the editor - a letter to the newspaper or magazine editor that is a shorter article written by a reader who wants to share an opinion about something they have just read or seen.
- Blogs - writing a blog or commenting on other blogs
- Podcasts & Radio Shows
- Television

Media advocacy does require some research to find opportunities in your own community, as well as at the state and national level. You can usually find instructions on how to submit articles, op-eds, letters to the editor on the websites of newspapers and magazines, or within the first few pages of the publication. You can also find contact information for the producers of podcasts, radio shows, and televisions shows, online.

When engaging in media advocacy is important to separate when you are sharing facts versus when you are sharing your opinion about a particular topic. But even if you are sharing facts, it can be helpful to share your personal story. For example, you may want to engage in media advocacy around the issue of access to health insurance. You can share facts about the health care system, you can share your opinion on how the health care system works, but you can also share your personal experience with the health care system.

Sharing your personal story can be a powerful tool. Your story can help other people better understand an issue. For example, sometimes, elected officials want to know how proposed laws might impact a real person who lives in their district. You may be able to provide that perspective. That said, we encourage everyone who is interested in engaging in cancer media advocacy to make conscious decisions about disclosing any medical information. Read our Quick Guide to Disclosure, Privacy, & Medical Certification Forms: [TriageCancer.org/QuickGuide-Disclosure](https://www.triagecancer.org/QuickGuide-Disclosure).

“I'd like to propose a show/article/story idea...”

Reaching out to a media platform to ask for an opportunity to share your story, is called “pitching.” Here are some tips for pitching the media:

- Tailor your pitch to the outlet - know the audience of the outlet
- Tie your pitch to something newsworthy - have a “hook” (e.g., National Cancer Survivor's Day, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a law has been proposed, a court case has just come out, etc.)
- Be brief! A good pitch is less than 2 minutes when speaking
- Have a one sheet that describes you, your story, and the issues you want to talk about
- Follow up! (e.g., send a thank you note, your contact information, your one sheet, etc.)

Cancer Advocacy Through Social Media

Do you use social media? If you do, then you may want to engage in cancer advocacy efforts on social media! You can use any platform to engage in cancer advocacy, by sharing information with your network.

If you want to engage in legislative advocacy or connect with your elected officials, here is a list of Twitter, Facebook, & Instagram handles for members of Congress: [TriageCancer.org/congressional-social-media](https://www.triagecancer.org/congressional-social-media).

Tips for Social Media Advocacy

Here are some general tips on using social media for cancer advocacy efforts:

- Search for relevant hashtags (#cancer) and terms to find information on issues you care about.
- Follow or like resources that you trust for accurate news and information related to cancer, health care, etc.
- Beware of fake news. Double check something before you share or retweet it. Only share information from reliable sources (e.g., cancer organizations).
- Communicate with people on social media by starting a public conversation, such as social media influencers, elected officials, and other thought leaders in the cancer community. You can do that by including their handle (@username) in your social media post.
- When tweeting or posting, use relevant #hashtags to help people find you or the issue that you are talking about.
- Post on social media when your audience is paying attention to their social media accounts (e.g., morning, evening, afternoon?)
- If you are concerned about disclosure and want to protect your privacy, you can keep your messages general, or even create accounts specifically for engaging in cancer advocacy (e.g., don't use your name as your handle, don't post your picture as your profile, etc.).

Examples of Cancer-Related Hashtags

#beyonddiagnosis
#cancersurvivorship
#cancerrights
#canceradvocacy
#triagetalks
#hscm - health care social media
#ayacsm - adolescent & young adult cancer
#blcsm - bladder cancer social media
#btism - brain tumor social media
#bcsm - breast cancer social media
#crccsm - colorectal cancer social media
#gyncsm - gynecological cancer social media
#lscsm - lung cancer social media
#mmsm - multiple myeloma social media
#pancsm - pancreatic cancer social media
#pcsm - prostate cancer social media



Examples of Social Media Events

The cancer community hosts a number of social media events on Facebook and Twitter, where you can engage in cancer media advocacy. For example, organizations host TweetChats on Twitter or Facebook Live events to create communities of support and share useful information and resources.

These are some examples of recurring TweetChats:

- #BCSM TweetChat - every Monday evening from 9-10pm Eastern / 8-9pm Central / 6-7pm Pacific
- #LCSM TweetChat - first Thursday of the month at 8pm Eastern / 7pm Central / 5pm Pacific
- #GYNCISM - second Wednesday of the month at 8pm Eastern / 7pm Central / 5pm Pacific
- #AYACSM—first Tuesday of the month at 8pm Eastern / 7pm Central / 5pm Pacific

For more information on using media advocacy:

www.advocacyandcommunication.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ACS_Media_Guide.pdf

For more information about engaging in cancer advocacy efforts:

[TriageCancer.org/Advocacy](https://www.triagecancer.org/advocacy)