

# MAKING AN IMPACT: THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE IN CALIFORNIA

## *PATIENT ADVOCATE TOOLKIT*



CALIFORNIA  
PARTNERSHIP FOR  
ACCESS TO  
TREATMENT



@CaAccess

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## ***Welcome***

From increasing access to care, to reducing disparities in treatment to navigating complex healthcare systems, the California Partnership for Access to Treatment (CPAT) and its member organizations are devoted to advancing public policies and programs that put patients first.

CPAT's diverse membership encompasses organizations of myriad sizes, budgets, and disease states, but all share a goal of being leaders in driving access to treatment and preventative healthcare. Together, we've made significant strides in building a sustainable, more equitable healthcare system in California that stems the growth of chronic disease and harnesses today's hopes to discover tomorrow's cures.

This toolkit outlines the best advocacy practices to empower healthcare leaders with the knowledge and tools to become better patient advocates; in turn, better serving their patient populations.

## ***History of CPAT***

Formed in 2006, CPAT serves as a communications, education and resource network to keep our partners and the communities they serve informed about critical issues involving access to treatment in California.

Since its beginning, CPAT has grown into a diverse network of more than 1,500 advocacy organizations, community groups, health care providers and employers committed to ensuring healthy and productive communities. The CPAT network:

- Organizes regular educational seminars
- Provides valuable resources to help partners better understand complexities of California's health care system
- Brings together organizations and individuals who may not usually have the opportunity to connect and share ideas

## ***Your role as a patient advocate – how you can help***

As an advocate, it is important to share a clear, streamlined message that will help strengthen your cause. Your actions may result in changing potential legislation or regulations and positively impact how millions of Americans access medical care.

Patient advocates should be committed to sharing resources, coordinating activities and disseminating information to patients, health care providers, and community members about related legislative activities.



## **COMMIT YOUR ORGANIZATION TO THE CAUSE**

By partnering with other organizations through a vehicle like CPAT, you can connect with like-minded organizations and benefit patients across the state. Partner organizations serve the important role of elevating patient stories and reminding policymakers of the impact the healthcare system has on real people suffering from real diseases. Collaboration and consistent involvement are critical to the success of patient advocacy, and by staying involved, you can make a difference.

## **LETTER WRITING**

Reaching out to policymakers via letter is an excellent way to share a perspective on any issue potentially impacting specific patient populations. Whether partner organizations write and send their own letters or sign on to each other's letters in support of their position, the outreach makes a difference in reminding lawmakers of the impact of their decisions on beneficiaries across the country.

## **POLICYMAKER ENGAGEMENT**

Policymakers often need to be re-educated on issues that affect their constituents, and patient issues are no exception. Engaging them, providing them with educational materials and becoming a reliable source of information for them is important in establishing these effective relationships. Phone calls to staff and scheduling in-person meetings to share an opinion on an upcoming vote are just a couple of ways patient advocates can regularly engage with policymakers. Additionally, arranging organized group trips to the Capitol to meet with multiple elected officials on one day (i.e. "Lobby Day") is an effective way to get many patients / patient advocates in front of key decision-makers at one time and make a strong statement about the significance of the issue at-hand.

## **EARNED AND SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE**

Earned media, including placing opinion editorials and letters to the editor, is a useful tool in sharing your perspective on issues such as healthcare. In addition, using your personal social media channels is an effective way to educate your network on a number of issues including particular patient issues. CPAT partners regularly use Twitter and Facebook to share their opinions and voice concerns regarding threats to access. Whether engaging policymakers in the conversation or urging your followers to take action of their own, strategically using earned and social media has the power to amplify your voice and garner support for your advocacy efforts.



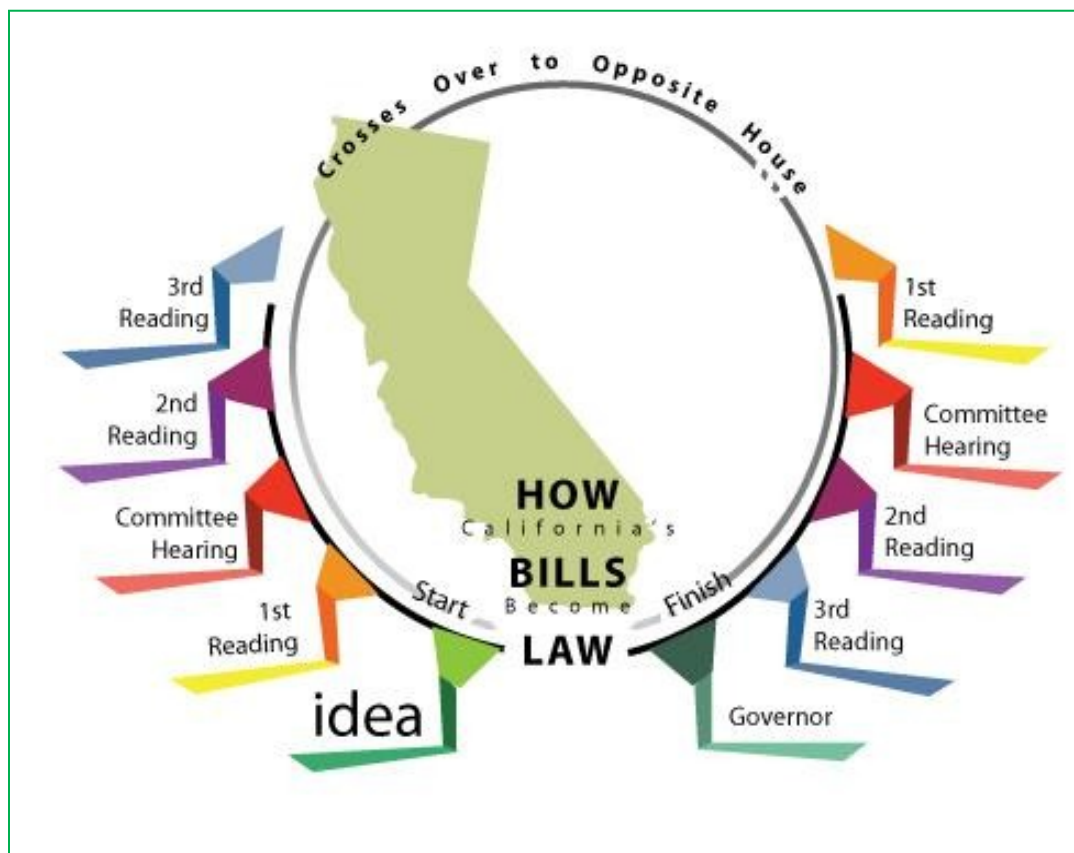
## ***Resources for your members***

Successful patient advocacy requires consistent efforts to educate your legislative representatives, fellow advocates, and community members about the issues impacting patient in the state. With the news cycle moving quicker than ever, it's easy for key decision makers and influencers to fall behind on certain issues or miss important developments.

Sharing resources or materials is especially helpful in keeping interested parties updated with the most accurate information possible and aware of the policy impacts of their decisions. As appropriate, CPAT provides its members the following materials on a number of topics:

- Fact sheets
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Key messages (these are usually internal documents)
- Social media cheat sheets
- Newsletter article
- Brochures
- Posters

## ***Knowing the legislative process***







## ***Glossary of terms***

- **Advocacy:** Speaking out on issues of concern; this can be as formal as speaking with your legislator to as simple as telling a friend about the impact of a law.
- **Amendment:** A change to a bill or motion, sometimes replacing the entire bill; voted on in the same manner as a bill.
- **Appropriations:** A budget; determined by the legislature's appropriations committee, this bill lays out how the government's money should be spent over a given time period; voted on by the entire legislature and signed into law by the governor.
- **Authorization:** Legislation that formally establishes a program or activity and sets its funding limit.
- **Bill:** Legislation drafted for consideration by the legislature.
- **Committee:** A group of legislators that develops legislation on specific topics, and has jurisdiction over all legislation that deal with its topic; generally, legislation must pass in a committee before the entire legislative body can vote on it.
- **Continuing:** Legislation passed by both the House and Senate permitting executive branch agencies to continue operating in the absence of a budget.
- **Cosponsor:** When a legislator supports a bill, but is not the primary sponsor, they may sign their name onto the bill as a cosponsor to show their support.
- **Direct Lobbying:** To present a case for or against a specific piece of legislation, and to ask a legislator to vote a certain way.
- **Electoral Advocacy:** Efforts to educate voters, or to register or encourage them to vote.
- **Filibuster:** Delaying tactic used in the US Senate by the minority in an effort to prevent the passage of a bill or amendment.
- **Grassroots Lobbying:** Stating a position on a specific legislative proposal to the public, then asking the public to urge their legislator to support that stated position.
- **Hearing:** A meeting in which evidence to support particular points of view can be presented to a committee.
- **Lobbying:** Communication with elected officials or their staff, which expresses a position on a pending piece of legislation.
- **Rider:** An amendment to an appropriations bill, which may not actually deal with the allocation of government funds.
- **Sponsor:** One or more legislators who are the primary writers of the bill.



## ***How to find your legislator***

### **STATE REPRESENTATIVES (STATE ASSEMBLYMEMBER & STATE SENATOR):**

1. Visit the California State Legislator website:  
[www.legislature.ca.gov/legislators\\_and\\_districts/legislators/your\\_legislator.html](http://www.legislature.ca.gov/legislators_and_districts/legislators/your_legislator.html)
2. Click “Search by Address” under “Find Your Legislator”

### **UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE (CONGRESSMEMBER):**

1. Visit the United States House of Representatives website:  
[www.house.gov/representatives/find/](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/)
2. Enter your ZIP code in the text box under “Find Your Representative”

## ***Summary & additional resources***

### **SOCIAL MEDIA (@CaAccess)**

CPAT uses social media platforms ([Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)) to keep its members and advocates up-to-date on pressing health care issues. Information includes health care reports, latest medicines in development, events, and seminars to gain a greater understanding of health trends, and the latest news.

### **MY PATIENT RIGHTS**

If you’ve been denied access to treatment, visit My Patient Rights ([mypatientrights.org](http://mypatientrights.org)) to file a claim with the California Department of Managed Care or California Department of Insurance. MPR helps patients resolve issues such as denied or delayed treatments so they can get the care they need and deserve.

### **MEDICINE ASSISTANCE TOOL**

Accessing your medicines can be confusing, but it doesn’t have to be. Medicine Assistance Tool (MAT) is a search engine designed to help patients make informed health care decisions by providing more transparency surrounding medicine costs. For more information, visit: [medicineassistancetool.org](http://medicineassistancetool.org).