

Get Your Voice Heard

Establish and maintain relationships with your elected officials.

Invite your state legislators to visit your clinic. Meet with them in Topeka. Make sure they know what your clinic does for the community, and the challenges it faces. Suggest what they can do. Follow up. Thank them. Keep them updated on the results of their support. Help publicize their support for health centers. Regular written communication provides a concrete reminder of your interest, your identity, and your issues. Send letters. Send faxes. Send e-mail. Provide talking points on key issues. Let them know about your annual report, new board members, and special events.

Attend town hall meetings to build local public awareness

Town hall meetings are often the forum where the community's most active and influential members meet to discuss and decide key issues. So, make sure your clinic is part of the discussion. Bring patients, board members and staff to town hall meetings. Let them speak from personal experience about the benefits of care provided at the clinic. Speak out about local health issues and how your clinic is helping.

Develop and execute a strong local media outreach effort

A well-conceived media plan can help your clinic raise its visibility in the public mind. Develop relationships with local reporters. Make sure they know whom to contact for news about clinics. Provide them story ideas. Invite them to health fairs and special events. Ask media personalities to speak at fundraisers and other public events. Write letters to the editor, and encourage your patients to do so as well. When an elected official does something important for your clinic, thank them publicly through the press.