# ADVOCACY WEEK
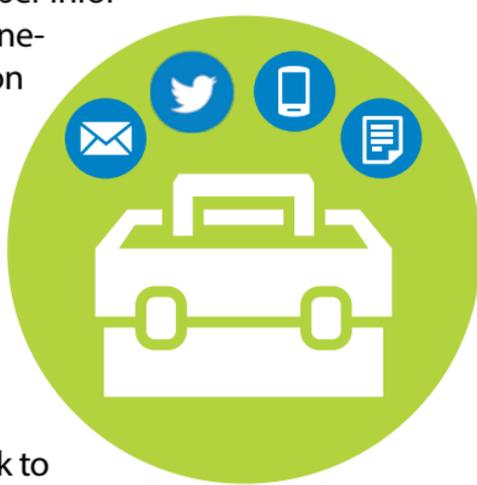## Engage. Influence. Create Change.

# COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

## Physicians Guide to Legislative Advocacy

This handy guide provides you with the basic elements of communicating effectively with legislators – 1) know your audience; 2) prepare your message; 3) deliver your message; and 4) follow up.

**A PHYSICIAN'S GUIDE TO**
## Legislative Advocacy

## Calling Your Legislator

Calling the legislator who represents you is an effective way to raise your voice on an issue. You can find contact information for your representative and senator by visiting the Minnesota House of Representatives Member Information page, as well as the Minnesota Senate Member Information page. Once you call, you will be connected with a staff member whose job it is to answer and pass on constituents' requests. Don't be discouraged if your senator or representative did not personally pick up the phone – they rely on staff to field calls and talk to their constituents.

Below is a sample script that you can use when calling your legislator. Remember to always keep the calls short, stick to the point/reason for calling, and always be respectful.

SAMPLE CALL:
*Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____ and I am a constituent who lives in [city]. Can you please let Senator/Representative _____ know that [include issue you are calling about, and why it is important]? I strongly urge the Senator/Representative to support [close with any related bill you are asking them to support; or reiterate the importance of their support for the overall issue]. Thank you.*

## Tweeting to Your Legislator

Twitter is an effective tool to use to reach your Minnesota legislators. Many members of both the House and Senate have Twitter accounts, and they routinely use them to share information and connect with their constituents.

Below are some sample tweets on the topic of firearm injury and death prevention. These tweets are included to act as a guide, so please modify for the issue for which you will be advocating.

SAMPLE TWEETS:
- Firearm injury and death is a public health crisis. @Legislator please support HF 8,HF 9 and SF 436 as meaningful steps to address this epidemic. #ThisIsOurLane #MNLeg #PutPatientsFirst #RaiseYourVoice
- As a physician, I support universal background checks and "red flag" laws as meaningful first steps in addressing gun violence. #ThisIsOurLane #MNLeg #PutPatientsFirst #RaiseYourVoice

## Emailing or Writing a Letter to Your Legislator

Sending an email or mailed letter to your legislator is an effective way to raise your voice on an issue. You can find contact information for your representatives and senators by visiting the Minnesota House of Representatives Member Information page, as well as the Minnesota Senate Member Information page.

Below is sample language for an email/letter to your legislator on the topic of firearm injury and death prevention. This sample language is included to act as a guide, so please modify for the issue for which you will be advocating. Important components to include in an email/letter include the following:
- The issue you want the legislator to address.
- Reference to the specific prevention measure/legislation.
- A personal story/connection to the issue.
- A "call to action" or "ask" you have for the legislator.

SAMPLE LETTER:
*Dear Senator/Representative _____*

*I am a physician in your community asking you to support the common-sense firearm injury and death prevention measures in HF8, HF9 and SF436 . On average, 96 Americans are killed every day with a gun and at least twice that number are injured. Looking at these staggering numbers, it is not hard to identify gun violence as a public health crisis.*

*Minnesotans overwhelmingly support common sense measures that will begin to address our gun violence epidemic. Criminal background checks on all purchases and transfers/exchanges of firearms and Extreme Risk Protective Orders, also known as "Red Flag" laws, allow family members a mechanism to temporarily remove firearms if there is a concern that an individual will harm themselves or others.*

*Sincerely,*

*Name, specialty*