

Exploring a Career as a Professional Independent Health Care Advocate

Introduction

Welcome to the dynamic field of Independent Health Care Advocacy, where dedicated professionals focus on supporting patients within the healthcare system. This guide provides an overview of how to begin your professional journey, educational paths, certification processes, and building and establishing your advocacy practice.

Getting Started- Discover and Engage:

- Visit the [CHCAO website](#) for resources and links to member organizations.
- Familiarize yourself with the Code of Ethics as posted on the [CHCAO website](#).
- Engage with practicing professionals to understand the profession's scope and responsibilities. (see below where to find them).

Educational Resources:

- Explore introductory sessions like HealthAdvocateX's [Community Conversations](#).
- Peruse [NAHAC's Library of Webinars](#) and register to view sessions of interest.
- Learn about the Patient Advocate Certification Board/[PACB](#) and BCPA certification.
- Review the PULSE Center for Patient Safety, Education & Advocacy ([PULSE](#)) programs and resources for patients and advocates.
- Visit the Alliance of Professional Health Advocates ([APHA](#)) and consider their educational opportunities for new advocates.
- Listen and Subscribe to the Greater National Advocates (GNA) "[Patient Advocacy Now](#)" [Podcast](#) that highlights the scope and diversity of the profession.
- Read articles written by practicing advocates detailing their professional accomplishments, client stories, and relevant advocacy news in the [GNA Blog](#) library.

Professional Certification, Degrees, and Credentials:

- The [Board Certified Patient Advocate](#) (BCPA) credential, administered by the [Patient Advocate Certification Board](#) (PACB), is the recognized professional certification body that sets the standard for competence and ethics for the profession
- Several colleges and universities have [certificate and degree programs](#) in patient and health care advocacy; The above list of resources is maintained by [APHA](#)

Building an Advocacy Practice: Tools and Networks

- Attend [NAHAC Design Your Practice Webinars](#) - Webinars and workshops designed to assist advocates in creating, building, and maintaining their practices.
- Get a [Free Professional Listing on GNANOW.ORG](#). GNA publishes and promotes the services of Independent Patient Advocates nationwide at no cost.
- Become a [Survivor Support Advocate](#): Connect with patients and families who are seeking advocacy services from professionals living with the same health or medical condition
- Join [The Alliance of Professional Health Advocates](#), which offers support for starting and growing an advocacy practice
- Consider [Solace Health](#), a billing and scheduling platform designed to assist with front end business needs and securing clients.

Networking Opportunities:

- Participate in NAHAC's monthly [Let's Chat Sessions](#), an informal gathering of advocates discussing current topics of interest. You do not need to be a member to participate. Learn more about.
- Join [HealthAdvocateX](#) to engage with and learn from professional advocates during regularly hosted online [Community Conversations, Case Reviews, Movie screenings with panel discussions, and X-Center events](#).
- Attend the [Healthcare Advocate Summit](#), a key in-person industry event with extensive networking and educational opportunities for health care advocates seeking to deepen their knowledge, connect with peers, and discover new trends in advocacy.
- Follow [Greater National Advocates on Facebook](#) and join [The Independent Patient Advocate Facebook Group](#) for up-to-date postings of events, opportunities, and discussions of interest to advocates
- Engage with [The Circle](#) where advocates with all levels of experience meet online weekly to build relationships, cultivate referral sources, and develop their advocacy support networks
- [Request admission](#) to the Advo Networking Discord Group, where professional advocates gather to learn from and teach each other through case studies and client stories.

Taking the Next Steps:

- Take actionable steps by attending free sessions, enrolling in webinars, and connecting with established advocates.
- Consider membership with professional groups to gain access to essential resources and community support necessary for a thriving advocacy practice.
- Earn the [BCPA credential](#) to validate your expertise in patient and health care advocacy, enhance your professional credibility, and demonstrate your commitment to the highest standards of ethical practice

For More Information:

Visit [CHCAO.ORG](https://www.chcao.org) for additional information and links to member organizations for deeper engagement.