



What you need to know about...

Advocacy

Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago promotes legislative action that will have a lasting impact on the lives of all people in the Chicago metropolitan area, especially those with lung disease. We advocate for change on local, statewide and national levels, and volunteers are an essential part of these efforts. We rely on people living with COPD and other lung diseases, their family members, friends and other concerned citizens to help us to educate and persuade legislators to take action for lung health.

Why is advocacy important?

Being an advocate can give a voice to an important issue that affects people's lives. For changes to be made, citizens must alert their legislators to important issues. Many people find their advocacy to be empowering; you can talk about issues that are important to you and see the results on a large scale.

Who can be an advocate?

Anyone can be an advocate for a cause. If you are living with lung disease, know someone who is affected, or are passionate about environmental and social justice, being an advocate may be right for you.

Forms of advocacy

There are numerous ways you can serve as an advocate. When considering what type of advocacy is right for you, think about what you like to do and what you're good at doing.

Some of common forms of advocacy include:

- Writing letters or sending e-mails
- Making phone calls
- Meeting with elected officials
- Talking with others about your experiences

Making a difference

Some policy campaigns that have been worked on by dedicated staff, volunteers and coalition members include:

1. **Creation of the Illinois COPD State Plan**
 - To improve the quality of care for people living with COPD in Illinois
2. **Illinois Campaign to Clean up Diesel Pollution**
 - No idling ordinances to protect citizens from excessive pollution by diesel-fueled construction equipment and buses.
3. **Smoke-Free Illinois**
 - All workplaces in Illinois, including bars and restaurants, are smoke-free.

For more information about how you can become an advocate for lung health and policy, please contact Matt Maloney at (312) 628-0233 or mmaloney@lungchicago.org.

Definitions

Advocacy: (*noun*) the act of supporting, recommending or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea or policy; active support.

Advocate: (*verb*) to speak or write in favor of; (*noun*) a person who speaks or writes in support or defense of a person or cause.