2017 GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ACADEMY

Influencing Public Policy: Enhancing the Voice of Essential Hospital Advocates

The 2017 Government Relations Academy is designed to enhance the advocacy skills of government relations professionals working for hospitals that fill an essential role in their communities. Over the course of nine months, members of the 2017 government relations class will

* advance their understanding of key federal legislative and regulatory issues;
* enhance their use of political communications strategies and tools with a selected communications colleague from their hospital\*;
* develop and implement an advocacy campaign aimed at achieving a legislative victory for their hospital; and
* build their professional network with government relations peers and seasoned mentors from essential hospitals.

This valuable educational series includes

* three highly interactive sessions at the spring 2017 Policy Assembly, VITAL2017\*, and the fall 2017 Policy Assembly;
* supplemental curriculum activities between sessions, such as webinars, small-group training conference calls, and discussion forums;
* ongoing one-on-one and small group interactions with mentors who have decades of experience advocating for essential hospitals; and
* the option to earn continuing education credits.

\*The session in conjunction with VITAL2017 requires the participation of a communications professional from the participant’s hospital. The curriculum will be tailored to enhance collaboration between government relations and communications staff.

Questions about the program?
Contact Erin Delaney at edelaney@essentialhospitals.org or 202-585-0117.

Session 1
**Navigating Washington: Advocacy for Essential Hospitals**
February 27–March 1, 2017 | Washington, DC
(Held with the spring Policy Assembly)

This session will deepen participants’ understanding of the key legislative and regulatory challenges for essential hospitals. Nationally recognized experts will provide in-depth explanations of essential hospital financing and the mechanisms states use to fund hospitals serving the most vulnerable. Policy experts and lobbyists with decades of experience in Washington will reflect on the evolution of effective advocacy in Washington and provide an advanced overview of the congressional and regulatory processes.

Participants will develop the concept for an advocacy campaign they will continue to build over the course of the program. During this session, participants will define the campaign goals, begin to identify the high-impact communications strategies for their campaign, and begin to outline the execution plan for their campaign with guidance from seasoned experts.

Session 2
**Telling Your Story**
June 20–23, 2017 | Chicago
(Held with VITAL2017)

This session will focus on building networks of grassroots and grasstops supporters and engaging community stakeholders. Participants are asked to bring a colleague from their hospital’s communications team to this session. This session will take advantage of the significant overlap between government relations and communications work by identifying techniques for enhancing collaboration between government relations and communications professionals.

Communications and messaging experts will help participants build upon their ability to tell their story with advanced lobbying techniques, effective messages, and meaningful storytelling strategies. In addition, cutting-edge social media experts will share inside tips and will work one-on-one with participants to experiment with various tools to enhance their hospital’s social media presence.

The techniques covered in this session will help participants develop their campaign’s communications strategy, with special attention to refining campaign messaging and incorporating effective communications tools.

Session 3
**Implementing Your Campaign**
October 23–25, 2017 | Washington, DC
(Held with the fall Policy Assembly)

This session will highlight key lessons from successful advocacy campaigns, with a focus on building successful advocacy coalitions. Leaders from national coalitions will share insights on strategies for both building and growing coalitions. Participants will enhance their ability to use complex data in their campaigns by hearing from trusted researchers with expertise in supporting evidence-based advocacy campaigns.

Participants will use these lessons as a framework to present their advocacy campaigns to class participants and mentors. Special emphasis will be placed on refining the execution strategy for the campaign. A significant amount of time will be dedicated to providing feedback to presenters.

Program Cost

* Tuition is $6,500, which includes three in-person sessions for government relations professionals and one in-person learning session for communications professionals; access to Washington insiders, policy experts, leading lobbyists, and seasoned communications coaches; curriculum materials; some meals; networking events; and distance learning activities between sessions.
* Tuition also includes one complimentary registration for VITAL2017, America’s Essential Hospitals’ annual conference in Chicago (a $1,295 value) and a discounted rate for the communications professional in attendance.
* Each participant’s sponsoring organization is responsible for travel and lodging expenses.