



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers

STATE LEGISLATIVE COORDINATOR (SLC) MANUAL

SLC MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| What is a State Legislative Coordinator (SLC)? | 1 |
| Working with NACHC | 3 |
| Working with Health Centers | 4 |
| Working with Key Contacts | 5 |
| SLC Calls/Webinars | 6 |
| NACHC Action Alerts | 7 |
| Policy & Issues Forum | 8 |
| PCA Conferences | 11 |
| ACE Program | 12 |
| Other: NHCW, CHI, Advocacy Task Force | 13 |



State Legislative Coordinator (SLC) Role and Responsibilities

As an SLC, your role is to act as a liaison between NACHC and your state's health centers for advocacy activities, as well as build and maintain strong, positive relationships with Members of Congress (MOC) and contact them as requested by NACHC advocacy staff.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

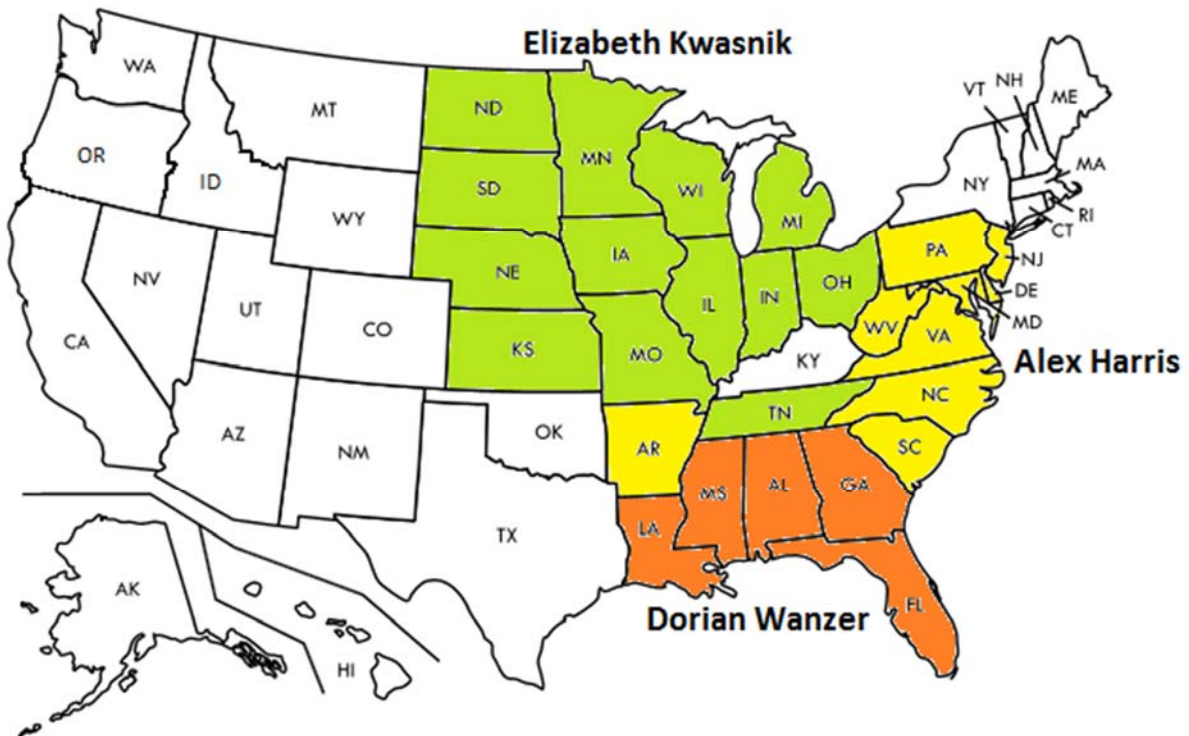
- **Be the point person at the state level for NACHC advocacy activities**
 - Participate in SLC and Key Contact conference calls/webinars
 - Provide feedback on advocacy initiatives or upcoming action items as requested by NACHC staff
 - Reinforce NACHC action alerts with email or e-blast to members
- **Be the convener and coordinator for outreach efforts to Congress with health centers in your state** (i.e. arrange for group meetings in-district, as opposed to multiple visits with the same office from health centers and the PCA where you risk looking uncoordinated)
- **Know and stay in touch with your state's Key Contacts**
- **Conduct outreach to Congressional offices when requested by NACHC staff**
- **Help support National Health Center Week (NHCW) events across your state**
 - Monitor posted/planned events throughout the state
 - Consider planning a state-sponsored event (invite your Members of Congress!) and convene multiple health centers
- **Track MOC visits to Health Centers in your state throughout the year for the purposes of NACHC annual Congressional awards**



POLICY & ISSUES FORUM (P&I) RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend Pre-P&I Prep Call hosted by NACHC in February
- Arrange meetings with Congressional delegation for your state's P&I attendees
- Attend pre-conference policy and advocacy session
- Attend pre-Hill Day SLC meeting
- Plan/host Hill Day prep meeting for P&I attendees from your state (coordinate time/space with NACHC)

Each member of the NACHC advocacy team is responsible for different regions of the country, and will be YOUR point person for resources and support. Please see the advocacy map below for more information.



Working with NACHC

As an SLC, you are the liaison between NACHC and your PCA (and to some extent, your members/the Health Centers in your state) on policy and advocacy issues. In cases where there is insufficient PCA staff to undertake this role, a Health Center advocate may be that state's SLC. NACHC's advocacy team divides the country up into regions, so there will likely be one main point of contact for you on all things grassroots, although our entire team is always happy to provide resources and support.

Throughout the year, NACHC relies heavily on SLCs to:

- Weigh in directly with congressional offices
- Reinforce NACHC's calls to action with broad grassroots via communications from the PCA
- Coordinate targeted outreach with Key Contacts
- Report back to NACHC regarding outreach conducted, response from the Hill, and any feedback or follow-up

Regular communication is important; we understand that federal policy issues are not the PCA's only priority, and that your state legislative sessions often require much attention. Being in touch with NACHC about how you are prioritizing issues is important, and helps us manage expectations and figure out how best to work together both in the short- and long-term.

While NACHC relies on SLCs for work throughout the year, SLCs/PCAs can rely on NACHC for support and resources, as well. Reach out at any time for help with any of the following:

- Explanation of policy issues/why advocacy is needed, and the impact of said policy on Health Centers
- Data/information on advocate sign-up, action alert response rate, etc.
- Requests for in-person or online advocacy training or other presentations
 - o At annual conferences
 - o For staff, board, or any other groups
 - o Topic-specific (like advocacy for special populations, for board members, social media etc.)
 - o Staff advocacy training at a Health Center
- Conference calls to discuss best practices and brainstorm advocacy strategy
- Statewide conference calls with Key Contacts to discuss issues and strategy
- Materials, templates, and other resources

NACHC is here to support you in your work, so please be sure to let us know how we can be helpful.

Working with Health Centers

NACHC relies on SLCs to relay information from the field. You know your members (and your members know you) better than we do, and it's crucial that we have an understanding about how our messages, campaigns, and calls to action are received.

- Is what we want advocates to take action on clear?
- Do they know how to take that action?
- If an issue is time-sensitive, have we effectively communicated its urgency?
- Have we provided enough background and does the field feel educated and informed enough on our issues to weigh in?

Feedback from your members about NACHC communications is invaluable, and helps us adjust our messaging or programming so as to be clear, effective, and engaging overall.

SLCs working with Health Centers

In an effort to encourage the PCA's Health Center members to build relationships with Congressional offices, SLCs may want to provide legislative contact information for easy reference (updated and disseminated periodically throughout the year/legislative session to ensure it is current).

The PCA may also want to consider helping Health Centers send invitations and schedule visits with elected officials, draft press releases, etc.

While NACHC can provide information to both the PCA and individual Health Centers on advocacy performance (response rates, sign-ups), SLCs can work with Health Center staff to identify benchmarks and goals for these activities.

NACHC working with Health Centers

Occasionally, NACHC will reach out directly to Health Centers and Key Contacts, whether to plan visits, check in on congressional outreach, or help connect folks to information. We will always make an effort to loop you in on the communications where it makes sense to do so, so that everyone is on the same page.

A final note: any NACHC communication sent to all SLCs will also be sent to PCA directors in an effort to keep everyone informed.

Working with Key Contacts

As you know, NACHC's Key Contact program is crucial to successfully advancing our advocacy and federal policy agenda. The goal of the program is to have a Health Center contact for each Member of Congress, whom NACHC can call on to reach out to senior staff or the Member directly to convey the Health Center message. Key Contacts ideally have good personal or professional relationships with the Member/office, and are a trusted, reliable source of information. NACHC usually activates Key Contacts on targeted advocacy pushes due to either importance or urgency (or both).

When NACHC communicates with Key Contacts, we will:

- Give you a heads up via email or during a conference call/webinar
- Copy you on the actual communication to Key Contacts
- Encourage Key Contacts to coordinate their outreach to Hill offices with you to avoid duplication of effort and make sure messaging is consistent

Typically, we reserve our Key Contacts for calls to action that are time-sensitive, require more than a broad grassroots push, or that are narrowly targeted (i.e. Senate Finance committee, House Appropriations committee ONLY). In these instances, depending on the action needed, we will reach out to either all SLCs, or just those SLCs who's Key Contacts have Members of Congress in the target group.

RECRUITING:

In terms of recruiting Key Contacts, we rely heavily on your knowledge of your member Health Centers and their staff/board/patients to know who might have a good relationship with Members of Congress for whom we need coverage, and who would be interested in volunteering to be a Key Contact. We will work directly with you on increasing the number of Key Contacts for your Congressional delegation (as well as candidates, in the case of an election year), as well as help you to prioritize Key Contact identification where Congressional leadership or committees of jurisdiction are concerned. We also make a plug for Key Contacts when we are speaking at conferences and other meetings, as well as identify connections directly when we are out in the field providing training, attending events, etc.

Please keep in touch with us and let us know if there are any major leadership changes at the PCA or your member Health Centers that might impact our Key Contact list; we are happy to provide the list of Key Contacts we have for your state at any time.

NACHC is always willing to provide orientation calls or webinars for new groups of Key Contacts at any time, and we are also happy to work one on one to get folks up to speed with the program. Please let us know how best we can be helpful.

The point of contact for the Key Contact Program is Elizabeth Kwasnik (ekwasnik@nachc.org).



SLC Calls/Webinars

Periodically, NACHC will host SLC calls and webinars. These are usually scheduled when there is an update on our legislative agenda, call to action, or event that requires planning and logistics (i.e. P&I, see next section for more on the conference).

The notification will come via email; scheduling is always a challenge, so we record most, if not all, SLC calls and webinars. We may or may not take a roll call at the beginning of a call; if you are unable to join us live, please let us know and be in touch so that we can provide you with a copy of the recording to listen to/watch at your convenience. Many times we are able to provide some valuable information that hasn't been shared with the public yet on these closed calls, so it's important that you listen live or to the recording.

SLC calls are usually scheduled in order to provide you with information, but are also an opportunity for discussion and an exchange of ideas and feedback, so please do not hesitate to speak up on these calls. This is the time we use to talk about our strategy or plan for something, and it's helpful to hear your ideas on how it might work best on the ground and with your own members.

NACHC Action Alerts

When NACHC sends an action alert, we typically see a response rate anywhere up to 20%, but we know that what really makes a difference for our grassroots is getting a personalized message from a trusted source asking them to take an action. It's usually the case that your members are far more familiar with the PCA than they are with NACHC, and that is one of our primary intentions in collaborating with you on policy and advocacy issues.

Some PCAs have accounts with NACHC's advocacy platform (Phone2Action and NationBuilder), and we have found it to be effective when the PCA can send one of our action alerts out on their own template; one that is more easily recognizable and trusted than NACHC/CFAHC. If your PCA doesn't have an account, a simple way to flag/emphasize the alert with your membership is to forward the alert you received from us and add a personal message.

As far as the content of those reinforcement messages is concerned, we've found that it's often very helpful to include state-level (or even district-level, if available) stats or information to help make the local connection and highlight the importance or urgency of the issue. For example: which MOCs specifically have taken action/not yet taken action, data on local impact like number of jobs lost or centers closed state-wide, etc. It's also important to include any outreach you've already done as a PCA in order to demonstrate that everyone has a vested interest in the issue at hand (and prevent duplication of effort).

CLICK THE IMAGE BELOW TO WATCH A SHORT VIDEO ON HOW TO USE NACHC'S NEW ADVOCACY PLATFORM

The image shows a screenshot of the 'Campaign for America's Health Centers' website. The header features the organization's logo, a '50 YEARS' anniversary badge, and social media icons. The navigation bar includes links for 'Our Campaign', '101', 'Take Action', 'Spread the Word', 'Access is the Answer', 'Sé un defensor', and 'Blog'. The main content area is titled 'Take action!' and includes a 'JOIN THE CAMPAIGN' button. Below this are buttons for 'CONTACT CONGRESS', 'SIGN THE PETITION', and 'TELL YOUR STORY'. A large blue form titled 'Enter your information to take action now!' is prominently displayed, containing fields for 'Full Name*', 'Email (jsmith@mail.com)*', 'Mobile Phone*', 'Home Address (123 Any St)*', 'Zip Code*', 'Your Health Center Name', and 'What is Your Health Center Connection?'. The footer includes a logo for 'ACCESS is the Answer' and a 'Community Health Vote' logo.

Policy & Issues Forum

SLCs play a major role in NACHC's Policy & Issues Forum each March. Given that this is our biggest fly-in every year, there is a lot of prep involved, beginning months in advance. In the weeks leading up to the conference, you will receive more frequent communications from us (starting with the annual P&I Memo), in an effort to provide the most up-to-date information and help you with planning and coordination.

CONFIRMING CONFERENCE ATTENDEES & SCHEDULING HILL MEETINGS

As you will likely have many of your Health Center members joining you in DC, it's important to set up a system of some kind in order to gauge attendance. Some states set up a registration form on their PCA's website, but if you decide to do that you will need make it clear that that doesn't take the place of registering for the conference with NACHC. Something as simple as asking for individuals to email you when they register on the NACHC site might be a good way to get an estimate of the size of your state's cohort for the conference.

Since you will likely have a lot of conference attendees headed to the Hill, it is important that the PCA take the lead on scheduling the Hill Day meetings. Not only does it allow you to keep the master list and be more organized, but it prevents Health Centers and PCAs from looking uncoordinated when multiple people put in a request for a meeting with the same office to talk about the same issues.

A week or two before the conference, NACHC will ask you to send us your Hill meeting schedules. This is helpful to us for two reasons: 1) so that we can keep a master list in case questions arise, and 2) because NACHC staff have a meeting where we review the full schedule and assign some of our staff to sit in on certain meetings. This is NOT so that we can run the meeting or because we are spying on you or think your team is not strong. Our role is to be a fly on the wall; we usually target Members of Congress who are key to our policy agenda, and it also affords our staff the opportunity to attend meetings with MOCs from their home districts or from states in their regions (in the case of the advocacy team) so that we can get more face time with you and our Health Center members.

SLC MEETING AND HILL PACKETS

The SLC meeting usually takes place the night before the official start of the conference, and it is very important that you attend. During the SLC meeting, you will:

- Pick up your state's Hill packets, which include admin/housekeeping info, policy info, and the blue leave-behind folders for congressional offices.
- Review the Policy Papers with the Federal Affairs team.
- Ask questions about Hill Day and NACHC's policy agenda, including getting advice from your peers in the room about any tough questions you might get asked on Hill Day.

The Policy Papers will have been shared with you prior to coming to DC, usually in draft form just so that you have a heads up about what our asks will be on Hill Day; the SLC meeting will not be your only opportunity to ask questions about the agenda, but sometimes it is more helpful to get things squared away in person, and we want you to feel as prepared as possible for your meetings.

Your Hill packets should have everything you need for your meetings, including a few extra leave-behind folders, just in case. Should you discover that something is missing or need additional copies, you can visit the Hill Day website to print various materials or contact NACHC staff immediately (contact info is always provided in the packet).

Many states prepare state-specific packets that are handed out to members during the state delegation meetings. This is a good idea if you are planning to talk about data at the state, district, or even local levels. Resources like these include: maps, fact sheets, brochures, charts/graphs, etc. We encourage you to use these in conjunction with the NACHC Hill packets.

STATE DELEGATION MEETINGS

State delegation meetings are usually the night before Hill Day, and are your opportunity to get your members organized for their meetings. NACHC provides space for these meetings in one of two time slots; a few weeks leading up to the conference, you will be asked to let us know if you are planning to have a state delegation meeting—this should be more of a confirmation, as these meetings are of the utmost importance and we do not recommend NOT having one.

However you choose to structure your meeting, at the very least they should cover:

- Review of NACHC's Hill packets and any state information you have prepared
- Assignment of Hill meetings
- Discussion of who in each meeting will talk about what (i.e. who talks about why you're there, who makes the local case, who makes the ask, etc.—this is a helpful exercise that will help the meeting run smoothly the next day)
- Distribution of NACHC Congressional Awards for presentation during Hill meetings
- Ask/answer any questions that arise from your members

One best practice from SLCs who've been doing this a long time revolves around how to assign your members to Hill meetings. Especially in large states, it's best to limit the meeting to representatives from Health Centers in that district only; this is especially important with any MOCs in your state who are in leadership positions (i.e. Paul Ryan, Nancy Pelosi, etc.). While it would be great for all of your members to sit in on the meeting, remember that your top priority is to explain to the office what our asks would mean for their constituents, and only the Health Centers in their district can tell that story.

A note about NACHC Congressional Awards: the awards will have been delivered to your state delegation meeting rooms ahead of time, and are usually placed underneath a table in either the front or back of the room. Please look for these and OPEN them. There may be a NACHC staffer's name on the box, but this is only for internal organization purposes; these boxes will have your state's name on them and are for you to open, distribute, and take with you to the Hill.

Like Hill meetings, NACHC staff are also assigned to state delegation meetings. Again, our purpose in attending these meetings is not to hijack and run your meeting for you; we are only there to pop in, say hello, answer any questions you may have for us, and be on our way. In most cases, the state delegation meetings we stop in at correspond with meetings we will be sitting in on the following day and we would just like to introduce ourselves in advance!

HILL DAY LOGISTICS

- Share phone numbers and email addresses. This will be extremely helpful in case there are any transportation issues, last minute meeting changes, etc.
- Provide Hill maps so people have a clear picture of where they are going and don't get lost or confused. There is a handy Hill map at the back of the Congressional directories that everyone receives in the NACHC registration bags, and is a great resource.
- Those with meetings together should travel together to the Hill (whether that's the NACHC shuttle, Metro, or cab).
- Leave yourself extra time to get to the Hill before your first meeting. DC rush hour traffic is chaotic, and it's worth it to get up a little bit earlier to avoid stressing out about being late for your meeting. You will also need to go through security, and sometimes the lines are long depending on the time of day and what else is going on that day on the Hill.
- Fill out a meeting report form in between meetings, during a lunch break, or right after you get back from the Hill while the details of the meeting are still fresh in your mind.
- Coordinate any follow-up before folks scatter after Hill Day/before you leave and make sure everyone knows who from each meeting is expected to do what once everyone returns home.

CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW FOR AN OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES SLCS CAN PROVIDE TO THEIR HEALTH CENTER MEMBERS FOR P&I



PCA Conferences

As SLCs, NACHC will likely reach out to you about your state's annual PCA conference. In addition to updates on state issues and other business, they can also be a great time to incorporate a NACHC policy update and/or advocacy training. Beyond the invitations that come to NACHC for speakers on various topics for PCA conferences throughout the year, the advocacy team will reach out to SLCs in their regions to find out about the agenda for the annual meeting, and see if we can arrange for a presentation or breakout session on advocacy. Not only are we happy to offer ourselves as resources and speakers, state conferences are also a great opportunity for NACHC to identify new Key Contacts and engage directly with Health Centers.

Some topics that NACHC staff are willing and able to present on include (not an exhaustive list):

- Federal policy update
- Advocacy 101
- Advocacy legalese
- Advocacy for special populations (and the Hispanic Advocacy Project)
- Social media & advocacy

We are also available to provide webinars for PCA staff and boards (or other groups convened by PCAs) on those topics and others by request.

ACE Program

Building on Health Center initiatives focused on operational excellence in health care delivery and primary care, the NACHC advocacy team has launched a new program called the [Advocacy Centers of Excellence \(ACE\) Program](#), which is a wonderful opportunity for collaboration between NACHC and PCAs. The program incorporates advocacy as an element of overall operational excellence, including clear goals, quality measures, and recognition for achieving excellence. This new initiative establishes a standardized framework that makes it easy for Health Centers to build a solid foundation of advocacy and demonstrate commitment to advocacy as a true organizational priority.

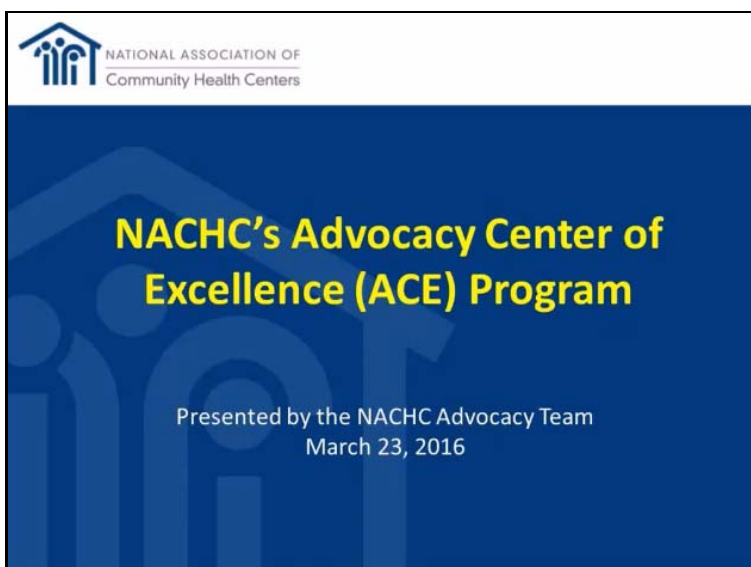
Part of the program entails establishing an MOU between NACHC and PCAs, and we will work together to set state goals around the following:

- Number of ACE Health Centers in your state within the year
- Percentage or number increase in your state's advocate count
- A state policy priority you'd like to focus on
- Incorporation of advocacy in some form at the annual PCA conference

We hope that you will partner with us to encourage and support advocacy growth at Health Centers across your state. The NACHC advocacy team will work individually with each PCA to set these goals and figure out how best to implement the ACE Program in your state, as well as provide ongoing support, performance data, etc.

The point of contact for the ACE Program is Elizabeth Kwasnik (ekwasnik@nachc.org).

CLICK THE IMAGE BELOW TO WATCH A WEBINAR ABOUT THE ACE PROGRAM.



[CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THE CURRENT LISTING OF ACE HEALTH CENTERS AND PCA PARTNERS.](#)

Other: NHCW, CHI, Advocacy Task Force

NATIONAL HEALTH CENTER WEEK (NHCW)

NHCW is one of the best advocacy tools NACHC and Health Centers have. A weeklong celebration of all the amazing work that Health Centers do and all that they provide to their communities every day, it's a great opportunity to gather more support for Health Centers in the form of community members, local organizations and businesses, and elected officials.

While NHCW is celebrated differently at Health Centers across the country, there is a role for SLCs to play in keeping track of all events across the state. When NACHC has sponsorship opportunities available through one of our national partners, we will often contact the PCA/SLC to discuss what might be the best events in that state to connect with sponsorships.

Here are some of the ways PCAs can directly support their member Health Centers during NHCW:

- Publicity via the PCA's website, e-newsletter, or social media
- Providing sponsorships (either from the PCA directly or through state partners)
- Sending staff to attend events across the state
- Convening multi-Health Center events (i.e. for an award presentation to a Member of Congress)

For resources and more information on NHCW, visit www.healthcenterweek.com.

COMMUNITY HEALTH INSTITUTE (CHI)

NACHC's second annual conference, CHI, is usually held in August and focuses on all aspects of Health Center operations. Though not heavily focused on NACHC's legislative agenda, there are still sessions on policy & advocacy from the federal affairs, state affairs, regulatory affairs, research, and advocacy departments.

ADVOCACY TASK FORCE

The Advocacy Task Force is a subgroup under NACHC's Legislative Committee, and meets in-person during NACHC conferences and via conference call periodically throughout the rest of the year. The Task Force is primarily employed to provide guidance and feedback on NACHC's advocacy agenda, as well as propose standards for advocacy participation to be undertaken by both that group and the entire Leg. Committee. As well, NACHC seeks input from the Task Force on advocacy programming.

The point of contact for the Advocacy Task Force is Amanda Pears Kelly (apearskelly@nachc.org).

QUESTIONS, CONCERNS? CONTACT THE NACHC ADVOCACY TEAM:

Amanda Pears Kelly

National Director, Advocacy & Civic Engagement

apearskelly@nachc.org

Alex Harris

Grassroots Advocacy Manager for Special Populations

aharris@nachc.org

Dorian Wanzer

Grassroots Advocacy Manager for Outreach & Communications

dwanzer@nachc.org

Elizabeth Kwasnik

Manager of Grassroots Advocacy

ekwasnik@nachc.org

