

Advocacy Toolkit

Helping you make
a difference



Introduction



Purpose

This toolkit is here to help you make a difference! Whether you're passionate about an issue or are just getting started, it's designed to

empower grassroots groups and individuals to advocate for positive change in health-care policy — locally, regionally or across the province.



Target audience

This toolkit is for all OMA members who want to take action and are passionate about creating a better health-care system.



Goal

Strengthen the voice of physicians in Ontario by providing guidance, resources and strategies for successful advocacy efforts.

Toolkit overview

STEP

1

Understand the landscape



Start by exploring current health-care issues and finding your allies. Here's how:

- **Get informed:** Learn about ongoing campaigns and policies
- **Find allies:** Connect with like-minded individuals and groups

STEP

2

Create a grassroots advocacy roadmap



1. **Set goals:** Define what you want to achieve using SMART goals.
2. **Identify the audience:** Know who can help you make the change.
3. **Choose your tactics:** Identify the best ways to connect with your audience.

STEP

3

Large-scale or complex advocacy requests

WHO IS THIS FOR

Members who completed the first two steps and want to work with OMA staff to propose more complex advocacy projects. If you are ready to expand, contact us at info@oma.org.

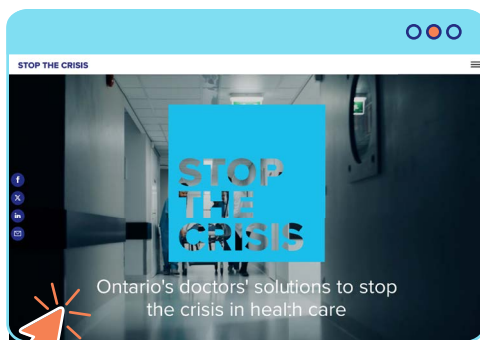
STEP 1

Understand the landscape

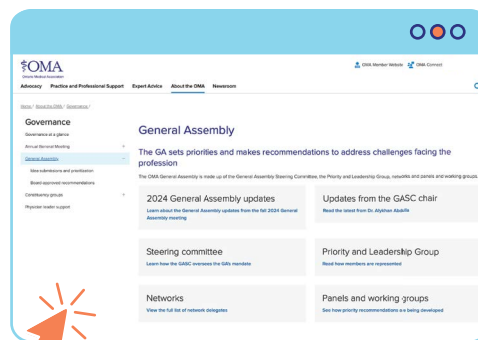
This step is for members who are passionate about an issue and want to start their advocacy journey. Although this step lists many OMA initiatives and groups, we encourage members to also connect with external interest groups, such as patient advocate groups or allied health professionals.

If you are unsure where to look, or which OMA groups or committees might be most helpful for your initiative, please contact info@oma.org.

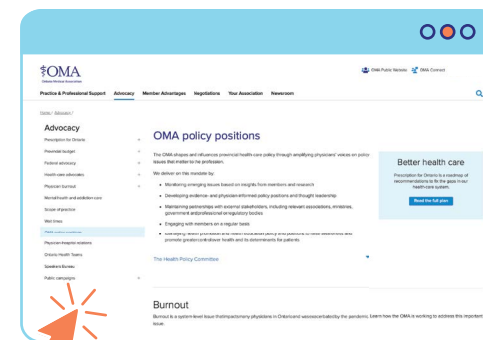
The following resources can help you get started:



[Our current advocacy campaign](#)



[Our advocacy priorities as voted on by PLG delegates](#)



[Our policy positions](#)

Actions you can take

1. Be informed and [subscribe to OMA News](#)
2. Identify partners and support through [our constituency groups or our committees](#)
3. [Become an OMA health-care advocate](#)

STEP 2

Create a grassroots advocacy roadmap

This step will help guide you to create an advocacy plan you can put into action in your own community and network. When you have completed this guide, you will be able to answer the following questions:

What needs to change?		
What is/are your goal(s)? (pg 7)		
Who do we need to influence? (pg 8-10)	What is important to them? (pg 11)	How can we influence them? (pg 11)
What existing OMA tools or resources may be helpful? (pg 13)		

Please note: This does not apply to professional government lobbying activities, which are governed by legislation and out of scope for this tool. [The Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario](#) has excellent resources.

STEP 2

Outreach and target list

It is important to identify your contacts for your outreach and any other referrals that may come from your advocacy work to successfully engage them and develop relationships. Keep track of your meetings with them and any key points to advancing your cause.

Target audience	Contact name	Title

STEP 2

What is your goal?

What is the desired outcome of your advocacy?

What impact will this change have on physicians and patients?

This section does not need to be more than a few sentences, as long as it outlines the exact nuances of your goal.

When developing your goal, it is important to keep the following in mind:

- What produces the most good and does the least harm?
- Respect the rights of all stakeholders
- Ensure it serves the whole community, not just some members
- What is the risk?
- Treat people fairly
- Follow the mandate of your group

S



SPECIFIC

Make goals
clear and
specific

M



MEASURABLE

Define
measurable
assets

A



ATTAINABLE

Confirm your
goals are
attainable

R



RELEVANT

Verify your
goals are
relevant

T



TIME-LIMITED

Set up a
time-based
plan

STEP 2

Who do we need to influence?

Before moving forward you need to understand your target audience(s) and what matters to them.

Below is a list of audiences you might consider. In choosing which groups to try to influence, it is important to consider their potential interest in the issue, their potential impact, and how to best reach and influence them.

If you plan to work with decision-makers and are unsure which of these are most appropriate, please contact info@oma.org.



Public

Public sentiment can deeply influence decision-makers and other stakeholders. You may want to identify which members of the public will most support your cause.



Influencers

In many cases, you will also want to identify those who have influence over them.



Decision-makers

Understand who has the power to make the change(s) you need to achieve your goal. Is it the Minister of Health, the Premier, a local hospital CEO? If you are unsure, please contact info@oma.org.

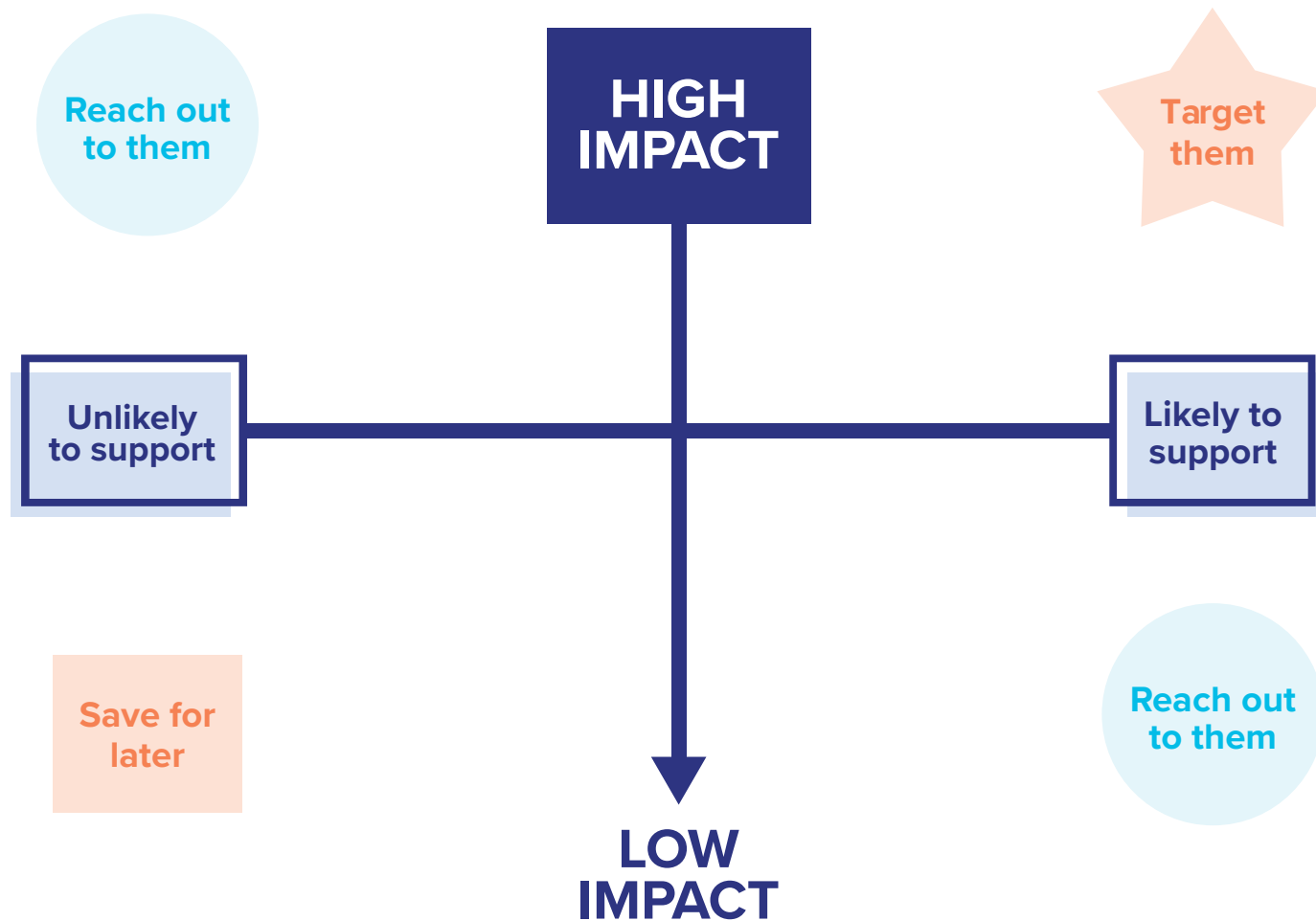
STEP 2

Public	Influencers	Decision-makers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents of school-aged children • Seniors 65+ • Millennials • Immigrants and newcomers • Geographic populations • Unattached patients • Specific condition groups • Patients • Caregivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMA constituency groups • Media • Opinion leaders • Public service • Professional/trade associations • Labour unions • Political parties • Allied health professionals • Ontario Health Teams • Local physicians and academic experts • Other health professional associations (national, provincial or local chapters) • Other health provider, patient group associations or unions • Local hospitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of Provincial Parliament • Ministers/caucus • Premier cabinet • Agency administrators • Federal government • Municipal mayors • Ontario Ministry of Health, other ministries • Municipalities including mayors and councillors • Other associations and local chapters such as the Chamber of Commerce

STEP 2

Identifying target audiences and anticipated impact

Try plotting your audience on this graph. Target those who have the most impact and are the most likely to support your cause.



STEP 2

What is important to them?

When starting an advocacy plan, understanding what is important to your target audience is crucial for tailoring your message and strategy effectively. Here are some guiding questions to help identify their priorities.

Understanding the audience's context

What are their
core values?

What are
their goals or
aspirations?

What challenges or
pain points are they
experiencing?

What barriers might
prevent them from
engaging?

Exploring interests and motivations

What benefits or
opportunities are
they seeking?

How does your
advocacy align with
their interests?

What shared
outcomes can you
highlight?

Evaluating communication preferences

Do they respond
to emotional
appeals, data-driven
arguments, or peer
influence?

Do they favour
digital platforms,
in-person discussions,
reports, or multimedia
content?

Are there key
individuals,
organizations or
media channels
they trust?

Are they more
responsive to
formal, professional
communication,
or casual relatable
messaging?



By answering these questions, you can develop a deeper understanding of your target audience and craft an advocacy plan that speaks to their needs, values and motivations effectively.

STEP 2

How can we influence them?

Here is where you will transform your strategic approach into a step-by-step guide. Ensure it is indicated in the right sequence for your plan to gain traction. You can find a list of tactics below, which you can refer to in deciding how you will deliver the messaging to your target audience.

Activity	Time commitment (High, medium, low)	How you can do it
Share information with the public	Medium	Create webinars, share infographics, post on social media or write blogs
Engage local voices and leaders	Medium	Host events or workshops for influencers
Host community conversations	Medium	Organize town halls, panel talks or webinars, host joint meetings or share knowledge
Gather community opinions	Medium	Run online surveys, social media polls, or focus groups
Support advocacy champions	High	Start mentorship programs, build community networks, work with existing organizations
Bring people together for change	High	Plan action days, organize events, or launch social media campaigns
Reach out to your elected leaders (eg. City council, mayor, MPP, MP)	Medium	Write letters, start petitions, set up meetings, or advocate online

STEP 2

What existing OMA tools or resources may be helpful?

Here are some OMA tools and resources you could use for your advocacy plan. These tools are designed to help you connect with decision-makers, build partnerships and mobilize your community effectively.



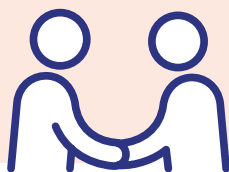
OMA advocacy resources

- i. [Sample questions, tips for meetings, and other guides](#)
- ii. [Email invitation template](#)



Health-care Advocates program training opportunities

- i. Webinars, workshops, and mentorship programs provided by the OMA



Meeting with your elected leaders

- i. Ways to contact your MPP
- ii. [MPP contact information database](#)
- iii. Tips for a good meeting with your MPP

STEP 3

Large-scale or complex requests

For large-scale or complex advocacy requests beyond steps 1 and 2, the OMA government relations and advocacy team is available to support. Please contact us at info@oma.org and we can help with your ideas.

In your request, please consider the following questions, where applicable:

- What do you need from the OMA?
- What do you need from the government?
- What do you need from our members?
- What do you need from the public?



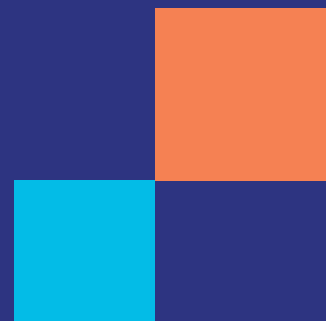
What you can expect from Step 3:

- Support from OMA staff to achieve your advocacy goals
- More information on what the OMA is working on and how it fits your advocacy goals
- Clarity on if your advocacy goals are aligned with OMA's scope and mandate

Questions or feedback?

Contact us:

info@oma.org



EXAMPLE

What needs to change?

Reducing delays in patient care

What is/are your goal(s)?

Prioritize palliative medicine. Addressing issues with referrals, reducing wait times, increasing access to quality care through allied health supports.

Who do we need to influence?	What is important to them?	How can we influence them?
Physician leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing delays in patient care • Improving patient experience • Burnout/administrative burden 	Sharing information through social media, blogs, or infographics
Ontario Health Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving patient experience • Improving population health outcomes • Reducing costs where possible • Improving efficiency of care 	Building partnerships by knowledge sharing or hosting joint meetings
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing healthcare cost • Improving patient experience • Reducing wait times 	Use data-driven advocacy to demonstrate cost savings and system improvements.
Patient advocate groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher quality care for those waiting for, or in palliative care • Improving patient experience • Meeting patient goals for location of care 	Supporting advocacy champions by building community networks or mentorship programs
<h2>What existing OMA tools or resources may be helpful?</h2> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register for OMA advocacy network for further advocacy training • Connect with people with writing/graphic design skills </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with groups via email • Register for the OMA Healthcare Advocates Program </div>		

EXAMPLE

Target audience	Contact name	Title
Patient advocate groups		Manager, Ontario Palliative Care Network CEO, Hospice Palliative Care Ontario
Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada		Executive Director
Ontario Health Teams		www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-health-teams
Ministry of Health		Associate Deputy Minister, Clinical Care and Delivery
OMA Physician leaders		Sr. Director, Physician Leader Engagement, Ontario Medical Association
• Palliative medicine		Section Chair Section Vice-chair
• Emergency medicine		
• Section of General and Family Practice		
• Pediatrics		
• Geriatric medicine		
• Long term care/care of the elderly		