

Using Social Media for Advocacy

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What was once a platform for connecting with friends, social media has become a vessel for policy change. After a contentious Presidential election, people are looking for new ways to engage with policymakers to make sure their voices are heard. The Women's March on Washington was rooted in a call-to-action on Facebook. The creation of one Facebook event page in Hawaii snowballed into a 500,000-person march in Washington, D.C. and several international marches for advocates to voice their concerns about policy proposals of the new administration. Facebook reports users spend an average of 50 minutes on their sites a day, and patient advocacy

organizations can use this to their advantage. Dialysis Patient Citizens (DPC) is utilizing social media to mobilize individuals to take action on behalf of dialysis patients across the country. After the release of a discriminatory ruling by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), DPC launched an online petition to the incoming administration encouraging them to overturn this rule. By using Facebook's audience targeting, we reached over 38,000 individuals who had an interest in kidney disease and educated them about this discriminatory rule. Over 24,000 of these patients, healthcare professionals, and family members signed the petition. Not only were we able to cultivate signatures on the





in 2016. It is also important to note, those 968 emails were for one campaign only. After acquiring over 5,000 new Facebook likes, we began to cultivate these individuals into active members.

Through a series of carefully crafted posts to “ease” individuals into what our organization does, we were able to convert 318 of those individuals into active advocates by simply sending a message to Congress to introduce themselves. Imagine what the turnout will be when we need to launch an issue-based campaign!

By scheduling and promoting daily posts about our organization, current calls to action, and news in the kidney community, we are reaching around 45,000 people a week. Maintaining an active social media presence will lead to increased action when issues arise that need immediate action.

petition, but we grew our total Facebook audience by 142%. So, how has this affected our advocacy efforts? Since January 1, patient advocates have sent 968 emails to legislators as opposed to 243 messages during the same period While Facebook continues to explore its role in politics and information sharing, it is already a great tool to mobilize individuals into active policy advocates. Have you liked us on Facebook yet? Visit facebook.com/patientcitizens for daily news and updates! ●