

# Advocacy Toolkit

Ontario Medical Student Association

This toolkit was consolidated from an advocacy toolkit prepared by Avri Lynn Ding and Nikhita Singhal and How to Contact Your Local MPP module, prepared by Colin Adams and Charles Yin, Ontario Medical Students' Association. Updated by Rae Ma and Maham Bushra, Ontario Medical Students' Association Political Advocacy Committee in 2019.

Updated by **Grace Zhu** and **Angela Li**, Ontario Medical Students' Association Political Advocacy Committee in 2020.

# Table of Contents

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>3</b>
6 months in Advance: October/November	3
4-5 months in Advance: November/December/January	3
3-4 months in Advance: January/February	3
2 months in Advance: February/March	4
1 month in Advance: March/April	4
Week of event: April/May	4
Two weeks after event	4
<b>Step 1: Understanding the Political Structure</b>	<b>5</b>
Canadian political structure	5
Ontario government structure	5
Intergovernmental relations	6
<b>Step 2: Choosing an Advocacy Topic</b>	<b>8</b>
Factors to Consider	8
1. Social Accountability	8
2. Personal Investment	8
3. Support from Stakeholders	8
4. Currency of Issue	9
5. Interests of your MPP	9
<b>Step 3: Reaching out to your MPP</b>	<b>10</b>
Email Correspondence	10
Initial Contact Email Template	10
Follow Up Email Template	11
Preparation for an MPP Meeting	11
1. Know Your MPP	11
2. Know Your Issue(s)	12
3. Brainstorm event and campaign ideas	12
4. Meeting Logistics	12
MPP Meeting & Follow-Up	13
Meeting Follow-Up Email Template	14
<b>Step 4: Event/Campaign Planning</b>	<b>14</b>
General planning	14
Roles and Responsibilities	15
Advertisement and Promotions	15
Follow-Up	15
Table 1: Event/Campaign Ideas	16
<b>References</b>	<b>17</b>

# Timeline

## 6 months in Advance: October/November

1. Arrange meeting with MPP
  - a. Contact your MPP for a meeting to discuss a potential partnership to host an advocacy event related to a priority health need. By contacting them early, you will have ample time for any administrative issues that may arise in arranging this meeting (ex. no response, low availability) without risking delays in event planning.
  - b. Refer to *Step 3: Reaching out to your MPP*
2. Research and Brainstorm
  - a. Conduct research to better understand the community's priority health needs of your riding and priorities of your MPP. Reflect on your own personal goals and interests too.
  - b. Using this research, brainstorm a list of health topics to explore as well as potential events for each topic. While these lists need not be exhaustive, having at least 3-4 will allow your meeting to go smoothly with the MPP.
  - c. Refer to *Step 1: Choosing an Advocacy Topic*, *Step 2: Understanding the political structure*, and *Step 4: Event/Campaign Planning*

## 4-5 months in Advance: November/December/January

1. Meeting with your MPP
  - a. Meet as soon as they are available! Many MPP offices have community events set months in advance and if you catch them early enough, you may be able to get additional support from their staff in event planning.
  - b. At this meeting, determine the health topic and event type you would like to do together, as well as a backup in case the first plan becomes infeasible. Determine possible date/times and venue/locations for the event. Assess what needs to be done, which community organizations to involve, and a potential event planning timeline.
2. After the meeting, follow up with the MPP office with a summary of roles and responsibilities and the event planning timeline to ensure you are both on the same page.
3. Refer to *Step 3: Reaching out to your MPP*

## 3-4 months in Advance: January/February

1. Speaker or community organization invitations
  - a. Community organizations that you will be partnering with on this event need to be contacted as soon as possible. Share with them your event idea, potential date/time, and health topic, and ask if they can meet to discuss a partnership.
  - b. If there are any local speakers or panelists you would like to invite, do so as soon as possible. Ask them of their willingness to participate and availability. This portion may take quite a bit of time to sort out.
2. Setting the Date/Time/Location
  - a. Based on the availability of MPP, community organizations, and speakers, the official date and time of the event can be established. Make sure this date does not conflict with any other major community or medical school event (ex. exams).
  - b. When picking the venue, ensure that it is located in the MPP riding, easily accessible to members of the community via various modes of transportation, and can encompass the number of potential attendees you expect. Based on this criteria, reach out to your partners for suggestions as well as look for some on your own. Ideally, this venue should be inexpensive due to our limited budget.

3. Event promotion strategies
  - a. Determine who your target audience is and how you are going to reach out to them (i.e through what forms of promotion). Do you want your event to be reported on by the media? Reach out to your partners to see what sorts of promotional strategies they can implement and what materials they would need from you.
4. Refer to Step 4: Event/Campaign Planning

### **2 months in Advance: February/March**

1. Executing promotion/advertisement strategy
  - a. In addition to starting advertising, consider how you want to keep track of potential attendees. Will there be an online sign up? Eventbrite can be a great website for this purpose. Event promotion should take place up to the day of the event.

### **1 month in Advance: March/April**

1. Confirmation from partners
  - a. Check in with community organizations, speakers, and your MPP to confirm their attendance and involvement in the event.
2. Preparing event materials
  - a. Does your event require physical materials such as pens and paper? Do you need signs to be made for directing attendees to the event room? Brainstorm a list of materials that you might need and begin gathering them. If you think of it, you probably need it!

### **Week of event: April/May**

1. Contingency plans
  - a. Does your event depend on weather? Is there a nearby breakout of COVID-19? What if one of your speakers cancels? Now is the time to come up with backup plans for these situations and to make the necessary preparations to have them ready just in case.
2. Reminder for attendees
  - a. Send out a reminder to attendees with details of the event.

### **Two weeks after event**

1. Follow up
  - a. Email your partners thanking them for their help. Ask them for feedback on the event planning process and the event itself in order to improve for next year. Ask your MPP if they are willing to participate next year with your successor.
  - b. Email a thank you to the attendees. Provide a list of resources on how to get involved and an update on the OMSA advocacy efforts on the health topic.

# Step 1: Understanding the Political Structure

## Canadian political structure

Canada has three levels of government: federal, provincial, and municipal, as outlined under the *Constitution Act, 1867*. The federal government, under leadership of the Prime Minister, deals with matters relating to mail, indirect taxation, national defence, trade and commerce, criminal justice, foreign affairs, employment insurance, and Indigenous lands and rights. Provincial and territorial governments led by a Premier are responsible for their own education, health and social services, administration of justice, direct taxation (sales tax) and road regulations. Municipal governments are led by mayors and oversee transit, policing, arterial road maintenance, child care, social housing and social assistance, public health, and land-use planning. Municipal governments consist of regions, counties, and municipalities (cities, towns, villages, and townships).

First Nations communities are governed by band councils, consisting of chiefs and councillors that are elected by band members. The band system was imposed by the *Indian Act, 1867*, and functions similar to a municipality, whereby the band manages their local governmental affairs, such as education and infrastructure. Although not recognized by the *Indian Act*, some First Nations communities recognize hereditary chiefs, who have inherited their titles through tradition. Band governments can also unite to form a larger tribal council, which can be based on specific political, economic, regional and social aims or interests, and collectively they may provide services such as education and health care to their members.

## Ontario government structure

Ontario has a unicameral (one chamber) parliament that oversees provincial matters of education, health and social services, administration of justice, direct taxation (sales tax) and road regulations. The Ontario government, formally known as the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, consists of 124 seats, representing the **124 ridings** of Ontario. Each riding, the geographic division of the province into electoral districts, is represented by one elected **Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP)**. Ontario has a fixed, four year election cycle. If the governing party has a majority, elections are usually held every four years on the first Thursday of October. The governing party can lose power if a vote of no confidence is passed by the Legislature.

MPPs may belong to a provincial political party, or be independent. The candidate with the most votes in the riding wins the and becomes the MPP, known as “first-past-the-post”. A majority government forms if a party wins 63 or more seats in an election. Otherwise, the party with a plurality of seats forms a minority government. The leader of the winning party becomes the **Premier**. The Premier selects MPPs from the governing party to form the **Cabinet**. These MPPs are thus called **Ministers** and each leads a ministry. The number of ministers and ministries is dependent on the Premier, and typically changes after an election. For a list of the current Cabinet Ministers, click [here](#). For the current Ministries click [here](#). The Cabinet makes the major decisions about government policies and priorities, including provincial budgets. Ministers introduce legislation for consideration in the House. The decisions made in Cabinet provide direction for policy development and implementation in the **Ontario Public Service (OPS)**. The OPS is made up of nonpartisan public servants who help implement government policies and deliver programs. They are politically neutral and remain in place throughout

elections. The OPS is led by the **Secretary of the Cabinet** and the **Deputy Ministers**, one corresponding to each Ministry. For a list of current Deputy Ministers click [here](#).

MPPs from non-governing parties make up the opposition. They ask questions to the Premier and Cabinet Ministers through Question Period, written notices, debates, and Statements to hold the government accountable. The Legislative Assembly votes on legislation, introduced as bills and brought forward by any member of the Legislature, and on the provincial budget. A Private Members' Bill is a bill brought forward by an MPP who is not a Cabinet Minister. Bills become Acts after receiving "three readings" and "Royal Assent" or proclamation by the Lieutenant Governor. In the first reading, the purpose of the bill is explained, in the second reading, the bill is debated and amendments may be made, and on the third reading, the House votes on the bill.

Standing committees are small working groups of MPPs that have been formed to consider bills and specific issues that the Legislature has asked them to review. These committees exist for the duration of the Parliament, or may exist for a limited period of time to study a particular issue. For more information on current standing committees, click [here](#). For more information on current standing committees, click [here](#).

## Intergovernmental relations

Provincial governments communicate, interact, and collaborate with both the federal government and the municipal governments. These relations tend to occur independently from one another. Informally, MPPs will develop relations with the city councillor and MP sharing the same riding. This relationship can be used to bring up issues and gain support from other levels of government. Formally, intergovernmental annual meetings and conferences are held to support and promote collaborations.

Cross-provincially, provincial and territorial leaders belong to a formal organization called the Council of the Federation, which serves to promote interprovincial-territorial cooperation and advocacy as one entity. Typically, this Council meets twice a year to discuss shared priorities and form positions on national issues in order to effectively lobby federal leaders.

In terms of federal-provincial/territorial relations, the federal and provincial/territorial ministers of specific portfolios meet at least once a year. The Prime Minister can also call First Ministers' Meetings, in which Canada's 13 Premiers and the Prime Minister gather to discuss specific issues. Since 2015, Justin Trudeau, our current Prime Minister, has called 6 of these meetings to discuss topics such as climate change, Syrian Crisis, and health care. These meetings sometimes can include national Indigenous leaders from the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council to advance work being done on Indigenous issues. Additionally, Ministers of Intergovernmental Affairs at both the federal and provincial level work collaboratively with federal, provincial, and international partners to strengthen these relations.

At the provincial-municipal level, Ontario has its own legislation guiding the communication with its local governments known as the Municipal Act, City of Toronto Act, and the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the primary provincial entity that engages with local governments. Its mandate is to deliver better public services, increase supply of affordable housing, and streamline development project approvals across the province. Collectively, Ontario's 444

municipalities work together under the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), a non-for-profit, non-partisan association. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was established as a formal agreement on the partnership between the AMO and the provincial government. This MOU states that the Ontario government will consult the AMO on matters that affect municipal sectors such as immigration, housing initiatives, and economic development while the AMO is responsible for reaching out to its membership and produce position papers to effectively advocate for the needs of municipalities.

## Step 2: Choosing an Advocacy Topic

The first step to advocacy is identifying an area of unmet health need in the community. The World Health Organization has defined the Social Accountability of Medical Schools as “the obligation to direct their education, research and service activities towards addressing the priority health concerns of the community, region, and/or nation they have a mandate to serve. The priority health concerns are to be identified jointly by governments, health care organizations, health professionals and the public.” Medical schools should work together and in partnership with their affiliated health care organizations, the community, other professional groups, policy makers and governments to develop a shared vision of an evolving and sustainable health care system for the future, and the same should apply to individual medical students. Many students find it helpful to review their clinical and life experiences to identify issues of inequity, injustice, or inefficiency.

### Factors to Consider

#### 1. Social Accountability

The most important factor to consider is the priority health needs of the community. To find information regarding these needs, try searching up “population health assessment” and “health priorities”/ “priority health needs” for your community and look for transcriptions or public records of these presentations to your community’s Board of Health or municipal council. You can also review your community’s Public Health department’s Annual Public Health Report to understand the larger-scale initiatives that took place in the past year. Remember to review the most recent information that you can find! There may also be research groups associated with your medical school or university that engage in community health research and population health assessment whose work you can review. Using this information, brainstorm a list of topics.

#### 2. Personal Investment

From your list of potential topics, identify ones that spark your own passion and concern for the issue! Choose a topic that you care about and will enjoy spending time and energy to advance solutions for. Advocacy is rewarding but you will likely meet roadblocks throughout the process. Internal motivation will go a long way to keep you motivated.

#### 3. Support from Stakeholders

As representatives of OMSA, your medical schools, and your community, the stances you take should align with the values of these organizations. Consider consulting the following groups to gather their perspectives and feedback on the problem and solution(s) you are advocating for:

- Your Medical School: individual students or Faculty members, relevant interest groups or committees, or the student council
- Ontario Political Advocacy Committee (OPAC): the advocacy arm of OMSA. Below are links that provide information on advocacy priorities of OMSA to help you generate ideas:
  - [Past Day of Action/Lobby Day Highlights](#)
  - [OMSA Advocacy Priorities](#)
- Community organizations: get in touch and speak with local organizations, particularly those who represent people impacted by the issue



Speaking to these groups at this stage can broaden your perspectives on the topic and produce an *informed* advocacy direction. Questions to consider during consultation include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Have they identified similar priority health needs of the community?
- 2) Do they agree with solutions or event/campaign ideas you have in mind?
- 3) Have they done work in the past, or are currently working on the issue (or a related issue)?
- 4) Are they interested in collaborating or supporting your advocacy?
- 5) Can they recommend or direct you to any resources to further inform your advocacy?

#### **4. Currency of Issue**

Social movements in which there is increased awareness and discussion of an issue can serve to strengthen your own social movements in which there is increased awareness and discussion of an issue can serve to strengthen your own advocacy projects. projects. Thus, try to choose topics either highlighted in the media or mentioned by the government/political parties. If you have a topic in mind, do a quick google search!

If you want to conduct a search to help you generate an idea, consider the following resources to become familiar with current health policy and advocacy issues.

For Ontario health policy and advocacy issues:

- Media outlets: Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen
  - Local outlets: Hamilton Spectator, London Free Press, Kingston Whig-Standard, Sudbury Star
- [MOHLTC Newsroom](#)
- [Ontario Medical Association](#)
- Any Canadian resources (since healthcare is managed at the provincial level, national issues are 9/10 times also applicable to Ontario)

For Canadian health policy and advocacy issues:

- Media outlets: Globe and Mail, National Post, CBC
- [Healthy Debate](#)
- [Canadian Medical Association](#)

#### **5. Interests of your MPP**

Given the goal of collaborating with the MPP of your school's riding for an advocacy event or campaign, your advocacy topic should ideally cater to the passions of your MPP. To find out what these interests are, conduct an online search of your MPP commenting on issues in the media and participating in advocacy events. Some areas to start include their personal website, Wikipedia page, and the Ontario Legislative Assembly website.

# Step 3: Reaching out to your MPP

## Email Correspondence

Before you can develop a relationship with your local MPP, determine who they are first. Enter the postal code of your medical school [here](#) to identify your riding and associated MPP. Once you know the MPP's name, find their contact information using the [Ontario Legislative Assembly website](#). If you are contacting your local MPP as a member of their constituency, your best bet is to contact them via the information listed under their constituency address. An MPP's constituency office is located in their electoral district. Usually staff are dedicated to responding to inquiries/requests from their constituency.

Below are email templates for initially contacting your MPP and follow up. The more you can personalize content for your specific MPP and the topics pertinent to their riding based on the research you conduct, the better!

### Initial Contact Email Template

Subject: OMSA student relations - Meeting request

Dear Ms./Dr./Mr./Minister (if your MPP is a Cabinet Minister) [Surname],

I hope you are doing well. My name is [Name], and I am a constituent of [your electoral district] and a medical student at [School]. I am reaching out to you on behalf of the [Ontario Medical Students Association \(OMSA\)](#), an organization representing the views and concerns of medical students across our province on a number of issues. Last year, [Insert name of student in your role last year] was in contact with you about organizing an event on [Insert topic or if unknown use "health issues"]. This year, I am taking over this role as [School] Longitudinal Government Representative, and I am excited to work with you. Within my role, I have been tasked to develop a collaborative relationship with the MPP of our school's riding, and organize an **event aiming to raise awareness/educate community members about a local health concern.**

I would be grateful for the opportunity to connect with you so we can discuss the most pressing healthcare issues affecting our fellow [City] constituents and collaborate on an event. I would greatly appreciate the chance to meet in person at your earliest convenience.

**Below are my availability in the upcoming weeks, would any of these work for you?**

[ provide several time slots in the upcoming 2-3 weeks, as MPPs are very busy and need advanced notice. Directly providing your availability and asking the MPP to pick a time slot decreases the amount of back and forth emails that's required to set up a meeting, and lessens the chance that you will need to follow up ]

Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to working with you and hopefully meeting soon!

Thank you so much for your time,

[Name]

MD Candidate, [School]

OMSA Ontario Political Advocacy Committee

[contact information]

Tips for personalization:

- If you've met the MPP before, it won't hurt to bring it up in your introduction.
- Are there any health topics that both you and your MPP are passionate about? Mention them in your email to express similar interests.
- If you are writing to advocate for an issue but not requesting a meeting or a response from the MPP, then simply include what action you would like to be taken by your MPP. Don't make sweeping demands and avoid sounding partisan. Remember, you are contacting your MPP in their capacity as your elected representative, less so than a member of any particular political party.

### No response from your MPP yet?

If you've indicated in your original communication that you would like to receive a response from the MPP's office, don't be afraid to follow up in 2-3 weeks if you don't hear back! Remember that the rough turnaround time varies between each individual politician, but keep in mind that they likely receive many emails and phone calls every day. Don't hesitate to follow up multiple times if you have to (within a reasonable amount of time between each follow-up). You might also try calling their electoral district office (you will most likely have to leave a message and a member of their staff will get back to you). All of this might seem aggressive, but remember it is their job to hear their constituents out and serve as a representative for your electoral district.

Reply to your original email with the following:

#### Follow Up Email Template

Dear Ms./Dr./Mr./Minister (if your MPP is a Cabinet Minister) [Surname],

I would like to send a follow up email to discuss the continuation of a collaborative relationship with Ontario Medical Student Association and [School of Medicine].

Best regards,

[your name]

## Preparation for an MPP Meeting

This part is arguably the most time-consuming and taxing step of the process. This section is written as a general guide for the preparation you should do prior to meeting with an MPP. It is not meant to be comprehensive and not all the components outlined here may be applicable, as the preparation necessary is dependent on the purpose of your meeting.

### 1. Know Your MPP

Before you meet the MPP, research basic facts about them and their riding. Information to look up may include:

- Biographies and personal websites
- Social media pages and posts – pay attention to recent posts and stances on issues
- Research affiliations, previous work, voting history
- Riding: location, demographics, major news

If you have an issue in mind to speak to them about, take note of relevant background, past work or publicities. Your goal is to frame your message in a manner that highlights the MPP and their community's interests. Making your issue relevant and meaningful will augment support.

Before your meeting, look back on your research and try finding common ground. Some starter questions to ask yourself while reading:

- Have you been involved in the same or similar local community groups?
- Do you have a similar family structure?
- Do you know someone that knows them?
- Do you have a story about seeing them at a community event or in the media?

## 2. Know Your Issue(s)

For your initial meeting, you might want to prepare a few topics and event ideas to provide your MPP with options in the collaboration. When presenting an issue, your aim will be to educate your MPP on implications of the policy you are asking them to support and how it will affect their constituents (you and others in your community). To prepare, research the issue. Important aspects to be familiar with:

- Background context
- Factors that created/are contributing to the problem
- How your issue relates to MPP and their constituents. It may be worthwhile to think of and write down a few stories/anecdotes that demonstrate the importance of the issue.
- Statistics demonstrating impact and importance
- Solutions and MPP's role – identify what you would like the MPP to do. This may take the form of voting for or against a particular policy, or a request for support. Support can include advocating for the issue at caucus, to a Minister, or a particular committee.
- Positions of your associations (OMSA, CFMS, OMA, CMA)
- Provincial and local perspectives
- Media coverage of the topic, noting favourable stories
- Opposition's arguments\*

During your research, gather any local examples that illustrate how the issue directly impacts your community (the MPP's constituency) and that may add a personal touch to your discussion. Politicians often respond to moving anecdotes.

*\*Part of knowing your issue is to understand the opposition. This will help you anticipate questions that may come up during the meeting and prepare responses. We highly recommend brainstorming a list of difficult questions that your MPP may ask and coming up with responses prior to your meeting.*

## 3. Brainstorm event and campaign ideas

See Section 4: Event/Campaign planning for more details

## 4. Meeting Logistics

In the days leading up to the meeting, do the following:

- Confirm the meeting a few days prior. A planned meeting is not immune to cancellation or rescheduling, particularly if scheduled far in advance. A confirmation/reminder also shows the MPP that the meeting is important to you.
- Prepare an agenda that includes:
  - An introduction of who you are, your role, what you hope to accomplish in this collaboration, and why you are interested in working with them
  - Ask: are you comfortable with partnering to organize an event together?
  - Health topics of interest
  - Extent of partnership: What level of involvement would they like to have?
  - Tasks to complete

- Create a message that is organized, concise, and easily understood. Make sure it is not lost in information.
- Bring written materials. This can be a one-page summary of key points and your contact information. Bring enough copies for every member of your group, the MPP, and their assistants.
- If multiple people from your group are attending, identify:
  - A leader for discussion. At the beginning, the leader should confirm the meeting timeframe and introduce goals of the meeting.
  - A note taker. The note taker will record what was said, what needs follow up, and what the MPP has agreed to do.

## MPP Meeting & Follow-Up

Once you're done preparing, it's time to actually attend the meeting with your MPP! Here are a few things to keep in mind to help ensure your meeting is as productive and effective as possible:

### During the Meeting

1. **Respect:** This goes without saying, but respect is of the utmost importance. Dress appropriately and professionally for your meeting, and be sure to introduce yourself to all staff you meet on your way in and out of the office. While engaging in discussion, be tolerant of differing views and keep the dialogue open. State your points clearly and firmly, but avoid arguing and speaking negatively about other individuals or organizations. Always be polite—not to the point of being timid, though.
2. **Time:** Be on it (and don't waste it!) Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early for your meeting, but definitely don't expect your MPP to be available right away! MPPs have extremely hectic schedules, and will often be slotting in meetings between a variety of other responsibilities. Be patient and flexible, and make the most of the time you do have; if the MPP arrives late or needs to depart earlier than expected, try to engage in conversation with their aid/assistants before or after the meeting as they are often instrumental in the MPP's decision-making processes.
3. **Rapport:** Don't underestimate small talk! Spending a few minutes asking the MPP about themselves, their interests, and their work (though you've hopefully already done some research in preparation for the meeting) is an excellent way to build rapport and set a positive tone. If you have common interests or experiences, share them!
4. **Stories:** If the issue resonates with you because of your own experiences, or an experience of a family member, friend or patient, tell that story in one minute. A real story is the perfect pathway to raise an issue.
5. **Questions:** If you are asked a question by the MPP to which you are unsure about the answer, be honest as you can always follow up later after you've had time to reflect, research, and discuss with colleagues. In fact, offering to provide more information once you've explored the question further is an excellent way to anchor your follow-up communication with the MPP.
6. **Reiterate:** As the meeting wraps up, tie all the loose ends together by concisely summarizing what was discussed, reviewing any follow-up items either you or the MPP have agreed to (as

well as rough timeframes. It is important to offer a next step, like telling candidates and their volunteers where they can learn more about this key issue. End by asking if the MPP has any further questions, and *thanking the MPP and their assistants for their time.*

Congratulations! You've made it through your meeting — hopefully, this is the start of a lasting and fruitful relationship with the MPP. But as you probably predicted, it doesn't stop here...

### **Meeting Follow-Up**

After the meeting (ideally within a few days), be sure to send a personalized thank-you letter to the MPP with a summary of key discussion points. You should also follow up on any outstanding action items or questions that arose during the meeting as promptly as possible.

Finally, don't forget to keep in touch with your MPP and request follow-up meetings to help keep the momentum going. It's also important not to set your expectations too high and expect immediate results — results come in time, usually after many meetings.

Feel free to use this template for your follow-up email:

#### **Meeting Follow-Up Email Template**

Dear [Title] [Surname],

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me / us on [Date]! It was a pleasure to speak with you, and we truly appreciate the insight you provided into your perspective on various healthcare issues. We are extremely excited to collaborate moving forward, and hope this will be the beginning of a longitudinal relationship to strive for better health for everyone in [City].

Following up our discussion, please find attached some of the documents we mentioned including [...].

In terms of next steps, we would love to keep the conversation going — would it be possible to tentatively schedule a meeting for the new year? Hopefully we can focus more on [Topic], and potentially discuss ways to raise awareness and engage our community regarding this issue. Again, please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns whatsoever!

Kindest regards,

[Name]

MD Candidate, [School]

OMSA Political Advocacy Committee

[email address] | [www.omsa.ca](http://www.omsa.ca)

Phone: [Phone #]

## **Step 4: Event/Campaign Planning**

## **General planning**

Before planning an event, you and your MPP should consider the goal of your event. Think of the priority health needs of your community and tailor the goal of your event to address these needs. This should be researched prior to meeting with your MPP and deciding the event. Potential goals can include educating or bringing awareness to the community on a certain health issue, promotion of advocacy efforts in the community, collectively advocating or lobbying with stakeholders, and providing a voice for members of marginalized populations. See Table 1 for examples of events and campaign ideas.

In each community, there will be community groups that may have more information on priority health needs and lots of experience and expertise working on initiatives addressing these needs. Relevant organizations would be great to reach out to be involved in your event! You should have an awareness of who these community organizations are, and what kind of work they do. As a starting point, you may find a list of community organizations through these following sources: your municipal council's webpage for community partners, Yellow Pages local charities and nonprofit organizations, and your LHIN healthline's web page for social action groups. Your event should be in concert with initiatives that are worked on by community organizations. Any event that works antagonistic to community initiatives will NOT have a positive impact on your community.

When meeting with your MPP, you can also ask them what priority health needs are on their radar and what they wish to address. Together, you can negotiate what the priority health need you wish to address is, and what the goal of the event should be, keeping the best interests of the community in mind. You must also consider what your impact on the community is as a medical student holding this event.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Once you have decided on an event with your MPP, it is time to delineate what the roles and responsibilities are. This will vary by MPP and community, and the nature of the event. You will need to clearly figure out what you will be responsible for, what the MPP will be responsible for, what relevant community organizations will be contributing, and any other supports that you wish to access for your event. Other supports that you can access include, but are not limited to: other OPAC members and committees, relevant interest groups at your medical school, and your medical school student council.

## **Advertisement and Promotions**

Promoting the event is crucial to its success. Avenues for promotion include: your medical school student body, your university student body, through your MPP's office to their constituents, and community members through relevant community organizations.

## **Follow-Up**

After the event, it is important to follow-up with your MPP on the event. It will be very helpful to collect feedback from event attendees to help identify strengths and areas for improvement. You should also follow up with community organizations and thank them for their contribution and continued work.

Make sure that you have documented the entire process of event planning well, as we will be asking for your transition notes to pass on to next year’s team. This follow up is important for having a sustainable impact on the health needs of the community.

**Table 1: Event/Campaign Ideas**

Event Type	What is it?
Speaker	An individual with expertise on the health topic offers a speech or presentation about its effects on the community. TED style talks (ex. blending storytelling and facts) on local issues and solutions may be beneficial for engagement. A question and answer period is also recommended.
Panel	A group of community stakeholders with varying backgrounds and expertise on the health topic share their experiences and knowledge. A moderator can help bring in predetermined questions and questions from the audience for increased engagement. Your MPP can also be one of these panelists.
Movie night	This event uses a documentary to introduce and inform attendees of the health topic issues. A discussion guided by reflective questions and a moderator should occur afterwards to further engage attendees.
Promotion of advocacy results	Is there a new policy, regulation, or development project that was just completed and related to the health topic? Host an event to promote and bring awareness to its completion. Celebrating the successes of advocacy can be important to maintaining morale. Ex. Opening day of a new ramp built to increase accessibility
Collective Action Night	Multiple advocacy groups are invited to share their activities on one particular health topic. Attendees are provided time to meet with these group leaders, possibly in a volunteer fair fashion, and choose to participate in the action of their choice.
Letter writing	Goal is to generate letters to policymakers (ex. MPPs) advocating for an evidence-based and community-approved action regarding the health topic. Organizers can provide templates that attendees can personalize and sign. These letters would later be mailed out by organizers.
Other activity-related events	Are there actionable aspects of the health topic that attendees can do together other than letter writing? Host an event to encourage a group of community members to participate. Ex. Blood drive, handing out masks



# References

## Step 1

1. Government of Canada [Government](#)
2. Government of Ontario [History of government](#)
3. Ontario Nonprofit Network [Who Does What in the Ontario Government](#)
4. Government of Ontario [About the Ontario Public Service](#)
5. Legislative Assembly of Ontario [Committees](#)
6. Commonwealth Local Government Forum [Canada](#)
7. Canada's Premiers [About Canada's Premiers](#)
8. Prime Minister of Canada [Prime Minister to host First Ministers' Meeting and meeting with National Indigenous Leaders](#)
9. Government of Canada Intergovernmental Affairs
10. Government of Ontario [Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs](#)
11. Government of Ontario [How Municipalities and Ontario Work Together](#)
12. AMO [Association of Municipalities of Ontario](#)
13. Government of Ontario [Association of Municipalities of Ontario: Memorandum of understanding](#)
14. Government of Ontario [Published plans and annual reports 2019-2020: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing](#)

## Step 3

1. CMA [MD-MP Contact Program Handbook](#),
2. CFMS [Advocacy Toolkit: Meeting with Policy-Makers](#),
3. OMA [Advocacy handouts](#)
4. CFMS [Advocacy Toolkit: Meeting with Policy-Makers](#),
5. OMA [Advocacy Handouts](#),
6. CPA [Advocacy Guide for Psychologists: How to Communicate Effectively with Members of Parliament](#)

## Step 4

1. International Justice Mission [Advocacy and Awareness Ideas for Campus Chapters](#)
2. ASHA Student [Advocacy Day Work Plan](#)
3. AFMC [Social Accountability: A Vision for Canadian Medical Schools](#)