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Independent Health and Patient Advocates Continue to Earn Enough to Help Patients Survey Shows Advocate Satisfaction and Optimism for Future of the Field

SEATTLE, WA -- For the second year in a row, the National Health and Patient Advocate Survey measured advocate backgrounds, practices, satisfaction and outlook on the emerging advocate field. Health and Patient Advocates for this survey were considered to be paid professionals helping individuals navigate the health care system.

“The field of health and patient advocates is new but growing as the health care system remains increasingly complex,” said Robin Shapiro, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Washington State Health Advocacy Association (WASHAA), one of the organizations fielding the survey. “There is good news [in The Survey] for patients who want an independent advisor to help assert their wishes and navigate the health care system.”

Key Findings

- The profession of health and patient advocacy seems to be viable, with the overwhelming majority (68%) of independent and employed advocates making enough money to continue doing the work. Almost all (92%) said they intend to continue doing this work in the foreseeable future.
- Advocates are highly educated. Although there is no one specific path to a career in advocacy, almost half (48%) have a Master’s Degree.
- Advocates continue to report being optimistic, with the vast majority (92%) reporting they believe that the advocacy field will grow in the next five years.
- The vast majority (90%) of advocates are hired independent of the health care system.
- Medical/Navigational Services were the advocacy service most frequently requested by patients (67% of advocates reported this as the top service they were hired to perform and 97% reported that Medical/Navigational Services were one of their top three requested services).

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About the Survey

The survey was conducted by representatives of the Washington State Health Advocacy Association (WASHAA) and the Alliance of Professional Health Advocates (APHA) in order to begin measuring the backgrounds of advocates, some of their work practices and their outlook on the field. For a copy of the entire survey, please go to: www.advocacycoalition.org.

Recommended Actions for Patients

Don't go alone! Navigating health care by yourself is challenging and potentially dangerous. Always educate yourself and have someone (an advocate who can speak for you or help you speak for yourself). We recommend:

- Join or support health advocacy organizations to help ensure that the field will continue to grow and advocates will continue to be available
- Identify an advocate for yourself before a health crisis emerges (this can be a family member, friend and/or a professional advocate)
- Educate yourself about what being an advocate means, so that you are can effectively discuss your personal health goals, values and choices. Join WASHAA at our upcoming events here, including our **Patient No More** Talk at the Phinney Neighborhood Village February 8: <http://www.washaa.org/events1.html>

Recommended Actions for Advocates

- Join organizations to meet other advocates to help keep up with advocate business practices
- Share your success and mentor advocates entering the field to help the field grow
- Track and participate in continuing education and credential of the practice

About WASHAA

The Washington State Health Advocacy Association (WASHAA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people transform from patients to full participants in their health. WASHAA fulfills our mission by: 1. Raising awareness about health advocacy 2. Teaching health advocacy skills and 3. Connecting people to local, relevant health advocacy resources. For more information visit us at www.washaa.org. We can't do it without you - consider joining as a 'Associate (Supporter) Member' <http://www.washaa.org/become-a-member.html> to help our organization grow and never miss a WASHAA update.

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