

What is an advocate?

An advocate is a person who uses their voice to raise awareness or push for a change in the way things are currently done.

- Advocates are everyday people
- Advocates have a powerful voice when standing together
- Advocates can lobby for issues regardless of multiple factors
 - If and/or who you voted for
 - If you receive government services
 - If you donate money to campaigns
- Advocates always garners some kind of end effect, whether a change is implemented or not

Why are they important?

Advocates do a lot of work, both in the beginning and late stages of creating empowerment to an individual or group of people. They often are working side-by-side with someone closely tied to a rare disease (a patient, caregiver, or loved one) and are able to show support that will help make their lives easier. Sometimes an advocate may be the only person in the individual's corner.

- Advocates represent others
- Advocates offer support
- Advocates rally for change
- Advocates educate others

What purpose do they serve?

Advocates come in all forms and you do not have to do anything extreme to fulfill an advocate's purpose.

- Advocates write letters to elected officials
- Advocates make phone calls to voters
- Advocates send emails to local and state offices about important bills
- Advocates schedule and attend meetings
- Advocates participate in fundraisers
- Advocates create awareness for rare diseases

How do you become an advocate?

- Understand the essentials
 - Who am I advocating for?
 - How does this affect me or someone I know?
 - Why am I advocating?
 - What issues or problems currently exist?
- Learn about current legislation and upcoming bills
- Research organization groups and get involved
- Participate in awareness campaigns and legislative meetings
 - Don't worry – legislators want to hear from you!
- Vote
 - Remember if a vote related to your issue arises, you and everyone you know should vote on it