

Rapid Response Fact Checking

In support of the Nation's Hospitals and Health Systems

Overview

The anti-hospital billionaire groups and the organizations they finance in Washington and across the United States have created a decidedly negative narrative about hospitals that has resulted in new laws and regulations that are wrongly punishing hospitals – with much more on the horizon.

We have all been working over the past year to push back on the half-truths, innuendos, one-sided reports, etc. generated by the anti-hospital groups. Pro-hospital efforts have been limited, poorly targeted and often too late due to the lack of strategic coordination and meaningful support from national and state trade associations. There is a need for a strategic, coordinated, rapid response to the anti-hospital narrative being advanced daily by well-financed anti-hospital groups.

As we have collectively learned over the past year, by working together we can effectively limit the anti-hospital efforts. For example, our combined site-neutral strategy has stalled further congressional efforts this year to pass broad site-neutral payment policies.

In preparation for upcoming legislative sessions across the country and next year's congressional session, we must work together to better coordinate timely, factual responses that will support hospitals and health systems as we continue to fight anti-hospital initiatives. This rebuttal effort is distinct from the general pro-hospital information provided by national and state trade associations and would be targeted to specific attacks.

Proposal

We propose creating a Rapid Response Fact Checking system that quickly responds to selected anti-hospital messages to Congress, state legislatures and the media with fact-based communications designed to set the record straight and correct misleading and false statements. It would also be used to initiate messages to key groups to demonstrate the value of hospitals to all Americans. This is a low-cost initiative with an expected high return. The key components of this system:

- A simple, elegant Fact Checking website updated continuously, containing both public facing information and members-only information.
 - The members-only information will include materials that participating health systems may access and tailor for their individual use at the state or federal level. Additionally, the members-only section will include information on state legislation being pushed by anti-hospital groups, including information from the field on effective arguments.
- An email and texting system to push fact-checking messages to:
 - Congressional staff
 - Selected statehouses - members and staff
 - Targeted media

- Participating health systems
- Non-participating hospitals and health systems (selected messages)
- The Fact Checking system would be nimble and focused. It would be a tool that is similar to those used by the billionaire groups.
- Social media. Supporters of the billionaire groups are active on LinkedIn (and maybe other platforms). The Fact Checking system would be able to challenge selected LinkedIn posts.

Structure

The Rapid Response Fact Checking system would be its own limited liability company and a subsidiary of Strategic Health Care.

- The LLC would have its own name, to be used on the website and all external communications. All participating health systems would serve on the advisory group to the LLC.
- The LLC could be identified as “an affiliate of Strategic Health Care and its partners.”
- Supporting “partners” would not be identified publicly. Additional supporting partners would be recruited.
- Strategic Health Care would employ, retain any staff used to support the LLC.

The Need for an “Independent” Hospital Policy Messaging System

1. AHA’s messages are important but predictable. Predictable messages are often ignored.
2. A separate hospital voice, generally supportive of AHA policies, would generate more attention...especially as it serves solely to correct misstatements and half-truths.
3. Part of the success of the billionaire groups is their ability to harness other groups to carry their message. While we don’t have the resources to pay other groups to support health systems, our partners will act as a separate messenger of solidly researched information.

1-Year Budget

Website development and maintenance	\$75,000
One full-time fact checker	\$100,000
One part-time fact checker	<u>\$70,000</u>
Total:	\$245,000

Strategic Health Care will contribute \$50,000 to the first year’s budget. Health system participants are asked to contribute \$40,000 each (payable in quarterly installments). A minimum of five participating health systems are needed to launch the Rapid Response Fact Checking initiative.