



*Together, we transform the healthcare experience.*

THE **BRIDGE** HEALTH ADVOCATES, PLLC

### **Frequently Asked Questions About Patient Advocacy**

**1. Is there a difference between the advocates working in the hospital and for my health insurance company, and independent patient advocates?**

Yes. Advocates that work for a corporate company are limited to the boundaries of the role that company creates. When you work as an independent patient advocate, you get to determine what your role looks like and structure it how you see fit for the goals you want to accomplish with your clients. As an independent patient advocate your only obligation is to your client and their well-being.

**2. Who pays you? Does insurance cover your services?**

No, health insurance does not cover independent patient advocate services. We are paid directly by the client. If insurance were to cover services, they could dictate how you run your practice and the services you provide. Being paid directly by the client allows you to meet their direct needs.

**3. Do I need to be a medical professional to work as an advocate?**

No, you do not need to be a medical professional to work as a patient advocate. Patient advocates need to be sure they have sufficient knowledge and experience within the healthcare system to bring substantial value to their clients. At The Bridge Health Advocates, being health care providers ourselves, we see the advantages of having a health care background as practicing patient advocates. This is why our program specifically works with people who have experience/degrees in health care and medicine.

**4. Do I need to be a Board Certified Patient Advocate (BCPA) to practice as a patient advocate?**

No, you do not need BCPA certification to practice as a patient advocate. However, we do encourage you to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and obtain this certification when you are ready. Although the public is still learning about this profession and the certification, it can help boost a client's confidence in your credibility. It also helps elevate the profession by creating a high standard for professional patient advocates, holding us accountable to professional development through continuing education and our commitment to ethical standards and competent care. At The Bridge Health Advocates, we are proud to hold this certification.

**5. How do I get clients?**

There are many ways to attract clients and some methods work better than others. As part of our [Keystone Advocacy Training Program](#), we give you the most effective ways to get the clients you want to work with. You are surrounded by experts who have done this before and will help you create an action plan to start seeing clients when you are ready. The program connects you with peers who are in the same position as you – starting their businesses.



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#### **6. In general, what do patient advocates do?**

Patient advocates serve their clients in many ways. Primarily people seek independent patient advocates when they are in a time of need with their health and health care providers. Patient advocates offer another listening ear in a doctor's visit, gather medical history so that all information is easily accessible, work with the client to achieve their goals in their health, connect their client with resources, provide education, explore health insurance options, facilitate communication and collaboration with their clients, their medical providers, and families, and much more. Patient advocates can be sought out by the patient directly, or through a family member or friend, or by a referral from a health care provider.

#### **7. What are your limitations as patient advocates?**

We follow the Patient Advocate Certification Board guidelines as to the scope of practice for patient advocates. However, there are a variety of factors that play a part in an advocate's practice and whether they plan to become a Board Certified Patient Advocate or not. Generally, patient advocates do not provide hands on medical care, tell their clients what to do, nor provide medical or legal advice. In our [Keystone Advocacy Training Program](#), we help you create the business you envision with your unique ideas and plan. We discuss the limitations of an advocate during the program, and more importantly, solutions!

Thank you for looking over our answers to some frequently asked questions about patient advocacy. If you have further questions about patient advocacy, we would be happy to help with more resources. Patient advocacy is a wonderful world with lots to explore. Please reach out to us at [info@bridgehealthadvocates.org](mailto:info@bridgehealthadvocates.org)

If you are interested in becoming an independent patient advocate, we have a comprehensive training program that guides you as you build your business and trains you to work as an advocate. You don't need to go it alone! We can help!

We look forward to hearing from you!