



Advocacy Toolkit

Using Social Media

When it comes to advocacy, social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, can be powerful tools. Many of your elected officials, other advocates and policy groups, and journalists are active on social media. Using your computer, tablet or smartphone, you can inspire others, engage with the advocacy community and interact with elected officials.

Your personal social media account, whether that's on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or another site, is the best place to feature your advocacy work online. Through your own network of contacts, you can exert a tremendous amount of influence and drive progress.

Each social platform has its strengths. Facebook is particularly good for getting others to sign on to petitions, email their elected officials and participate in local events. You also can post educational information about arthritis policy-related topics. Twitter is an ideal space for sharing images of meetings with your elected officials. It also allows you to speak with your elected officials by tweeting at them directly. And you can make a particular tweet more visible to users by including a certain hashtag. Remember, tweets can be no more than 280 characters so Facebook may be better for those with more messages and information.

You may be active on other social networks, too. You can use Instagram and Snapchat to post a photo or short video when you're at an advocacy event or public meeting. It's not necessary to be active on every platform. If you only use one or two social media sites, that's okay. Try to choose at least one that you enjoy and log on to regularly.

Posting on social media can give your followers more insight into what policy issues matter most to you, highlight arthritis-related policy news or get the

attention of your elected officials. (Sample Facebook and Twitter posts are included in this section.)

Facebook

- Keep your message concise when writing about an issue, petition or piece of legislation.
- Point out specifically what interests you about what you're posting and encourage your friends to get involved.
- You can always link to [ACE's Advocacy page](#). Here, individuals can send elected officials pre-drafted emails or compose their own notes. After you contact your elected officials, send the link to your friends and family and encourage them to take action.

Sample Facebook posts:

- I'm supporting federal and provincial/territorial efforts to introduce patient education and exercise programs, such as GLA:D, that have been proven to significantly reduce hip or knee osteoarthritis symptoms: Join me by contacting your elected officials and taking action here: <https://advocacy.jointhealth.org>
- A 2016 study predicts that by 2031, OA will cost the Canadian economy an estimated \$17.5 billion a year in lost productivity. I contacted my (MP, MLA, MNN, MPP) to advocate for funding support for patient education and exercise programs. Join me: <https://advocacy.jointhealth.org>
- Osteoarthritis forces people to stop working or work less due to pain, fatigue, and the demands of prescribed treatment therapies, contributing to making arthritis the leading cause of work disability in Canada. Let's tell our elected officials that patient education and exercise programs can reduce hip or knee osteoarthritis symptoms: <https://advocacy.jointhealth.org>

Twitter

- To tweet at an elected official, be sure to include their Twitter handle in your post. Use the search box in the top right corner of Twitter to find your lawmaker's page. You'll see a button under their profile picture that says, "Tweet to [elected official]."

- If your elected official's handle is the first thing in the tweet, add a period (.) in front of it to ensure all of your followers can see your post. Tweets without the period will be sent directly to elected officials and won't be visible to all users.
- Use the hashtag #ACETakeAction in arthritis public policy-related tweets.
- Attaching a short video to your tweet is a great way to engage with your elected officials. Here is a sample script you could use:

My name is ____ and I am from ____ (city/province).

[Include 1-2 sentences about your connection to arthritis]

I'm asking (MP/MLA/MPP/MNN) ____ to take steps to address health inequities for Indigenous peoples with arthritis in Canada.

Indigenous peoples in Canada have some of the highest rates of serious or life-threatening arthritis in the world, are at greater risk for becoming disabled by arthritis and also a high rate of co-morbidities like heart disease, hypertension, asthma, arthritis and cancer.

Thank you so much for your support!

Address health inequities for Indigenous peoples with arthritis in Canada

The largest racial health inequalities in Canada are faced by Indigenous peoples who have some of the highest rates of serious or life-threatening arthritis in the world, are at greater risk for becoming disabled by arthritis and also a high rate of co-morbidities like heart disease, hypertension, asthma, arthritis and cancer.

There is strong evidence that these health gaps are not the outcome of genetic differences but are instead the result of social and economic conditions shaped by a long history of colonialism, racism, destruction of land and food resources, and the trauma that comes with these experiences.

It's important to let elected officials know about health inequities in Canada such as those experienced by Indigenous people. Your voice matters.

Sample tweets:

- *@[elected official's handle]* Support efforts to reduce the barriers to early diagnosis of inflammatory arthritis and referral to specialists in Indigenous communities in (Canada/your province or territory) @XXX, @XXX and @XXX for the approximately XXXX Indigenous peoples living with arthritis in Canada. #ACEtakeaction
- Genetics, exposure to cigarette smoking, stress and trauma are all factors that can trigger an inflammatory arthritis. Indigenous peoples have a significantly higher inflammatory arthritis prevalence compared to all other Canadians. Our elected officials must lead efforts to improve the healthcare and lives of indigenous peoples living with arthritis and facing health inequity challenges. *@[elected official's handle]*, it is imperative that you commit to take action this year!
- I advocate to make it simpler for Indigenous people to receive early diagnosis and referral for inflammatory arthritis. Take action with me here: <https://advocacy.jointhehealth.org> #ACEtakeaction
- Our elected officials need to hear directly from the arthritis community that our health system must provide Indigenous peoples a safe, culturally relevant environment. Ask your elected official to make this available to patients: <https://advocacy.jointhehealth.org> #ACEtakeaction *(Note: use this to tweet at fellow advocates.)*

Support an ACE Post

ACE's Facebook page and Twitter account are frequently updated with information about policy issues affecting people with arthritis and their families. We keep our eye on government policy making so when new policies are introduced, we can deliver the latest news. By supporting one of these posts, you can spread the word about arthritis and public policy.

When an ACE Facebook or Twitter post resonates with you, there are a number of different actions you can take to respond.

Facebook

facebook.com/ACEJointHealth

1. Act. Look for ACE posts that link to pre-drafted emails you can send to elected officials on a particular policy issue. Click on the post to take action through ACE's website.
2. Share. The "Share" button allows you to place an ACE post on your own timeline where your friends can see it.
3. React. Hover over the "Like" button and select from the options to express how you feel about a post.

Twitter

twitter.com/ACEJointHealth

1. Act. Some posts direct you to pre-drafted emails that can be sent to elected officials. Click on the link to take action through ACE's website.
2. Share. The "retweet" button at the bottom of the post allows you to share an ACE tweet from your own account so your followers can see it.
3. React. Click the "like" button to indicate your support for a post.