Mobilize & Activate Advocacy

Manual

Student National Medical Association
Health Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee
Mobilize & Activate Advocacy Manual

Second Revision

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To our SNMA family –

The Student National Medical Association (SNMA) is committed to supporting current and future underrepresented minority medical students, addressing the needs of underserved communities, and increasing the number of clinically excellent, culturally competent and socially conscious physicians.

In alliance with its goals, it is the duty of the Student National Medical Association to address national events that cause distress to our society, especially when disproportionally and negative impacting historically marginalized communities. Furthermore, the SNMA hopes to provide guidance to chapters and regions that are considering organizing or hosting any talks, protests or demonstrations in response to these national events.

The following manual is designed to provide guidance for your chapter or region as you prepare to mobilize your members and advocate for your patients and community. However, we also want to make it clear that our national president, national board of directors, and national committee chairs are available if you have questions or concerns moving forward. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have concerns that arise, and we look forward to supporting you in your advocacy efforts.

Yours in SNMA,

Catharine Bernal
Justin Anderson
HPLA Membership Education Subcommittee Chairpersons, 2018-2019

Jeniffer Okungbowa-Ikponmwosa
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National Health Policy and Legislative Affairs Chairpersons, 2018-2019
SNMA as a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization

What is a 501(c)3 organization?

501(c)3 is an IRS classification that allows SNMA to operate as a tax-exempt charitable organization. The IRS defines 501(c)3 status as an organization that must be organized and operated exclusively for the exempt/charitable purposes and none of its earnings may be held by private shareholders or individuals. Additionally, a 501(c)3 organization cannot be an “action organization,” which means it may not attempt to influence legislation as a substantial part of its activities nor participate in any campaign activity for or against political candidates. The term “substantial part” is not explicitly defined, though the general rule of thumb is 5% of a 501(c)3 organization’s time and resources, though campaigning for or against political candidates and specific legislative is strictly prohibited. Any violation of such restriction can cause SNMA to lose its tax-exempt status.

What Political Activity is Allowed for a 501(c)3 Organization?

Despite the limitations in place, there are still many activities that SNMA may engage in politically that are not considered lobbying and carry weight to express the voice of our organization. These include:

1. Organizing non-partisan voter registration drives.
2. Developing policy positions directed on issues as long as said issue is not reduced to a specific piece of legislation.
   
   Example: SNMA may issue a policy statement in support of a Universal Healthcare system but cannot specifically express support for the Affordable Care Act.
3. Testify before a legislative committee at the request of a legislative body
4. Targeting a political executive such as mayor, governor, or president, with concerns so long as they are not explicitly asking the executive to promote, discourage or veto legislation.
   
   Example: SNMA may contact the governor in their state concerning smoking rates and the incidence of lung cancer but cannot specifically ask the governor to promote legislation that would raise taxes on cigarettes.
5. Engage in efforts to make an administrative agency of the government change its policies, rules or regulation or adopt new rules.
Example: SNMA may open discussion with the local government or police department regarding racial discrimination practices, urge reforms and make suggestions to encourage change, but cannot throw its support explicitly behind a political organization working toward similar goals.

6. Distribution of voter education materials is also acceptable provided the information:
   a. Is impartial at stating the position of candidates and does not provide evaluation of their positions
   b. Covers a broad range of issues without bias
   c. Provides information of ALL candidates’ position in a race regardless of political affiliation

A note for SNMA members who wish to engage in advocacy actions:

The aforementioned rules and limitations only apply to a 501(c)3 organization like SNMA as a whole. **They do not apply to individual actions** taken by SNMA members in their personal advocacy efforts and other political activities. Individuals are encouraged to personally support legislation, candidates, and engage in the political process as they feel necessary. However, any individual actions taken by SNMA members that fall outside the limitations of 501(c)3 organizations must explicitly state that they do not express the interests of the SNMA as an organization and solely express the intent and interest of the organizer.

For more information on 501(c)3 organizations visit:

Protocol for Organizing and Reporting Advocacy Work

Political Talks, Protests, and Demonstrations

The following algorithm will assist you as you plan a potential event. If you have any questions, contact healthpolicy@snma.org and externalaffairs@snma.org.

→ Does the SNMA have an official position statement concerning your topic of protest or activism? To check, go to the SNMA Health Policy and Legislative Affairs Page (snma.me/hpla); position statements are listed at the bottom on this page. Additionally, links to position statements are listed within this document.

• If yes, contact External Affairs (externalaffairs@snma.org) and HPLA (healthpolicy@snma.org) with an event synopsis at least 3 days prior to proposed event.

• If no, consider writing a new position statement to be voted on by the house of delegates. (See the Policy Statement Section later in this manual for more information). Until then, any protests that are conducted cannot be done in connection with the SNMA.

→ Is the event a protest? Obtain proper permits at least one week in advance of event from your local or state agency. Details on this process are outlined in a separate section of this manual.

→ Is the event public or private?

• If public, contact your state or local law enforcement agency to ensure that you are in compliance with any applicable laws, respectively.

• If private, talk to your local institution about potential security concerns and to assure correct permissions are acquired. If an event is held at your school, talk to administration to ensure correct permission are acquired and to engage staff and faculty where applicable.
→ **Consider collaborating** with other student or community organizations ONLY if a unified message, in accordance with current SNMA position statements, will be communicated.

→ **Are you considering using any press releases during protest planning stage?** If so, please contact [externalaffairs@snma.org](mailto:externalaffairs@snma.org) and [marketing@snma.org](mailto:marketing@snma.org) at least 3 days prior to proposed event, as they likely have a unifying message that can be disseminated to all media outlets.
HOW TO ORGANIZE ADVOCACY DEMONSTRATIONS

General Rules for Peaceful Protest:
• Be aware of your rights. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) provides some guidelines that may be helpful. https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/demonstrations-and-protests
• Posters, Fliers, Visual Aids or Pamphlets may be used to help communicate your concerns to the public.
• The SNMA does not condone any violence or damage to property, and this will be viewed as a criminal offense.

Organizing a Peaceful Protest:
• Most demonstrations do not require a permit. The ACLU has noted exceptions, which include:
  o A march or parade that does not stay on the sidewalk, and other events that require blocking traffic or street closure
  o A large rally requiring the use of sound amplifying devices; or
  o A rally at certain designated parks or plazas (will be city specific)
• How do you obtain a permit if you need one?
  o You will need the appropriate information to give to your city office when you file your application:
    ▪ An estimate of how many people will be present
    ▪ Area where you intend to walk and the route of your path if you are planning a march
    ▪ A time frame for when your event may occur
    ▪ Pay the application fee as indicated by your city
  o The link below provides a directory resource to permit offices by state. Please note that this list is not comprehensive. You will need to contact your local city hall to file and application.
• Keep in mind than many city ordinances require a permit to obtained at least a week in advance.
• Be sure to carry a copy of your permit with you the day of the event.

**Advertise your event**

• Posters, fliers and pamphlets are all forms of free speech protected by the First Amendment and can be used to advertise as well as handed out at the demonstration
• Connect through Social Media
• If you wish to have press involved, please contact externalaffairs@snma.org and marketing@snma.org at least 3 days in advance

**The Day of Your Event**

• Call 1-2 days prior to confirm with the city and to learn of any last-minute changes
• Carry a copy of your permit with you
• Inform all in attendance the city ordinances and laws surrounding your demonstration
• Be aware of your surroundings
NATIONAL PROTOCOL FOR RESPONDING TO NATIONAL EVENTS, CRISES OR TRAGEDIES

It is the duty of the Student National Medical Association to address national events that cause distress to our society, especially when disproportionally and negative impacting historically marginalized communities. When the national or international community is experiencing a crisis, it can be helpful to hear a sympathetic and affirming response from an established and respected organization.

National current events include, but are not limited to, natural environmental disasters, public health crises, or incidences involving law enforcement agents. Such events typically dominate the 24-hour news stations. It is important to note that the SNMA’s response to any event must be impartial with regards to political parties. SNMA is a nonpartisan organization and as such remains impartial no matter the protest or event. Once an event has been identified, an official statement will be shared by the National President via mass listservs, with optional additional outreach via social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter. Such statements will aim to humanize the organization, lend credibility to the voice of those impacted by the event, share information with those who may not be aware and bring unity to those suffering and those hoping to help. This will be accomplished by the following protocol:

- Once an event occurs, initial reports of events will be directed to a designated leader on the Health Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee by email (healthpolicy@snma.org).
- After initial dissemination of information, the committee designee will vet the event and create a draft response within 24 hours. The draft should include:
  - Information about the event, with sources where possible,
  - A segment referencing current SNMA policy statements, and
  - A statement about ways to contribute via action.
- The draft will be sent to the Executive Director (execdir@snma.org) and National President (president@snma.org).
- The National President will then have 24-48 hours to ensure correctness of cited facts, edit the language and information as needed, and give final
approval.

- Overall, the official statement regarding the event should be shared with the SNMA body within seven (7) days of the incident.

In addition to offering condolences and support, it is important that current SNMA leadership helps direct some form of action to provide relief from the tragedy. Where possible, the statement will tie sympathy with action by pointing hopeful students in the direction of current or future SNMA initiatives or other respected campaigns positively assisting those impacted. Examples may include donating to a reputable non-profit, signing a petition, organizing a volunteer effort, or finding other ways to get involved.
THE POSITION STATEMENTS

The Student National Medical Association has published position statements on a variety of pertinent issues, from gun violence and police brutality to substance abuse and smoking prevention. Position statements can be accessed at the SNMA Health Policy and Legislative Affairs webpage at snma.me/hpla, which will be updated with new position statements as they are approved. A list of current position statements is provided below:

- Affirmative Action
- Alcohol & Substance Use Disorder
- Cultural & Structural Competency
- Diversity & Equity
- Environmental Health
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Gun Violence
- HIV & AIDS
- Immigrant Health & Immigration Policy
- LGBTQIA+ Health
- Police Brutality
- Racism as a Public Health Issue
- Residency Work Hours
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Smoking Prevention
- Title Programs
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Universal Healthcare
- Women's Health
IF YOU WANT TO SUBMIT A POSITION STATEMENT

If there is an issue you are very passionate about, but do not see a position statement published on the SNMA website, you can submit your idea to the Health Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee at healthpolicy@snma.org. Keep in mind as you draft your statement that it must follow the guidelines mentioned in the SNMA as a 501(c)3 organization section above. Also, if you feel impassioned to grow and develop as an advocate in your medical school career and wish to become more involved with SNMA as a national organization, members are welcome and encouraged to join the national Health Policy and Legislative Affairs committee. You can apply online at www.SNMA.org by going to the National Committees section located under the Initiatives tab.
CONTACT INFORMATION

If further questions arise while using the information in this manual, please contact any of the following individuals for more information or assistance:

- National President – president@snma.org
- National Health Policy and Legislative Affairs Chairpersons – healthpolicy@snma.org
- National External Affairs Chairpersons – externalaffairs@snma.org
- National Marketing Consultant – marketing@snma.org